



Baloch Hamza
Brothers

The Borderlands: A Date with Opportunity

Supporting Baloch Hamza Brothers (BHB) to supply larger quantities of dates to the regional urban centres and set up a processing facility for female workers.



The Company

Baloch Hamza Brothers (BHB) is a company which specialises in date processing and supplies dates from Balochistan to urban centres across Pakistan.



The Context

Balochistan is the largest province in Pakistan by land area. Noted for its dry climate, it is the largest date-producing region in Pakistan. In Pangur, a remote region in the west of Balochistan and well-known for dates, processing and storage facilities are limited. Lack of accessibility and infrastructure restrains make private companies reluctant to invest.

At the same time, few opportunities and working spaces for women exist in Balochistan. As a result, it is difficult for women to work in commercial sectors, confining them to animal husbandry or making clothes.



The Challenge

In Panjgur, dates are sold to traders who transport the produce to other regional hubs. The dates are then processed and sold back to domestic and international markets. The long chain between farmers and final consumers decreases the profit margin for farmers.

Initially, BHB had a processing capacity of 400 tonnes of processed dates annually. However, as demand increased, the company was struggling to fulfil orders: during Ramadan in 2015, BHB received for 10 tonnes of dates every three days, far outstripping their annual supply capacity.

In order to address processing challenges, BHB had considered hiring women and involving them in factory work. But with limited working spaces suitable for women, it had struggled to attract them.



The Solution

MDF supported BHB to enhance its capacity by setting up processing machinery that would enable them to cater to the growing domestic market. The machinery included a curing machine for date drying and washing, grading tables to sort date varieties, and pitting and processing machines.

This allowed BHB to process and pack dates of different varieties and supply directly to both local supermarkets and retailers, and eventually to in far-flung areas of Balochistan. Plastic crates were also provided to farmers to help reduce post-harvest losses.

As a result, **more farmers are earning more** and are able to sell to a consistent buyer which offers a better price at the farm gate in return for higher-quality produce.

Moreover, BHB is proving to be a **change agent** in Balochistan. The company established a facility for women workers located about 2km from their main facility, where women are able to work full-time on sorting, grading and pitting dates. In this way, they can commute easily, work flexible hours and invest in the well-being of their families.

50% of BHB's workforce is now female, inspired by the owner's wife, who has acted as a powerful role model for women, encouraging them to try out working at the women only facility. Mrs. Nusrat works as a supervisor to provide guidance to female workers in the processing and packaging of dates at the facility.

The Results

 BHB connected with another MDF partners to export dates, earning an additional sales revenue of **PKR 3.8 million**

 Number of jobs created: **26**

 Farmers benefitted: **120**



Quote from the field

BHB employee Shagur shared:

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In Balochistan, women do not get a lot of opportunities to work. However, there are exceptions like Baloch Hamza Brothers which are breaking barriers. They give equal opportunity and facilities for women in Panjgur to work independently.

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