



**APP**  
ASIAN PREPAREDNESS PARTNERSHIP

# LOCAL BEST PRACTICES ON PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE

Success Stories and Case Studies

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# Saving Lives Changing Minds

Compiled by: IT Department

Organization: Pakistan Red Crescent Society

First Aid Pre-Hospital & Emergency Care Department of Pakistan Red Crescent Society AJK State Branch has been operating in the region since 2006. Currently, the program is smoothly running in seven districts of AJ&K including Line of Control and far furlong areas of Azad Jammu & Kashmir. On the other hand, community members in these areas do not have adequate health facilities on their doorsteps. Consequently, patients also have to travel across for minor medical treatment.

In October 2021, the First Aid Department of Pakistan Red Crescent Society had organized two-days First Aid training in Government Girls Middle School Tehsil Charoi (Saidpur) district Kotli of Azad Jammu & Kashmir. Twenty-five students and three female teachers took part in this training. In this training, participants were taught about life-saving skills, fractures, choking, bandages, transportation and CPR. The main purpose of this training was to build the capacity of students & teachers concerning First Aid Skills so that they could respond in an emergency or incident at the domestic level.

After a few days of this training, the positive impacts of the event began to emerge. A resident of Tehsil Charoi (Seri) Mrs Neelum Zahid senior teacher of the said school who was also the participant of this training went back home after school.

"I reached home after school and got busy in daily routine works; my one-year-old baby Muhammad Shahmeer who was crawling in the other room has swallowed something and got stuck in his throat. One of my nieces came and told me that Shahmeer has stuck something in his throat and he is not breathing. Immediately I left everything in the middle and ran to the other room, when I saw his condition, for a moment I was shaken and did not know what to do. Suddenly I have realized about First Aid Training and basic lifesaving skills in which we had been taught about choking. Then I started providing First Aid to my

child by using the back slap & abdominal thrust method, after a few seconds a leaf came out and the child began to breathe normally. For a moment my family was very upset but as soon as the leaf came out of the child's throat my family breathed a sigh of relief and my mother-in-law hugged me."

After this incident, I have realized the importance of First Aid & Basic Lifesaving Skills. At that moment, I thought what would have happened if I had not participated in this training? I am thankful to Pakistan Red Crescent Society for enhancing my capacity through First Aid training.

The Pakistan Red Crescent Society is not only providing practical training to the masses in the field of first aid but on the other hand it is our mission to bring real and positive change in people's lives as well as positive change in attitudes.



# Tackling Drought with Enhanced Capacities

**Compiled by:** Ashfaque Ahmed

**Organization:** Action Against Hunger

There are many dimensions of capacity that need to be developed to address climate induced disasters in resource poor regions where droughts, floods

and cyclones play havoc with people's life and assets to put them at great disadvantage. 'Strengthening Resilience to Natural Disaster of most Vulnerable Populations through Increased Disaster Preparedness and Nutrition Sensitive Emergency Assistance', commonly known as SKALA project of the

Action Against Hunger International (ACF) has substantially enhanced institutional capacities of a local civil society organization of Badin, the 'Larr Humanitarian and Development Program - LHDP' in Badin district of Sindh, Pakistan. ACF's capacity building assistance to LHDP is something that works beyond class-room training. Capacity building of local implementing partner LHDP is one of four major components of the project that ACF strategized to respond to natural disasters in the area. The SKALA project directly supports around 10,000 poverty stricken and disaster affected households in three Tehsils of district Badin.

Badin, located on Sindh's coastal strip, is a district of 1.8 million people prone to natural disasters such as drought. Although drought is taken as a normal phenomenon but it hardly evokes attention of stakeholders thus affecting thousands and at times millions who are rendered homeless or at least displaced. The main reason is the common understanding that drought usually affects arid regions and not areas in coastal, irrigated and riverine parts.

To overcome this mitigation related barrier, ACF chose the coastal belt for executing this strategic intervention to mainstream the integrated risk management into local level planning, for ACF believes that creating

an enabling environment is key to build disaster



resilience for a hunger free future of the world.

