

Fruits of Conflict

Durable solution of a conflict through series of dialogues and mediations



A general view of Miandam Market

The Background

Located at a distance of 56 km from Mingora, Miandam is a hill station with its natural beauty, cold climate, dense forests, orchards, and singing streams. Every year dozens of tourists come to enjoy the natural beauty of Miandam and inject considerable revenue to the local economy. The local people are mostly dependent on agriculture and local trade. The agriculture is mostly centered on maize and potatoes, but a portion of the population is dependent on the medicinal plant trade for their entire income.

The estimated population of Miandam is 20,000, including neighboring hamlets.

The Problem

Miandam being a tourist spot offers a range of business activities ranging from handicrafts, local shawls, tailoring to cafeteria, juice points, butcher shops, poultry and other local businesses. Due to the non-availability of space, people had installed their cabins on the main way and encroached in the entrance to Miandam. The congested cabins had severely polluted the surroundings with obnoxious smell and unhygienic environment. The traffic always remained stuck which added to the misery of the local people. There was no system of cleanliness and the local authorities tried their best

to get rid of these encroachers but failed. Many times, the government demolished their cabins but the people again came and installed it. There was a persisting dispute between the two.

In order to curb the militants in Swat, some of the military units were stationed in Miandam. Looking to environmental damages caused by illegal occupants, the military strictly ordered the encroachers to take away their business within a defined period of time otherwise they would be dealt harshly. Then the people had no choice except to stop their livelihood.

Solution/Problem Resolved



A general view of Miandam Market

After the successful military operation in Swat, QC started its work in the far flung area of Miandam where no other organization was willing to work in October 2009. We had identified a local village organization. Initially we assessed all the damaged and affected small businesses in the valley with active involvement of the local organization. The problem of demolished market was discussed by the locals several times, but every time we turned down their request and told the community that we do not have funds for the rebuilding of shops or markets. But when the local activists were requesting time and again, we raised this problem to the army personnel because they were in control of that area. We also discussed this issue with the Sub-division Magistrate (SDM) civil authority. After initial discussion with the civil and military authorities, we conducted a broad based community meeting in Miandam valley. After these meetings we had documented all the possible solutions of all the stakeholders. As a result three options had come up for the solution of the issue: i. to re-build the market on its old place, ii. to provide some financial support to the displaced entrepreneurs to start their livelihood somewhere else, and iii. to support them in the rehabilitation of their shops on some other location in the same valley.

A big meeting was called by QC, where all stakeholders were invited to attend the meeting and share their view point. It was well coordinated with Civil Military Liaison Cell for minimizing the risk of any security threat. After a detailed discussion the Govt Revenue department agreed to provide an alternate piece of land in the same area to all these displaced shopkeepers.

The Management of QC had a series of meetings with civil administration and military personnel for a durable solution. Ultimately, with the grace of Almighty Allah, the government agreed to provide a piece of land of about 3,600 square feet along the road which was being used as dumping land and that too created environmental pollution. The community also agreed to provide unskilled laborers whereas QC pledged an amount of Rs 25,000 per shop for 22 shops besides technical expertise in designing, construction, and supervision of work. The 22 shops were constructed in a semi-rectangle shape: 18 shops in the basement (5

shops on northern boundary, 7 to the west, and 6 to southern side) and 4 shops on the upper portion facing to road side. The center of the market has a lawn where the tourist can enjoy hot tea or cold drink while sitting in the light of sun.

The Impact

“No doubt we were earning money in cabins but, in fact, we have illegally occupied that place since we have no other option for our business. At the same time we were always concerned about the behavior of tehsildar, the government Revenue Officer. They came unannounced and demolished our shops. Now, with the grace of Allah, and with the support and efforts of Qatar Charity, we have started a decent business and life. No one irritates us and we confidently do our business activities,” said one business owner.

A local elder and community activist expressed his views and said, *“Miandam is a tourist spot and tourists come from all over the country and even from abroad to enjoy the beautiful natural scenery. The congested cabin structure was not only a source of pollution but it also degraded the beauty of Miandam and tourists would definitely annoy with the dirt. The construction of the market provided a decent picnic spot where the tourist can enjoy shopping and picturise the scene.”*

The construction of Miandam Market not only provided a scenic view for the tourist but also ensured a safe and clean environment along with a permanent and decent source of income. Net income of the shopkeepers ranges from Rs 15,000 to 25,000 on daily basis with a nominal monthly cost for a watchman and sweeper. Direct beneficiaries of this project are 22 families containing roughly 150 persons.

The 22 shops provide an array of facilities to the local population. There are butcher shops, barbers, poultry, buckler, juice points, cafeteria, medicine stores, and vegetable and fruit corners.