

REBUILDING LIVES

Post 2010 Floods



actionaid Pakistan

Acknowledgment

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Date of Publication:	July 2011

Foreword



Since the very onset of flood emergency in Pakistan in August 2010, ActionAid Pakistan has actively engaged with the affected people, helping them cope with the immediate and long-term impact of the disaster by prioritising the most vulnerable and marginalised groups especially women, girls, children, and minorities.

The focus of our efforts has been on providing immediate support such as food, non-food items and shelter, and building communities' resilience and capacities to engage in reconstruction and rehabilitation process in a proactive manner. We have also supported people's alliances and community groups in building rights consciousness, and supported their campaigns for equal compensation, agricultural support for smallholders including women farmers, and sustainable disaster management mechanisms.

The unprecedented disaster demanded that the government and development sector work together to curtail the suffering of the flood-affected population. Therefore, AAPk, as part of the larger development and humanitarian community, played a catalytic role in harnessing people's power to overcome the trauma of destruction and flood-induced displacement.

Our response aligned with our human rights based approach, which bounds us to be accountable, transparent, and responsible to the people with whom we work. At each stage of our flood response, we ensured people's dignity, active agency, and participation in the decisions and processes, instead of being passive recipients of aid and relief support. We promoted a culture of accountability, where duty bearers are responsible and responsive to rights holders.

This publication documents the role of ActionAid Pakistan in the flood emergency response, and the impact of our work with some of the poorest and most vulnerable people such as women and children. It is also to build a knowledge base for colleagues, peers and other humanitarian actors to take inspiration from our successes, learning and experiences.

I hope you will find this publication useful. We will look forward to hearing your feedback, suggestions and thoughts.

Best regards

Jemal Ahmed
Country Director
ActionAid Pakistan

“

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Introduction

Last year, monsoon-triggered floods affected up to 21 million children, women and men – more than the 2004 Asian tsunami and the 2010 Haiti earthquake combined. 78 out of 141 districts in Pakistan were affected, covering one third of its geographical area (more than 100,000 sq. km) causing damages of about \$10 billion. There were 1,980 deaths confirmed, and 1.7 million homes and 10,000 schools damaged or destroyed. 2.2 million hectares of standing crops destroyed, and 450,000 heads of livestock lost. Many villages as well as bridges and roads were washed away entirely. In addition to serious damage to irrigation infrastructure that massively affected agriculture, the power infrastructure of Pakistan also took a severe blow from the floods.

The international community pledged billions of dollars to help the affected communities. UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon had initially asked for \$460 million for emergency relief, noting that the flood was the worst disaster he had ever seen. The United Nations had been concerned that aid was not arriving fast enough, and the World Health Organization reported that ten million people were forced to drink unsafe water. Aid agencies warned that outbreaks of diseases (e.g. gastroenteritis, diarrhoea, and skin diseases) due to lack of clean drinking water and sanitation pose a serious new risk to flood victims.



Impact of Floods



9.18 Million Women Homeless

Immediately after the floods, 14 million people including 9.18 million women were in need of immediate humanitarian assistance including food, drinking water, shelter, essential medicines, and other items of daily use. Thousands of families were displaced to unfamiliar places including camps, which exposed women, girls and children to threats such as violence and harassment. Pregnant and lactating women faced difficulties accessing medical care and nutritious food. Women and girls also faced psychosocial problems such as depression, insomnia and anxiety, in addition to

skin, gastric and other diseases. ActionAid noted that at many places violence against women, including incidents of domestic violence increased after the floods. "According to a report by Reproductive Health Response in Crises Consortium, "85 per cent of persons displaced by floods were women and children who were at acute risk of starvation, sexual assault, and water-borne diseases. Women and vulnerable groups were denied their basic rights as well as access to compensation packages due to pre-existing gender inequalities.

Over USD 25 Billion Lost

According to UN observers, the 2010 Floods in Pakistan have caused more devastation than the combined effects of Asian Tsunami, the 2005 earthquake in Kashmir and the 2010 earthquake in Haiti. According to a joint World Bank-Asian Development Bank preliminary estimate of flood damages, the flood caused nearly \$25 billion in damages. According to Economic Survey 2010-11, decrease in income, rise in unemployment, are clear indicators that poverty has swelled to an unmanageable level. Major crops registered a negative growth of four per cent.

“

I had a small shop, I can't say I was rich but was able to make enough to get by. Now everything is gone. I do not know how to start all over again. I have no money and no possessions to sell.

”

35 years old Akram, father of two. District Muzaffargarh

More than 30% Women without Food, Nutrition and Livelihood

Even before the floods, much of Pakistan's population was at severe risk of hunger and malnutrition. A 2008 United Nations joint assessment estimated that 45 million people were severely food insecure and almost 40 per cent of children were underweight. The destruction of 2.2 million hectares of standing crops, 1 half a million heads of livestock, and increased prices of staple food items increased food insecurity, leading to malnourishment especially among woman, children and the elderly.

“

The price of flour has increased to almost double. We are literally dependant on ration supplies (from government and humanitarian food points) to stay alive.”

”

32 years old Azra Mai from Kot Adu.

1.8 Million People Displaced

In the aftermath of the devastating floods, the social fabric weakened as families were uprooted from their areas of origin. Most flood-hit people were poor or landless who were further pushed into poverty. “The government's response both to the immediate disaster and to issues around compensation was extremely sluggish causing further anger and resentment amongst the affected communities.” The power dynamics between the feudal landlords and poor farmers led to an exploitation and further marginalisation of the landless and small farmers, forcing the latter into heavy debts with high interests.

“

After the water dried, I returned to my village with my 3 children and my husband stayed back in the town to look for work. My fellow villagers helped me to clear out the debris and fetch fodder for the goat. In that time of need, these people helped me like my family.”