Taking this vision forward, ACF designed and implemented a number of capacity building initiatives for LHDP, starting from inception of project. There was a series of need-based training events and institutional support that has now turned LHDP into a sound local NGO

to tackle natural disasters in Badin district with technical knowledge base as well as resources.

Counting on the previous performance, Mr. Iqbal Hyder, CEO of LHDP says that they had little experience of working on droughts but today they have a well-trained team that understands types, causes and impacts of

climate induced droughts thus the organization is now equipped with institutional capacity to deal with complex nature of natural disasters. This team can now develop hazard mitigation plans, policies and strengthen community practices, and conduct monitoring of hazards. This was much needed and awaited assistance, Iqbal reiterates.

Mr. Zahoor Palijo, the Project Manager of ACF in Sindh, says that the ACF team followed a systematic approach of capacity building of LHDP to address risk management in long run. The SKALA project has developed a cadre of human resource in disaster management

and climate change fields that will not only assist LHDP but local civil society and communities too in mainstreaming mitigation into the local level planning. We have imparted training of trainers (TOTs) to more than fifteen mid- level, senior management, and core team of LHDP in art of social mobilization for disaster risk management (DRM), monitoring and evaluation skills, drought resilient agricultural farming, livestock management and nutritious vegetable cultivation, as per the training need assessment of LHDP at the time of project designing, he adds.



# Localizing Integrated Risk Management in Drought Affected Agrarian Communities

**Compiled by:** Ashfaque Ahmed

**Organization:** Action Against Hunger



Located at some 40 kilometers away from the main towns of Badin Village Bachal Nohrio in Taluka Tando Bagho, is one of those 30 revenue villages, where farming families have joined hands to address drought impacts collectively. 30 revenue village level cluster organizations have been formed under SKALA project of ACF, which is being implemented by LHDP to address the drought affected livelihood and food security issues in the coastal belt of district Badin, through a multi-pronged risk management approach that encompasses mobilizing and organizing affected people to lead it.

Each revenue village organization comprise of 10 members, elected through a community based selection process to lead these social structures. The underlying achievement of this participatory process-oriented activity is the acceptance and trust of wider at risk communities, reflecting the respect for cultural diversity, roles and responsibilities and recognizing the capacity of members to contribute to risk management in their respective areas.





The people of village Bachal Nohrio have collectively coordinated with various government departments; mainly the livestock and agriculture department to seek their services for the common good. This improved networking has resulted in vaccination of more than 15000 animals in the village, sought extension services of the agriculture department for pest management of cotton crops and got due share of the irrigation from the Left Bank Area Water Board.

The ACF and LHDP team has built capacities of the community groups in various disciplines identified through the community action planning exercises carried out with male and female groups separately. Training on networking, advocacy, community leadership, Climate Change and DRM, livestock management during droughts and resilient agricultural farming were major capacity building initiatives of the project. Later, ACF provided these organizations with the need based DRR kits, comprising of essential items to reduce sufferings during any natural catastrophic event.

Building resilience in the productive sectors such as agriculture and livestock and social structures were the key interventions of the project, targeting approximately 10,000 households in 30 revenue villages of district Badin.

Around 300 active community leaders entrusted by their respective village organizations are taking forward the drought mitigation agenda, set by the project. This shows the effectiveness of the program which lies in its community centered design to empower at risk groups right from conceptualization to evaluation.



# A Road to Drought- Resilient Agriculture

Compiled by: Ashfaque Ahmed

Organization: Action Against Hunger



Dilpat Ram, a twenty-two years old intermediate young man, lives with his wife and three children in tail end village of Pancho Kadhi in District Badin, an oil-rich district which lies at the extreme tail end of the Indus River system, therefore, most of the farmers face water shortage throughout the year.

