



Centre on Integrated Rural
Development for Asia and
the Pacific (CIRDAP)

The second celebration of

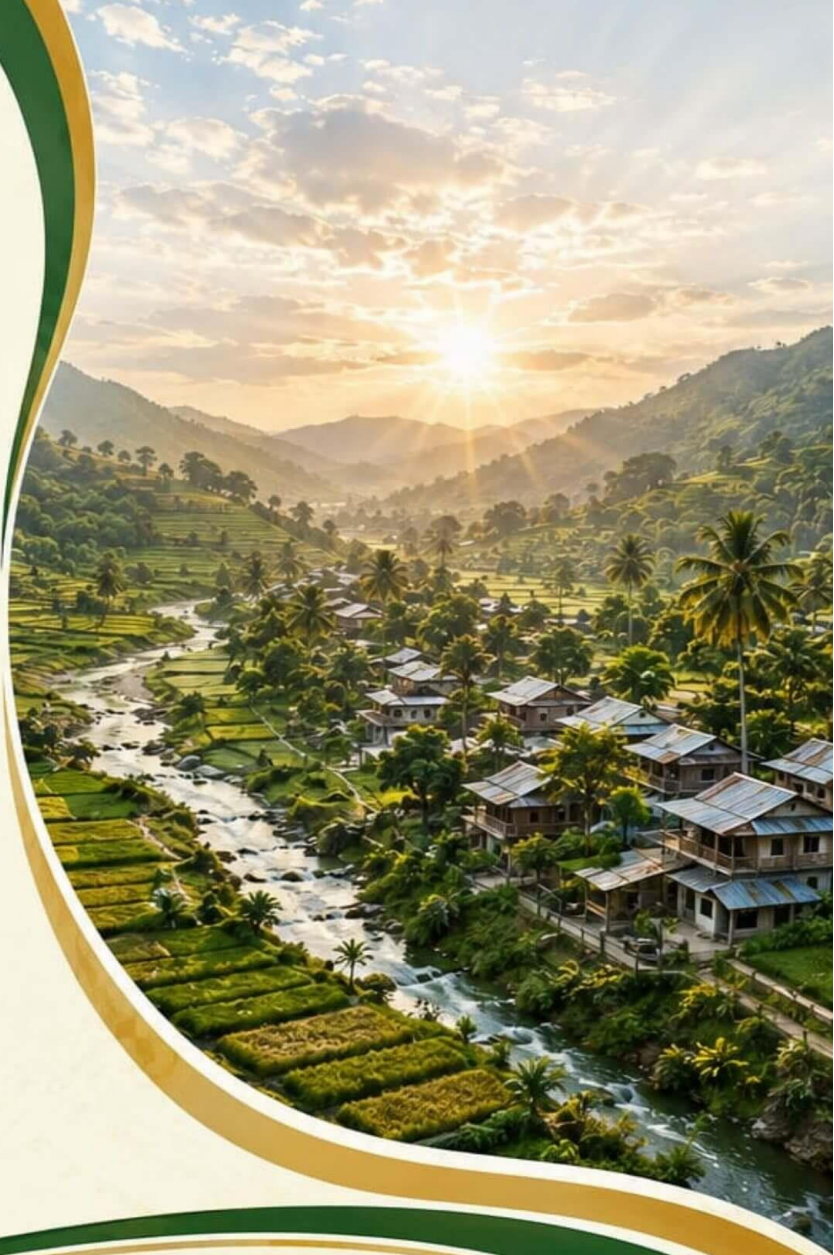
WORLD RURAL DEVELOPMENT DAY 2026

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➤ SPECIAL EDITION OF CIRDAP ➤

➤ THEME 2026 ➤

Towards Vibrant,
Prosperous and Happy
Rural Communities



INCLUSIVE
RURAL DEVELOPMENT



POVERTY GRADUATION
& LIVELIHOOD SECURITY



GREEN & SUSTAINABLE
AGRICULTURE



PARTNERSHIP FOR
RURAL PROSPERITY



RESILIENT INFRASTRUCTURE
& CONNECTIVITY

**Transforming Rural Lives:
The Enduring Legacy of Akhtar Hameed Khan
National Centre for Rural Development (AHKNCRD)**

— By —

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1. Introduction and Institutional Framework

The rural landscape of Pakistan hosts over 60 percent of the nation's population, making rural development an indispensable pillar of national socio-economic progression. The Akhtar Hameed Khan National Centre for Rural Development (AHKNCRD) was established to address the distinct spatial challenges and serves as a premier federal institution dedicated to capacity building, policy research, and institutional alignment in the field of rural uplift and poverty alleviation.