”

Kalsoom bibi. Layyah

An Unparalleled Humanitarian and Security Challenge

The floods primarily affected communities in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the poverty-stricken plains of southern Punjab and northern Sindh and finally, Balochistan. Most of these areas were already devastated by violence, military operations, religious extremism and insurgency. The floods were therefore more than a humanitarian crisis; they also represent an unparalleled challenge for Pakistan's national security as well as regional and international security. There is some evidence of a deterioration of security situation after the floods, though comprehensive studies have not yet been undertaken.

“

Flood has devastated our lives. People do not have food for their children. There are increasing quarrels between husbands and wives.”

”

26 years old Saba Bibi, facilitator of local women's group who participated in the advocacy campaign in Kot Adu.



Effects on Social Fabric

The factors mentioned above have had a significant impact on the economy, food security, family relationships and survival capacity at the household level. Floods caused loss of jobs and livelihoods, shortage of nutritious food, increased domestic violence (as established by community interaction

and qualitative surveys in our work areas) and overall demoralisation of the people due to heavy losses and disproportionate relief / rehabilitation support by government and nongovernmental actors. Poor families responded to high food prices by eating cheaper foods with lower nutritional value, consuming less food per meal or skipping meals.

1/3 of Pakistan Inundated

The flood 2010 has laid bare the environmental crisis of the country and its vulnerability to the floods. Ruthless deforestation has reduced water retention capacity in the catchment areas, thus increasing the rainwater run-off. The water conveyance capacity of the rivers, hill-torrents and other watercourses in wake of modern irrigation regime has created a serious drainage problem. Unless the due consideration is given to the environmental issues, severe floods are likely to hit the country in future.

“

Floods have changed the entire geography of the area. Houses have disappeared overnight and river has changed course. It is unbelievable.

”

Says Zia Nawab from Literate Masses,
ActionAid's local partner in Swat.

Actionaid's Approach to Emergencies



Rights-Based Response

ActionAid views poverty as a fundamental factor in the violation of human rights. Poor and marginalised groups are hardest hit by natural disasters and conflict, and have the least capacity to prepare for, cope with and recover from emergencies. They may also be marginalised in relief and recovery efforts. The Rights Based framework recognises that people's suffering during disasters is primarily the outcome of the denial of their rights. It emphasises citizens' participation and the ability of women, poor and excluded communities to ask questions, claim rights, make decisions and seek accountability from the state as well as non-state institutions

The priorities and capacities of rights holders are central to ActionAid's emergency preparedness and response planning efforts, and so we strive to build the capacities of rights holders to be actively involved in preparedness and response activities. We focus on building capacity in local communities, coordination through strategic partnerships and protection of people, including especially women and children.



ActionAid recognises that disasters hit women the hardest. Our work with women consists of providing them with immediate relief and protection, enhancing their leadership capacities to claim their rights, enhancing their voices in decision-making, and improving their long-term recovery and preparedness against disasters.

Advocacy for Empowering the Poor People

In the chaos and confusion of a disaster, voices can get lost. Even before disasters strike, people living in poverty are often excluded from important decisions, which affect their lives. ActionAid's Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA), enables the poor, oppressed and marginalised people to articulate their voices and assert their rights. In doing so, it creates participatory spaces and interface between the people (rights holders) and the state (duty bearer) - conditions without which development can never be inclusive. Sustained development is only possible if the

concerned institutions, policies, and frameworks put human rights first, and governments make decisions in line with the needs of poor and marginalized communities. Direct contact with the disaster-affected communities enables us to highlight the real needs and interests of poor and marginalized communities, who are usually excluded from the decision-making processes dominated by rich and influential stakeholders. Thus, ActionAid's policy work is deeply rooted in the views and aspirations of poor and marginalized communities.



Our policy work includes analysis of implementation of existing policies, as well as suggestions for review, analysis and creation of new policies at local, provincial or national levels. We support our rights holders to mitigate, prepare for, and respond to disasters, and help them to adapt to the impacts of climate change.

Upholding the Humanitarian Standards

Our work is underpinned by a range of international legal frameworks and standards such as the International law for humanitarian action. This is applicable in emergencies and is composed of three interrelated and mutually reinforcing sets of rules such as International Humanitarian Law (IHL), Human rights law and Refugee law.

ActionAid is a signatory to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Response, generally known as the 'Red Cross Code'. It has been expanded and further developed through the 'Sphere Charter', which includes reference to conflict, the 'Sphere Common Standards', which provide operational guidance, and the 'Sphere Minimum Standards', which provide detailed advice on good practice and set out minimum standards within different sectors. ActionAid is also a signatory to other standards for good practice in management, notably the 'People in Aid Code'. (Read Downward Accountability & Transparency)

In our emergency response work, we also comply with 'International Codes and principles for humanitarian action' which holds us accountable to take action to 'prevent or put a stop to a specific pattern of abuse' and/or alleviate its immediate effects (responsive action); take action to 'restore people's dignity and ensure adequate living conditions' through reparation, restitution and rehabilitation (remedial action); and 'an environment conducive to respect for the rights of individuals' in accordance with the relevant bodies of law (environment building).



Actionaid Pakistan's Emergency Response

RELIEF PHASE

1st August 2010 To 31st December 2010

Core activities: meeting immediate needs; women's rights, food security, disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction, policy/advocacy and governance, (shelter, livelihoods, psychosocial support and protection).