Badin district predominately has a non- perennial irrigation system i.e., water is available in canals for only 4 months a year. Due to shortage of water, many canals, minor canals, and watercourses at tail ends face water scarcity, except in the beginning or at

end of the season, when others in the head and middle reaches of the canal do not need water. The growers on these tail ends of canals do not cultivate their lands regularly and wait for their luck and when water becomes available, they raise some fodder crops and in lucky years, short-season millets. However, some of them also opt for migration.



Dilpat shared that as a tail-end villager, he only receives water for 6 months in a year. At that time, he migrates with his family in search of livelihood to the areas where water is available. When the water shortage is reduced, he returns.

Diplat was a daily wage farmer and used to work occasionally in fields during the season when water was available to them. He earned very little which was not enough to fulfill his daily family expenses. He also borrowed a loan of PKR. 1,25,000 for a wedding ceremony and to meet some other household expenditures.



ACF International along with LHDP addressed the issue of drought-affected communities and introduced various innovative strategies to strengthen local agriculture systems and farming practices. ACF and LHDP established one hundred and twenty-five demonstration plots in thirty Revenue villages under the SKALA project. The local farmers were trained to construct drought-resistant demo plots using relevant technologies for growing high-quality vegetables and other drought-resistant crop varieties like Ispangar, Alfa Alfa, Jujube, Guava etc.

It was the first time that soil samples of the demo plot were tested in the areas where the laser leveler was used. Intercropping methods by utilizing compost were also introduced in these demonstration plots. The demonstration plots helped farmers to improve local agricultural practices to introduce drought-resistant agriculture and make nutritious vegetables and other crops available in the local market.

Dilpat was also selected by ACF and LHDP for the demonstration plot. His selection was a joint decision of members of the community organization (CO) of his village, which were formed by LHDP in different villages. Ram successfully demonstrated drought- resilient cotton crop on 1 acre land, which was provided to him along with 10 kg of cottonseed and compost.

He also used mulching techniques for soil moisture conservation and used leaves of different plants/shrubs to increase organic matter into the soils, until he could start cultivating cotton when the water becomes available. Cover crops are grown to protect and enrich the soil and keep the soil healthy by putting nutrients back into it. They help slow erosion, control pests and diseases and also increase crop yields.

Cotton commonly known as “white gold” is an important cash crop for Pakistan and normally grows in agriculture plains of Punjab and Sindh in the kharif season. It contributes 8.2 percent of the value-added share in national agricultural and about 3.2% to GDP; around two third of the country’s export earnings come from the cotton made-up and textile which adds over \$2.5 billion to the national economy.

Cotton is very drought tolerant and uses about the same amount of water as other crops like millet and sorghum etc. In Sindh province cotton is grown in more than one million acres in different districts including Badin.

# A penny spent in time saves pounds later

Compiled by: Fayyaz Shah

Organization: Malteser International



Following any disaster or emergency event there is no doubt that the role of relief assistance becomes paramount. It is imperative, however, to recognize the need for much greater attention on implementation of protective strategies i.e. preparedness and mitigations, which can contribute to saving lives and protecting property and resources before they are lost. It is for this reason that an integrated approach, that emphasizes vulnerability and risk factors, has coalesced around the concept of disaster preparedness in MI project in district Sanghar Pakistan funded by German Federal Ministry of Foreign Office. Unfortunately, the outcomes of the disaster preparedness training are not tangible. It takes time to convince the societies understand the true gains they are likely to reap in case of any future emergency. The actual outcomes of the project can be measured during real time emergency on ground. Communities from Taluka Jam Nawaz Ali, MI project area, facing a real time monsoon rains emergency and affected with damage to crops, shelters and livestock.

A spell of heavy rain with thunderstorm started in the week commencing from August 23, 2020 as predicted by the weather reports and advisory. Keeping in view the weather forecast, the trained community members

of MI project and MI trained Community Based Humanitarian Aid Workers organized themselves and responded in a professional manner. Trained activists played leading role to mitigate the human and property losses. Following steps are taken.

- Issued early warning through loud speakers to habitants and spread awareness about necessary precautionary measures.
- Ensured evacuation of men and material to safer locations. Many families and their belongings are safely and timely evacuated by MI trained community workers and families received necessary items from our community based emergency kits.
- Continuous awareness especially to children to a void swimming in rainy water to reduce risk of diseases.



