



September 2010

Introduction

Global Partnership for Afghanistan has established 40 Hybrid Poplar woodlots with 20 male and 20 female farmers in the Farza District of rural Kabul Province, one hour north of the city of Kabul.

The woodlots are located in two villages. The project was funded by Janet Ketcham, with GPFA matching her donation dollar for dollar.



Janet Ketcham - a keen photographer and funder of this project, shares her photographs with some local children when visiting one of the woodlots.

Project Activities

1. Selection of Participants

Afghan staff chose project participants in consultation with local village leaders and based upon GPFA's standard criteria:

- Farmers interested in poplar woodlots
- Farmers with sufficient land and water
- Farmers with the ability to fulfil required tasks
- Potential for distribution and marketing of products

In addition, poorer women and men received priority so that they might be able to improve their economic situation.

Prior to implementing the woodlots, GPFA staff travelled to the villages and explained the benefits of the program. These information sessions met with a high level of interest from local farmers, both women and men.

What are hybrid poplar woodlots?

Hybrid poplar cuttings are supplied to selected farmers by GPFA. Farmers are taught to prepare land, design fields, and plant cuttings on a grid of 50 X 50cm.

This allows the following production options:

- **Production of cuttings:** each stool or mother plant can yield 3 – 4 stems for cuttings in 12 months from planting and 6 – 10 in subsequent years. Cuttings can be used for woodlot expansion or sold for income. In this way, the woodlot also serves as a nursery.
- **Production of timber for construction and scaffolding.** The most common use is for roofing joists and for this use woodlots can be progressively thinned from 50x50cm to a less dense 1x1m or wider depending on the size of timber required.
- **Production for use in framework, carpentry and joinery** requires a wider spacing and longer growing period, say 3m x 3m over 7-8 years.

Woodlots are planted on land of ½ jerib or larger. 8,000 cuttings are required per jerib. Women's woodlots are generally ½ jerib. GPFA supplies cuttings and farmers must return an equal number of cuttings in the second year. These are distributed to other farmers to continue the process of expansion. Farmers have additional cuttings which they can use for expansion of their own woodlots, sell or distribute to family and neighbours.

A woodlot on ½ jerib of land costs less than US\$2,000 to establish and maintain over 7 years and can produce an income of US\$12,636 over the same period. Woodlots producing timber can sell timber from a ½ jerib of land for \$30,000 at the end of the 7th or 8th year. Income and growth figures will differ depending on water and soil conditions and altitude.

Woodlot owners are encouraged to expand woodlots using their own cuttings. This allows them successive harvests, creating an annual income over successive years.

2. The Involvement of Women

There is an interesting story surrounding the involvement of women in this project.

Farmers in the one village, located high on the mountains in Farza District, explained that for years they had watched from afar as GPFA worked with other villages in the Guldara and Farza District. They were somewhat skeptical of the ability of the hybrid poplars that GPFA was promoting to survive and grow. Local poplars are planted deep in the ground from 3 foot cuttings. GPFA hybrids are planted as short cuttings of about 6-8 inches. As the farmers saw it, there was little chance of success for these stunted cuttings



Fatima Sardar (right), GPFA Manager for Women's Affairs and one of her extensionists (R), shows women in Farza how to lay out their fields and plan cuttings

Having observed the success of other farmers, however, they decided to get into the action and in 2007 approached GPFA to plant cuttings in their village, a peaceful area with large quantities of water though with relatively poor soils and mountainous terrain. GPFA agreed to visit the area but was prevented from doing so due to early snowfall and landslides that isolated the village.

In 2008, they learned that GPFA was looking to establish up to 20 woodlots in a single village, with 40-50% women's participation. They attended the local shura meeting where GPFA was soliciting advice on participants and requested that their village be considered – offering 100% women's participation.