Geographical areas:	14
Households reached:	19,075 HH
No. of women:	70,110 (59% of total)
Sponsored children:	6,216
Persons with disabilities:	691
Persons belonging to minority groups:	659

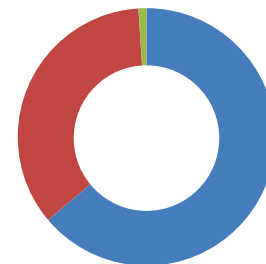
REHABILITATION PHASE

From 1st January 2011 Onwards

Core activities: Restoration of livelihood, provision of shelters, rehabilitation of education and health facilities, provision of clean drinking water, sanitation facilities, capacity building initiatives, protection of women, children, girls, vulnerable segments, minorities, awareness raising on disaster preparedness and disaster risk reduction, advocacy for food rights and improving access of women to compensation are the focus areas for the Country Programme.

Geographical areas:	8
Households planned:	29,259 HH
No. of women and children:	173,270 (74% of total)
Persons with Disabilities:	920
Persons belonging to minority groups:	1,230

10,229 HHs (81,832 people) have already been reached from January 2011 to June 2011 through one or more interventions.



TOTAL COVERAGE
AUGUST 2010 TO AUGUST 2011
(Planned and Reached)

- Women and Children
- Persons with Disabilities & Minorities
- Men and Boys

Women at the Centre of our Emergency Response

ActionAid Pakistan prioritised women at all stages of emergency response - Rescue, relief, and rehabilitation.

As the floods came, AAPK's partners provided boats and transportation to evacuate women and children from the inundated areas and brought them to government shelters. Pregnant and lactating women were provided nutritious food, and essential medical care.

Relief kits were customised to fulfil women's and girl's specific needs. Cash for Work assistance was specifically provided to women-headed households, which helped them to rebuild their

houses, and grow vegetables in their gardens for food and to generate income.

We facilitated women to form groups, meet government authorities, and attend UN cluster meetings to highlight specific issues such as protection and equal compensation.

As the emergency response progressed, we supported rural women and women farmers to take up the issue of 'Women's Right to Land' with the provincial authorities of Sindh and Punjab. This advocacy push is particularly relevant, as the Government has planned to allocate state-owned land to the landless farmers.



Women Driving Change!



In order to help poor people – especially women – to overcome the trauma and devastation of the 2010 floods, ActionAid provided immediate relief such as food rations, shelter materials, and hygiene kits to thousands of poor and vulnerable families, and cash support to women headed households to rebuild their homes, grow food (kitchen gardens), and set up small shops and businesses.

ActionAid's village schools provided an opportunity to many children to resume their education, which also helped in their emotional healing.

We also supported women to understand their rights in the post emergency situation and demand access to the government's compensation scheme (Watan Cards). In Kot Adu (South Punjab), women groups that had been formed with the support of ActionAid as part of long-term DA work, were supported to launch an advocacy campaign to claim their right to equal compensation.

Members of Tareemat Sanjh (community women's groups) organised rallies, press conferences and sit-ins with the support and participation of Haali Sanjh (community men's group), local civil society activists, and other flood-affected people.

We were very active in Tareemat Sanjh groups even before the floods came. We used to meet regularly and discuss our problems. After the floods we saw an opportunity to reorganise and lobby the local government to ensure equal and timely compensation for flood hit women. Tells 32 years old Naseem Bibi from village Basti Langah, an active member of Tareemat Sanjh.

With the legal support provided by ActionAid's local partner Hirrak development Centre, women activists from Tareemat Sanjh were able to file a writ petition in the High Court, which was followed by a series of public demonstrations and press conferences. Because of social and legal action, the court gave a verdict in community's favour and hundreds of households, including women headed families were included in the government's compensation scheme.

This is a big achievement for us. How long can we depend on relief items being distributed by NGOs? We want to be included in the government's beneficiary list so that we are eligible for all future compensation schemes and benefits. We want long-term solution to the problem. This is our right. Says Naseem.

Violence Against Women

At ActionAid's Women and Child Friendly Spaces, our protection officers and trained counsellors provided information, guidance and mentoring to women who were facing violence within and outside their homes. This helped them learn about their equal rights and entitlements as human beings, and encouraged them to be to take preventive measures for their safety and protection. We also organised awareness sessions in government camps, which helped women and girls to raise their issues with the camp management and influence them to include women in the management committees. As mentioned in the previous section, issues related to women's protection and Gender Based Violence were also raised at the policy level with government and humanitarian bodies.



16 years old Zarina Bibi from Kot Adu had to flee her flooded village along with her ailing parents to take refuge in a government camp.

“

I felt frightened and nervous in the camp. Some women from ActionAid visited us and gave us food, soaps and sanitary napkins. They came several times and asked us if we were facing any problem and advised if we felt someone was staring at us or trying to follow us as we walked to the washroom, we should immediately report to the camp management. They advised us to go to food point and toilets in groups as that would discourage the teasing men.

”

'I will not treat my daughters differently'

Says Hajran Bai



Despite being a woman myself, I used to give preference to my son over my daughters. I myself grew up in an environment where women were considered inferior to men.

In village meetings, I learnt that girls are equally capable and strong as boys, but it is only the social and cultural pressures that make them weak. I thank ActionAid and Soofi Sachal Sarmast Association (SSSA) for helping me realise this. I love my daughters a lot and will never treat them differently.

This is the story of 31 years old Hindu woman Hajran Bai from Ghouspur village, Kashmore district (Sindh)

Hajran got married to a farm labourer Somar at the age of 16. Before she was 20 years old, she had become a mother of two daughters and one son. She recalls the threats she received from her in laws when she was pregnant the third time.

"I was told if I had the third daughter my marriage would be over. They wanted a son, and so did I to save my marriage."

What Hajran went through is not an uncommon phenomenon in Pakistan. Many women face social and family pressures to give birth to a boy child 'to carry the family name'. At times, women face violence and abuse upon birth of a girl child.

When the flood came, we lost our house and possession and moved to a government camp. Food was scarce but I used to give a larger portion to my son. At times my daughters and I would stay hungry so that my son and husband could eat a full meal.