- Trained Activists remained active in cleaning the rain water paths in order to make the rain water drain out of the villages quickly to water channels.
- By using the MI community feedback mechanism, community activists remained in good coordination with MI staff especially with Project Officer DRR.
- Pool of trained Local Humanitarian Aid Workers played a professional role as first responders and provided tents and tarpaulin sheets to affected families. These items are already available in emergency stockpile provided earlier by MI to village committees and being used for the right purpose.

However, more families may be in need of critical assistance such as water, food, medicines and temporary shelters. The families living in partially collapsed houses are potentially under threat as well. Trained Humanitarian Aid workers are continuously monitoring the situation and assessing the needs along with spreading the awareness and guidance. Community based trained local aid workers responded the situation and through this action the people of these communities virtually realized the importance of integration of disaster preparedness at community level interventions. This action to respond in real time emergency not only boosted confidence of community based local humanitarian aid workers but it served as trend setter for other members and inhabitants of the area.



Malteser International team in Pakistan realized that community based training may be at a very smaller scale pays in hours of need. Availability of Emergency Response Tools at community level with appropriate expertise in handling can help save lives and economize on major rescue efforts. Building capacity and transferring skills to the communities can help them fight minor disastrous incidents by themselves. This helps in building their confidence, save lives and money. Volunteers trained under MI project intervened at opportune moment and were instrumental in saving lives and belongings. This created a sense of safety and security among local inhabitants and augmented the confidence of community.



# Coordination is a Backbone of Humanitarian Response

**Compiled by:** Ms. Zakia

**Organization:** Rural Education and Economic Development Society (REEDS)

Heavy rainfall, heavy snowfall, and sub-zero temperatures hit Baluchistan province between 4–10 January 2022, causing flash floods and landslides. The worst affected area was the coastal district of Gwadar in southern Baluchistan. The highest levels of rainfall recorded were in Pasni (185mm) and Gwadar (121mm) sub-districts (the average rainfall in the district for January is 16mm). The floods and landslides killed at least three people and injured over 300.



The Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Baluchistan declared an emergency on 5th January in Gwadar and Pasni sub-districts in Gwadar district and Balnigorsub-district in Ketch district.

The floods affected over 17,300 people (around 6.5% of the population in Gwadar province) in 41 villages within the Gwadar district and damaged or destroyed more than 500 houses.



Assistant Commissioner sent a written request to Rural Education & Economic Development Society (REEDS) Pakistan to join hands with District Government in responding to the humanitarian needs of the Rain/flood affected of District Gwadar-Baluchistan.

REEDS Pakistan is an NHN member organization. National Humanitarian Network NHN and REEDS as members collaboratively from years of learning collaborative to help country leaders learn from each other on various topics, including how to create and manage cross-sectoral response to mount a coordinated response to the emergency, to develop pandemic/epidemic preparedness and response strategies, and to strengthen coordination across sectors and different levels of government and non Govt to ensure a prompt and effective response.

Upon receiving a request from the administration and network, REEDS contacted the NHN secretariat based in Islamabad for providing facilitation for coordination with the NHN provincial chapter in Baluchistan. NHN national secretariat linked REEDS with NHN provincial chapter. In close coordination with the NHN Baluchistan chapter, local humanitarian organization, and District administration, REEDS launched an effective and coordinative response project "Emergency Appeal for the Rain/flood affectees of District Gwadar-Baluchistan with the financial support of Kerk In Actie(KIA ) with the objective to provide the food relief package to 1700 families of flood-affected and provided dry fodder for livestock to 1250 animal keepers along with the coastal areas of district Gwadar including Pishukan, Plairi, Suntsor and Gwadar city.

REEDS with close coordination with the relevant stakeholders could manage to reach the most vulnerable communities including transgender, Hindu community, orphans, widows, and poor women in the rain-affected areas.



