

Small grants build sustainable houses in Pakistan

Small grants build sustainable houses in Pakistan

Rural communities are using small grants to build hundreds of low-cost, energy-efficient houses in Pakistan.

In 2010, the GEF Small Grants Programme (SGP) Pakistan team designed a sustainable house for people in the province of Sindh who were left homeless by the floods. This award-winning technique is called the Benazir Model, and both tackles and adapts to the effects of climate change and natural disasters.

The simple, low-carbon construction is based on hollow or compressed earth blocks and produces naturally insulated houses with very low electricity needs, while reducing deforestation. Wire-reinforced walls and pyramid-shaped roofs provide strength to better withstand future natural disasters. The building costs are as low as \$6 per square feet.

The initial construction took two weeks and labour was hired locally, providing significant income for poor rural communities and giving more than 1,000 local masons the skills to replicate the model. The prototype houses were built using specific machines locally known as SGP Spirits, in reference to the Small Grants Programme.

More than half of the houses are owned by women, who also contributed to the construction and were included in all training programmes.



A specially designed "SGP Spirit" block-making machine.
Photo: Masood Lohar



Energy efficient, environmentally sustainable houses being constructed in Pakistan's rural district of Thatta supported by the UNDP-GEF Small Grants Programme. **Photo:** Masood Lohar

The primary project was executed by UNOPS on behalf of the UNDP-implemented GEF Small Grants Programme in Pakistan. UNDP Pakistan and the Sindh Local Government have now adopted and integrated the Benazir Model in similar projects, resulting in over 500 new houses being built.

How we add value

Our partners request UNOPS support to supplement their own capacities, improve speed, reduce risks, boost cost-effectiveness or increase quality.

UNOPS size, scope and track record allows our partners to benefit from economies of scale and specialized expertise. In 2010, we delivered \$1.27 billion through project implementation.

UNOPS is a not-for-profit organization and is fully self-financing, prompting efficiency and financial discipline.

Our transparent, accountable management services meet the highest international standards. External auditors gave UNOPS an unqualified audit opinion for 2008/2009.

We are flexible and can adapt to partner needs, implementing operations quickly, effectively and professionally. We are focused on results.

UNOPS maintains a physical presence on the ground and promotes the ownership and engagement of governments and local communities.