After the flood water receded and people returned to their villages, ActionAid not only provided them immediate relief items such as food and household kits, but also established Women and Child Friendly Spaces to provide an opportunity to women, girls and children to indulge in healthy activities.

At these WCF spaces, trained facilitators provided psychosocial support to women that helped in their emotional healing. Educational and recreational activities were organised for children as well.

One of the most important components of WCFS activities were awareness sessions and discussions on women's rights, Disaster preparedness and community resilience. ActionAid's staff and partners engaged with women and girls to build their understanding of violence against women protection, women's social participation and their right to equal compensation. The spaces also built community bonds especially amongst different religious and ethnic groups. Hajran and many other Hindu women actively participated in the awareness and healing session and benefitted.

At ActionAid's centre, I learnt that human beings are equal, whether they are Hindus or Muslims. Similarly men and women are also equal and no one is superior to the other. Everyone should be treated with respect.

This helped in developing good relationship between Hindu and Muslim women; and made us realise that equality must first be practiced at home, by treating our daughters and sons as equals.

Transparency with Downward Accountability

Building upon the learning from ActionAid's people-led transformative response to 2005 earthquake, AAPk's accountability and transparency practices, and mechanisms/tools employed in our Local Rights Programmes, AAPk put together people-centred accountability in its flood emergency response programme. The core composition of the people-centred accountability framework is around a participatory review and reflection process, open information, people's assemblies, information dissemination and social audits/accountabilities processes. It aims to ensure rights consciousness, awareness, capacity building and mobilisation of the poor people for informed actions in their favour.

Accountability and Transparency: The agency places heavy emphasis on these issues and puts up transparency boards within each project site that mentions the details of the project and provides a number where people can call in case of complaints.

Learning: The agency has undertaken several sessions where past emergency learning was discussed and plans were made incorporating them in current interventions.

Agire Project-External Evaluation Report

“ *When I brought home the reliefkit, it did not include sugar bag as we had seen at the distribution point. I asked my son to take it back to the point. I was afraid they might think I took it out myself and was playing a trick to get an additional bag. My son returned with a fresh reliefkit, he told me the distribution committee had double-checked it this time to make sure it included all the items. My son said that they were very polite and thanked my son for pointing out the missing item.* ”

45 years old Gulrukh Bibi from Sibi

By practicing people-centred accountability, we were able to open spaces for rights holders to lead the process of need identification, eligibility criteria setting, and relief goods distribution at village level. They had easy access to information about the items included in the relief kits, their quality and quantity, as well as the cost of items. This information was displayed on open information boards, and communicated through public announcements.

Participatory Review and Reflection Processes with women's groups and men's groups helped the communities to monitor programme implementation and take stock of gaps, successes, and challenges, and suggest workable, people-centred alternatives.

AAPk has outlined its response against DEC-Accountability priorities in DECAF with evidence created through effective implementation of Monitoring & Evaluation/Accountability Framework in emergency response. This has enabled ActionAid and partners to incorporate communities' feedback in plans, and handle complaints in a timely and effective manner, thus strengthening rights holders' confidence and relationship with ActionAid.



Restoration of Livelihoods

The July 2010 floods caused colossal damage to the agriculture sector. Of the 20 million people affected, around 16 million were dependent on agriculture. Floods not only reduced their access to food, but also gave rise to numerous land related conflicts. Land boundaries were washed away, and a change in river course led to major land loss. In many areas, authorities responsible for land demarcation were influenced by feudal and tribal elites, which left the poor people with even less land than they had before the floods.

ActionAid Pakistan provided livelihood assistance to flood hit families in terms of Cash for Work, Cash Grants and livestock/poultry for women, and capacity building sessions on livelihood development. We facilitated communities to gain access to government's agricultural relief packages, and in collaboration with NGOs, farmers' networks, national advocacy groups and media, supported farmers' campaigns for agricultural rehabilitation. We closely worked with networks like Pakistan Kissan Ittehad (PKI) and Sustainable Agriculture Action Group (SAAG) for local, provincial and national level advocacy work.



People Centered Accountability Framework



OPEN INFORMATION BOARDS
 Notices of activities, objectives, incidents, coverage, budget of the initiatives being implemented and source of financing are displayed on a board, which is placed in an open, visible and accessible place. It will be in a language and style that the rights holders can understand with ease.