Isma, like others in Kobin Ward, is from the most part of the affected families who benefit from in-kind food distribution through the project which specifically targets females including widows, Female-headed, disabled in family and herder communities, by handing out food packages (flour, two kinds maize's, dry tea, rice chickpeas, salt, dry chilies biscuits grocery items and oil ) for one month to their residents.



This has remained the sole emergency service in the community. Isma told us that this food distribution gives her respite in their daily life, alleviating some of the burdens of worrying about food, and allowing her to devote her time and energies to tend to the medical needs and wellbeing of four children. "If the food distribution were not provided," she said, "I don't know how we manage to cope."

I can't thank REEDS enough for your help during this crisis. Without this initiative, other widows like myself would have been left to fend for themselves in those tough times. I hope you get to raise more money to help all of those in need. "Isma shared"



# Once You Strive for the Good, Eventually You Find It...

Compiled by: Muhammad Iqbal

Organization: Farmers Development Organization



Sustainability Phase of Building Disaster Resilience in Pakistan (BDRP-Sustainability) does not only aim to build resilience of communities' against disasters but communities and households are introduced to sustainable livelihoods and environmental management practices for resilience building. Agriculture sector is backbone to our economy but facing a lot of problems since long like low yield, old farming methods, expensive new technology, holding of un-economic land, inadequate infrastructure, subsistence farming, scarcity of rains, improper water systems, scarcity of high yield variety seeds and etc. All these reasons restrict farmers to maximize the production hence maximize the profits. Muhammad Iqbal is a farmer, resident of Union Council Sheikh Umar, Tehsil Kot Addu, and District Muzaffargarh who is bread winner of three sons, wife and a younger brother. He was facing the same problems in cultivation of variety of vegetables. Production of vegetables was very low due to old cultivation methods, poor quality seeds and low market prices for the seasonal vegetables. Due to which he was unable to meet farming and family expenses. In that situation making profit was beyond expectations. His blood relations started avoiding him due to his poor situation. Even his kids were expelled from school for not paying school fee. He was completely disillusioned with his life.

In January 2018, Farmers Development Organization with financial support of Welthungerhilfe (WHH) introduced him with new technology of tunnel farming. With help of 34 pipes, sheets and technical knowledge given to him by FDO's agricultural expert he planted cucumber and bitter gourds with this technique. He could only reach at breakeven first time but in next season he cultivated 13 farms on time with investment of almost 2 lac with tunnel farming method and earned 9 lac rupees. He is the one who introduced the concept of multi cropping with tunnel farming in his area due to which he is earning at least 400% more than investment cost now.

FDO also connected him and other farmers with line departments, local and national markets. He had benefited a lot from this coordination with agriculture department regarding new farming techniques, availability of high yield quality seeds and etc. This intervention has not only improved his financial situation but also his social status. Education of his children is resumed again. His neighbors, relative and villagers appreciate him and also consult him for new farming techniques.

# Establishing Vaccination Centers in District Swat

Compiled by: Anwarul Haq

**Organization:** LASOONA – Society for Human and Natural Resource Development



COVID-19 vaccination has proved to be pre-requisite for the revitalization of economies apart from protecting communities against the devastated impacts caused by the deadly COVID-19 virus. Government of Pakistan despite their weak financial situation is struggling hard to provide much needed resources to health department to get the people vaccinated. However, the meagre financial resources hamper efficient and effective response to ensure vaccination of large population in a timely manner.



For a population of more than two million there were only twelve vaccination centers in the entire district Swat. The health department was under severe pressure to vaccinate as much of their populations as quickly as possible to tackle the current pandemic, they also needed to maintain high rates of immunization against COVID-19. To cope with the challenge, the health department wanted to establish new vaccination centers in existing health facilities but the challenge was to spare proper space for safe physical distancing measures and adequate facilities to facilitate people while vaccination. For a healthcare system to be more creative and effective, the IT equipment, furniture and medical equipment are the common requirement to establish new vaccination centers, to help vaccination rollout run smoothly.