1.1 Constitutional and Institutional Alignment

AHKNCRD operating as an Attached Department under the Establishment Division of the Government of Pakistan, occupies a pivotal role in the federal administrative matrix. It serves as the apex national training body tasked with enhancing the capacity building of human capital of federal, provincial, and regional institutions involved in rural transformation.

The institution bridges the gap between state-level policy formulation and grassroots execution. AHKNCRD organizes capacity building programmes for government functionaries, elected local representatives, academia and civil society actors to ensure the execution of public policy alignment with modern public administration frameworks.

1.2 Historical Evolution and Nomenclature

The institution was established in **1979** as the National Centre for Rural Development and Municipal Administration (NCRDMA) to provide institutional backing to the local government systems and integrated rural development programs implemented across the country.

In the year **2000**, the Government of Pakistan renamed the Centre as *Akhtar Hameed Khan National Centre for Rural Development (AHKNCRD)*. This change was enacted to honor the legacy of Dr. Akhtar Hameed Khan, a world-renowned social scientist and pioneer of participatory rural development in South Asia. Dr. Khan's structural models—most notably the **Comilla Model (1959)** and the **Orangi Pilot Project, Karachi**—transformed global paradigms of community-driven infrastructure, microfinance, and cooperative systems. The rebranding marked a renewed institutional commitment to participatory, grassroots, and self-reliant rural development methodologies.

1.3 Physical and Infrastructural Ecosystem

AHKNCRD have a 12-acres campus in Islamabad and maintains a fully integrated educational and residential infrastructure. The institute includes an executive administrative block, modern lecture halls, and a specialized research library that houses an extensive collection of literature on rural sociology, agricultural economics, and governance. The Centre trains about two thousand people each year from Federal Capital, all four provinces (Punjab, Sind, Baluchistan, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa) & constituent units (Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), and Gilgit-Baltistan, through its on-campus training activities and residential hostels, that also offer subsidized boarding and lodging. In addition, AHKNCRD also operates demonstration nurseries and agricultural experimental plots that facilitate practical training in local farming practices and environmentally sustainable land management.

2.0 Capacity Building and Human Resource Development

The primary function of the Centre is to design and execute specific training courses, workshops, and seminars aimed at enhancing the capacity and effectiveness of mid-level and senior public sector officials. These interventions primarily target functionaries from Nation Building Departments (NBDs), including Local Government and Rural Development Departments; Agriculture and Livestock wings; Public Health Engineering, Irrigation, and Forestry sectors; as well as the Social Welfare and Women Development Department. The Centre also extends its capacity-building initiatives to representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations (CBOs), and international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), fostering collaborative approaches to sustainable development and public service delivery.

The training programs aim to equip Government officers with administrative, technical, and management skills, bridging the divide between theoretical policy frameworks and field-level execution.

2.1 International Partnerships and Knowledge Exchange

Rural poverty is a shared challenge across the Global South. AHKNCRD serves as the official national focal point and executing link for prominent international intergovernmental organizations such as:

- **African Asian Rural Development Organization (AARDO):** The African Asian Rural Development Organization (AARDO), established in 1962, is an autonomous, non-political, inter-governmental body dedicated to promoting South-South cooperation in agriculture and rural development. AARDO has headquarter in New Delhi, India, the organization bridges 34 member nations across Africa and Asia to collectively combat rural poverty, hunger, illiteracy, and disease. It serves as a vital catalyst for regional growth by facilitating human resource development through international training programs, technical workshops, and seminars.

- **Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP):** The Centre on Integrated Rural Development for Asia and the Pacific (CIRDAP) is a regional, intergovernmental, and autonomous organization established in 1979 at the initiative of the countries of the Asia-Pacific region and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations. Headquartered in Dhaka, Bangladesh, CIRDAP operates with a core mandate to alleviate rural poverty and promote sustainable development through integrated rural development (IRD) practices. By serving as a vital network for its member countries, the institution facilitates research, action programs, policy formulation, and extensive training designed to empower rural communities. Acting as a bridge between governments, non-governmental entities, and international development agencies, CIRDAP plays a pivotal role in fostering regional cooperation, sharing scalable best practices, and driving structural transformations to improve the livelihoods of millions of rural citizens across Asia and the Pacific.