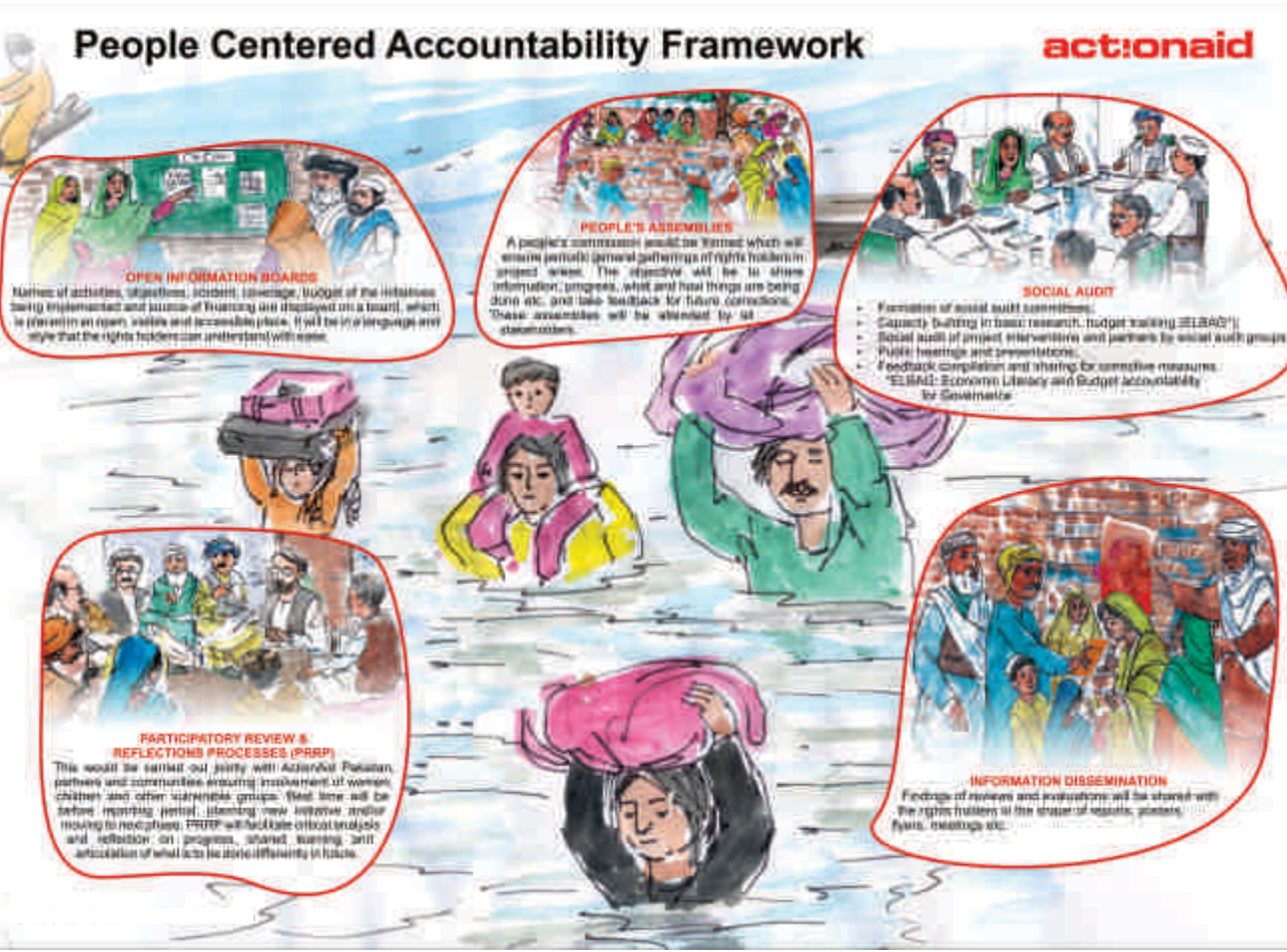
PEOPLE'S ASSEMBLIES
 A project committee would be formed which will ensure periodic general gatherings of rights holders in project areas. The objective will be to share information, progress, what and how things are being done etc. and take feedback for future corrections. These assemblies will be attended by all stakeholders.

SOCIAL AUDIT

- Formation of social audit committees.
- Capacity building in basic research, budget tracking (EELACG).
- Social audit of project interventions and partners by social audit groups.
- Public hearings and presentations.
- Feedback compilation and sharing for corrective measures.
- *EELACG: Economic Literacy and Budget Accountability for Governance.

PARTICIPATORY REVIEW & REFLECTIONS PROCESSES (PRRP)
 This would be carried out jointly with ActionAid Pakistan partners and communities ensuring involvement of women, children and other vulnerable groups. Field time will be before, during and after the project. Using new evidence and/or involving new groups, PRRP will facilitate critical analysis and reflection on program, shared learning and articulation of what acts for their differently in future.

INFORMATION DISSEMINATION
 Findings of reviews and evaluations will be shared with the rights holders in the shape of reports, posters, films, meetings etc.



Farmers Mobilise to Demand Post-Flood Agricultural Support

Supporting Women's Livelihoods

To highlight post-flood agriculture and food security situation, and government negligence in agriculture rehabilitation, farmers were sensitised and mobilised to raise their voice at provincial and national level.

Smallholders including women farmers and landless peasants carried out a powerful advocacy campaign with an active media engagement, which pushed the Sindh Provincial Assembly to pass a resolution for providing easy loans to the flood-hit farmers. In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, small farmers received subsidy on the price of sugarcane seed and 500 families received livestock support. The provincial government also announced compensation money amounting PKR 2,400/acre for flood-affected farmers.

Our local partner in Pind Dadan Khan supported over 150 flood-affected families to stage a series of protests against their exclusion from the agricultural relief package. They demanded their area to be declared 'calamity stricken' and called for compensation for flood related losses. This forced

the district government officials to initiate the formal process to include these farmers in government's agriculture support scheme.

At the national level, hundreds of women and men farmers from all four provinces took to the streets of Islamabad and presented a charter of demands to the policy makers, demanding a long-term Agricultural Rehabilitation Programme.

As an immediate outcome of farmers' mobilisation, the Prime Minister of Pakistan called a meeting with elected representatives of the flood-hit districts to discuss on-ground issues and people's immediate needs. Making use of the opportunity, the farmers' representatives lobbied their local politicians in order to relay their demands to the Prime Minister.

As a result, the provincial governments of Sindh and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa announced agriculture relief packages for the flood-affected farmers, and an irrigation infrastructure rehabilitation programme was initiated at the national level.



I am so happy to own a shop. I lost my cattle and grains in the floods and was left with no source of income. With ActionAid's help I managed to set up a shop. Tells 50 years old Jindan Mai from village Truri of Layyah District.

In my village it is not very common for women to run a business therefore I faced challenges in the beginning. People said I won't be able to do it. But I worked with honesty and dedication. Soon my shop business picked up and now I make enough to live comfortably.

I am quite popular with village children as I have the biggest variety of candy! She adds proudly.

I have set an example for other women. They shouldn't feel shy coming out of their homes to make a living.

Layyah District of South Punjab was badly hit by the 2010 floods. Hundreds of houses were damaged or destroyed and thousands of people were displaced. Women and girls were worst affected by the flood and associated displacement, They lost their homes, possessions and livelihood. In an unfamiliar camp environment, they were exposed to multiple threats including harassment .