These women woodlot owners, rather than selling the cuttings, have expanded their own woodlots and distributed cuttings to others in the village – what began as a project for 20 women's woodlots is now a project of more than 40. They have ongoing plans for further distributions until the entire village is covered with acres of poplar, producing timber for annual sale.

For GPFA's women farmers it seems that longer term, larger returns are achievable goals.

3. Distribution of Cuttings and Planting

160,000 cuttings were distributed in March/April 2008. All cuttings were procured from other GPFA woodlot projects. Each cutting costs 5 AFS for a total of 800,000 AFS (\$US 17,800) injected into other local economies.

Each farmer received 4,000 cuttings for their woodlot and each woodlot measured 1,000 square meters. This meant that a total of 40,000 square meters of woodlot were created. In the subsequent 2009 season, participants returned an equal number of cuttings to GPFA for use in new woodlots in other communities.

The table below shows the numbers and types of cuttings distributed during the project

Type of clones & number of cuttings distributed and planted				Total	Area in M ²
Simplot	OP-367	DN-70	NE-389		
8,000	24,000	32,000	16,000	80,000	20,000
16,000	24,000	16,000	24,000	80,000	20,000

4. Training

GPFA staff provided participants with training in the following areas:

- Forestry enterprises, hybrid poplar woodlots/nurseries and environmental impacts
- Selection of cuttings and preparation for planting
- Land preparation and layout of the woodlots
- Irrigation systems and watering of woodlots
- Pest and disease control and weeding

5. Progress of Cuttings

Survival rates varied from one woodlot to another but, in general, a rate of higher than 90% has been achieved.



Farmers begin planting on prepared land

Response to the Project

The response from participants in the project has been positive. Farmers and their families are pleased with how their woodlots are developing.

The response is spreading beyond the people involved in the 40 woodlots. Other farmers, women included, in the two participating villages as well as neighbouring villages are very keen to develop their own woodlots.

GPFA will take advantage of this interest to launch more projects in the Farza district.

Women and men spoke to GPFA staff of the increased income that woodlots produce. This will be used to improve the lives of their families in many ways. Farmers mentioned improved health access, education and increased employment for family members. Women tend to emphasize education, improvements to the home, and a feeling of confidence derived from participating as family income earners.

Some farmers who have previously rented out land to bring in income can now farm it themselves. This will provide work for their sons and daughters and even neighbors.

Higher incomes provide capital for other farmers and rural shopkeepers.

Fatima Sardar, GPFA Manager for Women's Affairs, and her assistant, Somaya Tareen, spoke of how significant the woodlots are for women participants:

"These women feel as though they now really have a role in the family's income." Fatima noted, "It is so good to see the women in their woodlots. They are so excited as they prepare the land, plan the layout and plant cuttings. I can imagine them when they begin to sell their products and when after 7-8 years they discover the real wealth they have created."

Ongoing Support from GPFA

GPFA continues to monitor the development of the woodlots and to provide farmers with support to ensure that they have all the skills and techniques they require.

In addition, GPFA will in the future purchase cuttings from these farmers to supply farmers in other parts of the country. For now, these farmers can now sell cuttings to their friends and neighbours.

Looking to the Future

To encourage farmers to care for their woodlots and to maximize economic returns, GPFA is assisting farmers to form farm forestry associations. In this way they can assist one another as well as bargain with suppliers and buyers for better prices. There is a whole new world for exploration just waiting these new entrepreneurs.



Women use string to lay out the woodlot in preparation for planting their cuttings

Appendix 1

Women's Ketcham Woodlots

This table shows the details of the women's woodlots in the project.