2.2 Institutional Liaison and Technical Assistance

The Centre provides technical and academic oversight to provincial Local Government Training Institutions (such as Punjab Local Govt. Academy, Government of the Punjab in Lalamusa, Sindh Civil Services and Local Government Academy, Tando Jam, and Pakistan Academy for Rural Development, Peshawar). By synchronizing training curricula and standardizing Rural Development methodologies, AHKNCRD maintains a unified quality standard for public service training across Pakistan in post 18th Amendment administrative framework in 2010.

3. Training Programmes and Structural Curricula

The core of AHKNCRD's operational impact lies in its **Annual Training Plan (ATP) as per each financial year (July-June)**. The structured curricula are revised annually through consultations with public sector experts, academia, and international development agencies to address emerging global trends. The training initiatives are categorized into four major thematic domains.

3.1 Project Planning, Management, and Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E)

A major challenge in Pakistan's public sector development is the inefficient planning and utilization of resources within the **Public Sector Development Programme (PSDP)** at federal level and provincial **Annual Development Programmes (ADPs)**. AHKNCRD addresses the challenges through dedicated training programmes such as:

- **Project Proposal Writing:** The Project Proposal Writing training is an intensive, practical program designed to equip professionals with the essential skills needed to transform impactful ideas into winning funding proposals. Participants dive deep into the entire proposal lifecycle, mastering how to conduct thorough needs assessments, define measurable objectives, and construct logical frameworks (Log Frames).

- **Project Planning and Management:** Building capacity to identify economic, environmental, and structural risks before project capital is deployed.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation of Development Projects:** Moving away from simple financial tracking toward measuring evaluating the actual socioeconomic impact of development projects on target rural populations.
- **Report Writing Skills:** The Report Writing Skills training program is a practical, career-enhancing workshop designed to transform complex data and day-to-day project activities into clear, actionable business intelligence. Participants will master the art of structured communication, learning how to move away from dense, conversational prose and instead draft high-impact executive summaries, precise project updates, and objective, data-driven conclusions.

3.2 Climate Change, Environmental & Concerns, Disaster Management, and Natural Resource Uplift

Given Pakistan's extreme vulnerability to climate change, AHKNCRD has integrated environmental resilience into its core curriculum. Training programmes included:

- **Disaster Risk Reduction and Management:** Preparing local government functionaries to design grassroots early warning systems and localized emergency responses for floods, droughts, and seismic programme.
- **Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH):** Focus on the management of safe drinking water systems, localized drainage solutions, and ecological sanitation models adapted from the Orangi Pilot Project.
- **Sustainable Natural Resource Management:** Instructing agricultural extension workers on water conservation techniques, rainwater harvesting, and the protection of rural rangelands.
- **Environmental Concerns in Development:** The Environmental Concerns in Development training program is a crucial workshop designed to bridge the gap between infrastructural growth and ecological sustainability. As modern development projects increasingly intersect with fragile ecosystems, this course equips project managers, engineers, and policymakers with the tools to identify, assess, and mitigate environmental risks.
- **Climate Change Adaptation & Mitigation Programmes:** The Climate Change Adaptation & Mitigation training program is a forward-looking course designed to equip development professionals, environmental officers, and policymakers with a dual-strategy framework for addressing global climate realities. Participants explore the critical distinctions and synergies between mitigation—reducing greenhouse gas emissions through renewable energy, sustainable land use, and energy efficiency—and adaptation

3.3 Poverty Alleviation, Financial Inclusion, and Social Safety Nets

To maximize the impact of national fiscal & socio-economic interventions, the Centre trains stake holders in the governance during training programmes being held at Centre. Key areas include:

- **Social Safety Nets for Poverty Alleviation:** Analyzing and optimizing the delivery mechanisms of major welfare initiatives, such as the **Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP)** and Pakistan Bait-ul-Mal, Pakistan Poverty Alleviation Fund (PPAF).
- **Micro-Enterprise and Rural Entrepreneurship:** Developing training structures for interest-free micro-loans, vocational asset creation, and financial inclusion for rural youth and women.
- **Poverty Alleviation:** The Poverty Alleviation: Challenges & Solutions training program at the Akhtar Hameed Khan National Centre for Rural Development (AHKNCRD) in Islamabad is a flagship capacity-building initiative aimed at socioeconomic empowerment for the country's underprivileged populations. Tailored for mid-level public officials, local government representatives, and development professionals, this intensive workshop provides a deep dive into poverty identification indicators, measurement tools, and strategic methodologies.