ActionAid immediately provided rescue and relief support to the affected people, prioritising women, girls, and children. Hundreds of families received food supplies, household items, hygiene kits and plastic sheets for shelter.

Supported by donors such as Avaaz and ICAP, ActionAid with its local partner Participatory Welfare Services was able to help flood affected families, especially women-headed households rebuild shelter and livelihoods. Women were also supported in terms of kitchen gardens to help them cope with hunger and malnutrition, and cash support to start small businesses.

Jindan Mai is happy with the help she received. By selling items of everyday use such as biscuits, detergent, soaps, hair pins and embroidery thread, she is able to buy food for her 10 children and pay for their education.

"If my husband were alive, he'd be so proud of me" she says.

Jindan Mai is not the only woman who benefited from ActionAid's flood response emergency programme, other women such as 32 years old Razia Bibi also received cash support and started small business.

With the money that ActionAid gave me, I bought material for weaving chatai (traditional woven mats) and baskets. This helps me to earn a decent living. In fact many village girls have shown interest in learning the skill so that they can also have a source of income. I plan to save some money and start a vocational centre so that my skill can benefit other women too.

Disaster Preparedness with Sustainable Risk Reduction

While helping communities rebuild their lives, we also supported them to strengthen their individual and collective resilience against disasters and traumas. Capacity building trainings and sessions on Disaster Risk Reduction and Preparedness were organised for schoolchildren, women and men, which helped in strengthening local knowledge base and community-led disaster management mechanisms.



Preparing Communities to Cope with Current & Future Disasters



We wouldn't have lost all our livestock had we left the area in time before the water came. We were so confused and panicked, not knowing what to do, or whom to go for help. Shares 29 years old Khadija from Ghouspur village, of District Kashmore (Sindh).

Sindh is the southernmost province of the country, the last to be flooded. However, despite arbitrary knowledge of increasing water levels in Mighty Indus, people in the Ghouspur village, just like those in the neighbouring areas, were apprehensive about leaving their homes.

We feared our possessions would be stolen if we left our home. My old mother in law was also unwell and did not want to leave. Says Khadija

We didn't know where to go. With a 5-year-old child and 3 goats, how could we leave without knowing about our destination? asks her husband Nazeer.

Thousands of people suffered great loss in terms of homes, possessions and livestock due to the absence of effective early warning systems at village level, and a lack of district level communication and coordination mechanism. Although many people were aware of an 'upcoming disaster', but inadequate information about the existence or location of relief camps kept people from evacuating in time.

Moreover, the communities were not aware of basic disaster response techniques, which resulted in panic and chaos at the onset of the floods.

In order to address these gaps and build communities' resilience and preparedness to better cope with future disasters, ActionAid organised training and capacity building sessions on Disaster Risk Reduction and village level disaster preparedness plans. Women, youth and children are especially mobilised to participate in village level emergency response plans. Village volunteer committees are being formed and trained to act as 'First Action Response Teams' in case of any future disaster. This is an on-going component of our overall flood emergency response programme.

We have attended many meetings and discussions on how to save our lives and livestock in floods and heavy rains. This information is very useful. We are also meeting local government officials to ask them to designate a focal person to provide us information in case of a future floods. Nazeer informs

I have learnt that in rainy season we should prepare a small bundle with dry food, medicines, clothing, and water so that if the flood comes, we can immediately leave the house. For the livestock, we must build a high shed with extra stock of fodder so that our cattle can survive. Adds Khadija

Psychosocial Support for Women, Children and Vulnerable Groups

ActionAid's Women and Child Friendly Spaces provided psychosocial support to women, girls, and children, and helped in strengthening community bonds and promoting interfaith harmony. Children were provided educational and play material, which engaged them in productive activities, thus helping

in their emotional healing. In the first 6 months of our response, we supported **6,216** sponsored children and their families with food, household items, psychosocial care, essential medical care and shelters. Women from religious minority communities also became part of the WCFS where they learned skills such as reading, writing

and embroidery and made new friends. In addition, Cash for Work programmes and kitchen gardening initiatives also helped women, youth and girls to overcome disaster-induced trauma and return to normal life.



Capacity Building and Awareness to 'End Domestic Violence'



I am happy that domestic quarrels and violence has reduced in our village. Earlier, women were shy to talk about it; we believed it to be our fate that men should hit us and treat us like cattle. But in ActionAid's meetings we learnt about our human rights. We realised we are equal and deserve to live a respectable life. Shares 40 years old Kareema of village Haji Arbab Dall Juna, District Thatta (Sindh).

Kareema is a woman farmer whose husband Wali Muhammad died a few years ago. She works from dawn to dusk to feed her six children. Her eldest daughter is 20 years old and Kareema is already worried for her marriage.

She is growing up; she says pointing at her daughter Sakeena. "I had gathered some dowry for her but flood water did not spare anything. In our village, girls who do not bring good dowry are often ridiculed, ill-treated, and beaten by the husband and in laws.

Kareema says in order to prepare dowry for her daughter; she almost sold her one-acre land to a big landowner.

'Wishing to keep my daughter from facing abuse and humiliation from in laws, (for bringing less dowry), I was almost ready to sell the land and face hunger. But in ActionAid's meetings I realised dowry is no guarantee of a happy marital life.

Many women and girls attend village meetings organised by ActionAid where they learn farming and vocational skills and get knowledge about their equal status as citizens. They also learn about harassment, violence and protection related issues, particularly in the aftermath of floods.

I take my daughter to these meetings. I want her to gain confidence and learn some skill. This will enable her to earn and have her own money instead of being dependent on her future husband for her needs. This will give her respect and better status in the family.