Sr No	Farmer Name	Village	GPS Reading	Type of clone & number of cutting Distributed/planted				Total	Planting Date	Area in M ²	Remark
				Simplot	OP-367	DN-70	NE-389				
1	Qandi jan	Zargaran				4000		4000	12.03.2009	1000	
2	Samar Gul	Zargaran				4000		4000	14.03.2009	1000	
3	Nazifa	Zargaran				4000		4000	16.03.2009	1000	
4	Lailuma	Zargaran				4000		4000	17.03.2009	1000	
5	Shaista	Zargaran			4000			4000	19.03.2009	1000	
6	Gul Makai	Zargaran			4000			4000	21.03.2009	1000	
7	Sheela	Zargaran		4000				4000	23.03.2009	1000	
8	Naqiba	Zargaran		4000				4000	25.03.2009	1000	
9	Ruqia	Zargaran				4000		4000	26.03.2009	1000	
10	Najiba	Zargaran				4000		4000	28.03.2009	1000	
11	Sabzina	Zargaran					4000	4000	30.03.2009	1000	
12	Kamla	Zargaran					4000	4000	31.03.2009	1000	
13	Shughla	Zargaran				4000		4000	01.04.2009	1000	
14	Habiba	Zargaran					4000	4000	02.04.2009	1000	
15	Maryam	Zargaran			4000			4000	04.04.2009	1000	
16	Khadija	Zargaran			4000			4000	05.04.2009	1000	
17	Zulaikha	Zargaran			4000			4000	07.04.2009	1000	
18	Naqiba	Zargaran					4000	4000	09.04.2009	1000	
19	Ogai	Zargaran				4000		4000	11.04.2009	1000	
20	Amil	Zargaran			4000			4000	12.04.2009	1000	
Total				8,000	24,000	32,000	16,000	80,000		20,000	

Appendix 2

Men's Ketcham Woodlots

This table shows the details of the men's woodlots in the project.

Sr No	Farmer Name	Village	GPS Reading	Type of clone & number of cutting Distributed/planted				Total	Planting Date	Area in M ²
				Simplot	OP-367	DN-70	NE-389			
1	Haj.Khan Mohammad	Salim khan					4000	4000	10.03.2009	1000
2	Fulad khan	Salim khan					4000	4000	13.03.2009	1000
3	Noor Hakim	Salim khan					4000	4000	15.03.2009	1000
4	Abdul Ahad	Salim khan				4000		4000	16.03.2009	1000
5	Haj. Mamoor	Salim khan			4000			4000	18.03.2009	1000
6	Imam –u-deen	Salim khan			4000			4000	20.03.2009	1000
7	Narsallah khan	Salim khan			4000			4000	22.03.2009	1000
8	M.Halim	Salim khan					4000	4000	24.03.2009	1000
9	Sahib sha	Salim khan		4000				4000	26.03.2009	1000
10	Saboor	Salim khan				4000		4000	28.03.2009	1000
11	Katib	Salim khan					4000	4000	30.03.2009	1000
12	Mula Gulab	Salim khan					4000	4000	03.04.2009	1000
13	Zia-u-Haq	Salim khan			4000			4000	05.04.2009	1000
14	Marjan	Salim khan			4000			4000	07.04.2009	1000
15	Rahmat khan	Salim khan		4000				4000	05.04.2009	1000
16	Darya khan	Salim khan		4000				4000	07.04.2009	1000
17	Jalil	Salim khan				4000		4000	09.04.2009	1000
18	Muhibullah	Salim khan				4000		4000	11.04.2009	1000
19	Mirwais	Salim khan			4000			4000	13.04.2009	1000
20	Muqam	Salim khan		4000				4000	15.04.2009	1000
Total				16,000	24,000	16,000	24,000	80,000		20,000

Appendix 3

Photographs of the Woodlots



Janet Ketcham, funder of the project, visits a mature woodlot.



Men prepare the land for the woodlot



Beginning the planting of cuttings



Cuttings being planted



Women laying out their woodlot in preparation for planting



Women planting cuttings



A farmer visits his established woodlot with his young daughter



GPFA staff member, Somaya Tareen, inspects an established woodlot



A young girl stands in her mother's woodlot



A maturing woodlot



A woman measures a potential cutting



Children playing in the shade of the woodlot are learning their value from an early age