3.4 Governance, Ethical Leadership, and Digital Administration

Efficient public delivery requires transparent administrative structures and modern tools. AHKNCRD runs regular modules on:

- **Ethical Leadership and Public Management:** Strengthening accountability, administrative ethics, and transparent asset management within local government wings.
- **Digital Transformation and E-Governance:** Training mid-level bureaucracy in digital record-keeping, data-driven citizen portal management, and geographic information systems (GIS) for rural land tracking.
- **Gender-Mainstreamed Development:** Instructing planners on integrating gender-inclusive indicators into local infrastructure and educational development budgets.

4. Key Progress, Achievements, and Quantitative Impact

Over the decades, AHKNCRD has transitioned from a basic training center into a high-output institution for capacity building. Its achievements span across quantitative human resource metrics, policy impacts, and international collaborations.

4.1 Quantitative Training Footprint

The primary indicator of AHKNCRD's institutional performance is the cumulative volume of its trained human capital.

- **Trainee Output:** Since its inception, the Centre has successfully trained over **40,000** public sector professionals, elected local councilors, non-governmental organization (NGO) officials, academia and international delegates.

- **Annual Operational Density:** The institution maintains a consistent operational tempo, executing an average of 41 to 43 extensive training programs per fiscal year. This averages roughly four to five specialized cohorts per month.
- **Financial Model:** AHKNCRD offers free trainings to all participants. The training expenses are fully absorbed by federal budgetary allocations under the Establishment Division, Government of Pakistan.

4.2 International Training Footprint and South-South Technical Exchange

AHKNCRD has reinforced Pakistan's position within international development forums by hosting high-level multilateral training programs.

Collaboration	Key Participating Countries	Core Focal Area/ Programme
AHKNCRD-CIRDAP International Training Initiative  	Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Fiji, India, Indonesia, Iran, Lao PDR, Malaysia, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Philippines, Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Vietnam	Disaster Management & Climate Change Adaptation; building regional climate resilience framework
AARDO AHKNCRD International Training Initiative	Bangladesh, India, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Oman, Pakistan, Palestine,	Social Safety Nets: Challenges & Opportunities; Irrigation System & Water



Philippines, Republic of China (Taiwan), Republic of Korea, Sri Lanka, Syria, and Yemen. Burkina Faso, Egypt, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Morocco, Namibia, Nigeria, Sudan, Tunisia, Zambia, and others

Resource Management; Disaster Management and Climate Change Adaptation

These international programs help export Pakistan's successful rural development methodologies, Disaster Management and Climate Change expertise along with Water Resource Management, while importing contemporary global frameworks like the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

5. Challenges, Modern Adaptations, and Strategic Outlook

As rural socio-economic landscapes evolve, AHKNCRD faces new structural realities driven by rapid demographic transitions, environmental degradation, and technological advancement.

5.1 Contemporary Structural Challenges

- **The Pace of Rural-Urban Migration:** The rapid expansion of peri-urban regions is blurring traditional distinctions between rural and urban spaces.
- Facilitation in trainings by other Member countries
- **Provincial-Federal Devolution Dynamics:** Following the 18th Constitutional Amendment, local governments and rural development has become fully devolved provincial subjects. AHKNCRD must continuously refine its mandate to serve as a cohesive federal training coordinator without overstepping provincial autonomy.

5.2 Strategic Modernization and Future Initiatives

To maintain its institutional relevance, AHKNCRD has initiated several key strategic adjustments:

- **Hybrid and Digital Learning Infrastructures:** Building on the success of its international e-training formats with organizations like AARDO, the Centre is expanding its digital learning architecture. By launching online modules and hybrid training, AHKNCRD can reach sub-divisional officers in remote locations who cannot leave their field posts for extended periods.
- **Focus on Agrarian Digitization (Agri-Tech):** Future program cycles are increasingly integrating modern agricultural technologies. This includes training extension workers in satellite crop monitoring, smart irrigation scheduling, and digital market pricing portals to help protect smallholder farmers from middleman exploitation.

6. Conclusion

The Akhtar Hameed Khan National Centre for Rural Development remains a cornerstone of Pakistan's rural human resource development architecture. By combining structured capacity building for public officials with international knowledge exchange and applied research, the Centre directly addresses the roots of rural poverty and institutional inefficiency.

As Pakistan navigates complex climate adjustments and economic restructuring, AHKNCRD's evolution—from an entry-level training wing into a specialized center of excellence—underlines its vital role in building a resilient, self-sustaining, and empowered rural economy. Through its commitment to participatory governance and institutional excellence, the Centre continues to honor the legacy of its namesake, driving sustainable transformation across rural Pakistan.