Women's Caravan

A unique visual stunt to demand funds for women's rehabilitation

A large number of rural women joined by students and civil society activists organised a unique visual stunt in Islamabad to demand fund allocation in Fiscal Budget 2011-2012 for rehabilitation of flood-hit women.

Women embarked on a 40-foot float, decorated with banners and slogans, and presented theatre performances and folk music to attract attention of policy makers towards their demands.

In addition to fund allocation for women's rehabilitation, they called for land allocation for

women farmers and inclusion of women in all relief and rehabilitation processes.

The powerful mobilisation of rural women in the capital city attracted a large number of audiences and supporters from different sections of the society.

Participants included women farmers, landless women, community activists, folk singers and members of village committees from the flood-affected areas, who boldly articulated their problems.



Jannat Mai from Kot Adu, a proactive participant of the Caravan said, 'Those were horrible days as massive flood waves came all of sudden and washed away all our belonging. Women faced many problems after the floods; there was a marked rise in domestic violence and harassment.

'It was difficult for women to collect relief material from food distribution centres because of recurrent incidents of harassment and misconduct. Similarly, women were left out of the 'Watan Card' distribution scheme, so they did not have money to fulfil immediate needs such as food and clothing. Said Zainab Mai from Layyah.

"Women and girls have been the worst victims of 2010 floods due to their pre-existing vulnerabilities. After almost a year of the devastating floods, millions of women are still desperately striving to rebuild their lives and livelihoods. Therefore, it is imperative that

government and NGOs keep their focus on women's rehabilitation. Only strong, empowered women can build a safe and prosperous society. "Said Jemal Ahmed, ActionAid Pakistan's Country Director, while addressing the women's assembly at the conclusion of women's caravan at the National Press Club.

Floods have pushed rural women into further poverty and suffering, but they have immense resilience, and courage of conviction; which is why they are here today to tell the world of their problems, and demand prioritization in the fiscal budget 2011-12. Government must allocate budget for women support programme, which means they should be given Watan cards, proper shelter and income generating opportunities." He added

The women's caravan culminated in a protest march and sit-in in front of the Parliament.

Policy Dialogue: Compensation and Disaster Risk Management



In order to evaluate the institutional response for compensating the flood-affected people through cash grants (Watan cards), and to identify gaps in legal, administrative and financial aspects of the existing Disaster Risk Management Framework, ActionAid Pakistan and the Institute of Social and Policy Science organised a policy dialogue in Islamabad. The forum underlined the significance of an effective framework for disaster risk management in the country and demanded immediate compensation for the flood affected communities, particularly women and other vulnerable people.

Participants and speakers of the policy dialogue criticised the parliament for not putting required efforts in drafting National Disaster Management Act 2010. They asked for a comprehensive review of NDM Act 2010 to avoid duplication of roles and responsibilities amongst various institutions and parallel structures. . Participants also demanded the government to make the District Disaster Management Authorities functional.

There is a need for an effective institutional framework to cope with future disasters.” Said Jemal Ahmed, ActionAid Pakistan's Country Director.

The government must put in place appropriate systems to deal with the grievances of flood-affected communities who have been excluded from the rehabilitation process. At the same time, it must ensure immediate release of the second instalment of citizens' compensation scheme.

Parliamentarians, representatives of national and provincial Disaster Management Authorities, humanitarian workers, and officials from donor organisations participated in the discussion. The policy dialogue helped to initiate a useful debate and build civil society's consensus for a long-term policy engagement on the issue.

Marking One-Year Anniversary of 2010 Floods

In order to mark the one-year anniversary of 2010 floods, ActionAid Pakistan, in collaboration with the rights holders and local partners from the flood affected districts is organising a People's Forum comprising panel discussions and community testimonies on three main policy agendas:

Women's rights

This session will discuss the impact of floods on women and girls, particularly the increase in gender-based violence. The discussion will focus on women farmers' campaign for land rights particularly in the post flood situation and will highlight the need for incorporating 'protection' and women's issues into National Disaster Management Act 2010.

Food rights

This session will talk about the colossal damage to agricultural land and resources caused by floods and the resulting food insecurity and livelihood challenges for the affected communities.

Governance

The key issues under discussion will be gaps in government's compensation programme (Watan cards) as well as institutional coordination and capacity with reference to flood response and disaster risk management.

Representatives of the Government, Provincial and National Disaster Management, and UN agencies, parliamentarians, civil society activists, media practitioners, flood affected women, men and children, and our local partners will participate in the consultation. Flood affected people will develop a 'charter of demands' which will be presented to the policy makers.

The event is expected to bring together all stakeholders involved in the flood response, and develop an interface between the poor communities and elected representatives. The desired output is a collective and cohesive 'way forward' for effective and efficient rehabilitation of the people hit by last year's deluge.



Linking Relief and Rehabilitation with Long-Term Programme

Thatta is geographically the lowest area of the country and its location just next to the Indian Ocean makes it prone to frequent floods. Last year's floods affected almost 900,000 people in Thatta, destroying or damaging almost 60,000 homes and buildings. In 2011, AAPK started flood

rehabilitation and long-term programme in the district. The decision was based on our assessment of the poverty and pre-existing vulnerability of the local people, and flood-related destruction and its impact on the lives and livelihoods of the poor communities.



'My Children Don't Have to Sleep Hungry Anymore, Thanks To ActionAid'



"I am happy for the goat that ActionAid gave me. My children don't have to sleep hungry anymore. Food prices have gone very high after the flood and for poor people like us, who don't have a regular job; it is difficult to buy food items from the market."

This is the story of 38 years old Faiz Bano, a resident of village Haji Arbab Dall Juna of district Thatta. This is one of the flood-hit areas of Sindh Province where the floods gradually unrolled, causing mass destruction and displacement.

She is a mother of four children; the oldest son is 11 years old and youngest daughter only 2. Her husband is a daily wage labourer who does not earn enough to support the basic needs of the family. At times, he does not get any work, hence no wage. The family has no land, cattle or poultry. **"When my husband comes home without any money, we know we'd have to sleep hungry that night."**

In order to support family income, Faiz makes Rilli - a hand-woven quilt. She works on one piece for almost 3 days and sells it for a small price to fellow villagers.

"I work very hard; my eyesight is getting weak due to intricate needle work. People in the village are poor and cannot pay a good price so I sometimes ask for rice instead of money. At least this way I am able to make food available for the family."

In 2010, ActionAid started long-term programme in Thatta with a focus on promoting women's rights, food security, governance and flood emergency response. We identified the poorest and most

vulnerable households for immediate relief such as food, linen and household items, and also started a livelihood support programme to help flood-hit poor families rebuild their sources of income and improve their access to food.

"It was a good day for us when some people from ActionAid came to our village and told us they would give us goats. But for that they said we had to make a village committee that would decide who gets a goat. Everyone was poor but there were some poorer than others. I was also part of the village committee. So we talked to other villagers and selected 10 households."

Few days later, they again came, this time with a trolley full of beautiful goats. We gave them a list of selected people, four of whom were widow women with no source of income.

My fellow villagers and other members of the village selection committee nominated me also and so I got a goat too."

Faiz Bano says having a goat in her house has helped her cope with hunger.

Every morning I milk it and prepare breakfast for my children. The older one goes to school, but unlike before, he goes with a full stomach now which helps him learn better."

ActionAid has helped many women like Faiz Bano to overcome the impact of floods, and have access to nutritious food for themselves and their families. Some households that received goats and poultry are also able to earn a living by selling eggs and milk.

ActionAid's Hand Pumps Literally Saving Lives in Thatta!



“I lost my unborn child while fetching water from the far off well. I was very sad and prayed that water should be available at our doorstep. It is as if my prayers were answered when ActionAid came to our village and installed hand pumps.

The best part is, they asked the women to identify the most suitable place for their installation. This is fair because women have to fetch water, even if they are unwell, pregnant or extremely exhausted from working all day.

This is a story of 28 years old Taj Bibi , who lives in Haji Arbab Dall Juna, a small village of district Thatta, Sindh. She has a 2 years old daughter and her husband Abdul Sattar is a farm labourer.

Ever since the floods came, the well water has become muddy and bitter to taste. It also gives us stomachache. Now we have clean drinking water available, ActionAid's hand pumps are a blessing; Taj Bibi says pointing at a newly installed hand pump. As she spoke, a group of women and girls arrived at the pump and started filling their pans and pots with clean water. The sound of their chitchat and laughter expressed their happiness.

ActionAid started emergency response in Thatta in 2010 as the flood-displaced people were returning to their ravished villages. The water had largely receded but there were signs of destruction everywhere. ActionAid provided the poor and vulnerable people with relief items, including food packages, linen, soaps and household items. In addition, food, livelihood and shelter support has also been provided to the most vulnerable households especially women-headed families.

In the rehabilitation phase of our emergency response, and as part of the long-term programmatic work, we are building people's capacities to understand, claim and secure their human rights. Disaster risk education and preparedness is an important component of our awareness work. The shelters and other structures such as hand pumps are sturdy and built in such a way that they can withstand heavy rains and floods.

Taj Bibi and many women like her are happy with ActionAid's work and hope it will help improve their quality of life. **'I am happy that no more babies have to die like mine did. ActionAid's hand pumps will save lives.'**

Challenges, Learning and Way Forward



Due to a lack of adequate government response in terms of preventive measures and due to the likely increase in natural disasters due to the effects of climate change, ActionAid and other stakeholders must learn from the experience of the 2010 floods. With this in mind, the following are some key challenges and learnings:

Challenges

- Providing relief in a manner that ensures people's participation, downward accountability and rights based approach
- Capacity of partners to manage large size relief and rehabilitation programme vis a vis their experience of managing small funds and programme in normal circumstances
- Speedy hiring and capacity building and orientation of new staffs and partners on RBA and humanitarian approach
- Extensive and detailed donor reporting requirements
- Socio cultural hurdles face in targeting the most vulnerable rights holders

Learning

- The need for organisational preparedness in responding to emergencies (including contingency planning, staff hiring, fast track staff hiring/deployment, and effective financial and HR policies.
- In order to coordinate the emergency response at various levels with a cohesive and integrated approach, ActionAid Pakistan strengthened existing management and coordination structures, which helped in shifting from Project-based approach to long-term programmatic approach.
- In order to identify gaps between needs and coverage, a "Gap Analysis" was carried out which has informed future planning, targeting and fundraising.
- The importance of integrating 'Disaster Risk Reduction' in the emergency response; the need for a clear and rapid assessment of partners' capacity during emergency, and their capacity building. The need to ensure downward accountability, community participation and transparency, keeping pace with the emergency response.

Way forward

As a way forward, we will continue to help the most vulnerable and poor people to build credible risk reduction and resilience capacities, with active and meaningful participation of women. This means that the affected communities respond effectively to a significant conflict or disaster in through people-centred responses in which traditional power relationships are challenged, women's leadership enabled, and rights are protected. We will work with people, our rights holders and partners to support campaigns demanding people-centred changes in policies around disaster risk reduction, state accountability and long-term commitment for effective legislation and public financing for disaster prevention, climate adaptation and coordinated emergency responses.



The background features a large, semi-transparent watermark of the ActionAid logo. The logo consists of a circular emblem with a stylized figure in the center, surrounded by the text 'ActionAid' at the top and 'Ending poverty. Together.' at the bottom.

www.actionaid.org/pakistan

ActionAid is unique partnership of people who are fighting for a better world - a world without poverty and injustice