Anticipating the challenge NCA through its local implementing partner (LASOONA) came forward to enhance the response capacities of health authorities by providing much needed support in establishing four vaccination centers. These centers were identified across the district by LASOONA and prioritized by the respective government health authorities. Health department provided list of equipment along with detailed specifications that included furniture, IT equipment, medical equipment, refrigerators and water dispensers.

The required equipment provided in a timely manner for which a handing taking over ceremony was organized. In the event district health officer, focal person and regional and regional in-charge of vaccination, Deputy Commissioner, District Monitoring Officer and focal persons of all four vaccination centers. The items provided by the organization were meeting the requirement of inclusivity as separate spaces were established for women and men, also the specific requirements of people with disability and elderly were catered. It is worth mentioning that these centers have been set up in collaboration with LASOONA organization and health department in which there is scope for vaccination of up to two thousand people daily.

The establishment of these vaccination centers are rightly proud to serve and facilitate the ailing humanity in this vast prevailing pandemic. This on one hand increased the response capacity of health department in maintaining high rates of immunization and addressed the specific needs of people visiting the vaccination centers to mitigate the continued effects of the pandemic. Since establishment of vaccination centers till December 31, 2021, in total 172,432 people got vaccinated in the new vaccination centers which is approximately 9% of the entire district population.

Dr. Muhammad Salim District Health Officer (DHO Swat) in his statement said "It is a timely step by NCA that helped us addressing the issue of smooth and quick vaccination in a safe and dignified environment. This would also help in controlling the pandemic efficiently and effectively. My instruction to the Medical Superintendents of these vaccination centers is to properly use this equipment and also maintain clean, safe and optimal environment in the vaccination centers". Meanwhile, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) and medical superintendents of all four centers and other concerned government officials appreciated the huge support by NCA. The health department officials urged NCA to extend support to other far flung areas of the district, where people are still looking for help.



# Emerging Women Leadership in CBDRM

**Compiled by:** Rabia Bukhari

**Organization:** Farmers Development Organization

Pakistan is beset with a plethora of natural and man-made disasters. In the recent years, the magnitude and frequency of natural disasters such as floods have increased significantly. These repeated floods have reversed the recovery of affected communities and may have resulted in permanent changes in livelihood patterns across disaster prone areas particular in south Punjab. The increase in natural disasters is mainly attributed to climate change but also due to factors including lack of DRR knowledge to construct disaster resilient houses and infrastructures as well as resilient livelihood options and lack of institution set up.

The Building Disaster Resilience Programme (BDRP) worked with the poor and vulnerable households and communities at village and Union Council level at District Muzaffargarh. This programme mainly followed an integrated approach for resilience building measures in CBDRM, shelter, WASH, infrastructure, on-farm livelihoods and off-farm livelihoods.

Community Based Disaster Risk Management initiatives have played a pivotal role in increasing awareness amongst local folks especially women on disaster management using multifold approaches. These initiatives on one hand increase awareness and on the other prepare them for any disaster considering community-based disaster management approaches. This is done in a manner that they understand social dynamics related to the challenges faced by women, children and disables during emergencies in terms of their vulnerabilities in all phases of disasters.

In a similar intervention, under DFID funded project “Building Disaster Resilience in Pakistan (BDRP)”, Farmers Development Organization (FDO) – an implementing partner of Deutsche Welthungerhilfe (WHH) formed community social structures comprising of men and women as first emergency responders at village and UC level. Sumera Naz (22)

emerged as a young leader in village Disaster Management Committee as Team leader; with a family comprising of 07 members, she is the only graduate woman of the village and has been working with village level private school as a teacher.

With the participation of multiple activities of the program and engagement with community level beneficiaries, she didn't only get insights of how the program is developing over time but also understand that women engagement at village level is important in reducing their vulnerability; she has remained engaged for identification of most vulnerable women and women headed households for different interventions of the program. This helped strengthening her knowledge on selection criteria development and role of women in decision making.

The most effective role she is playing right now as representative from her community comes from her training on Disaster Management.

She discussed that being an active member of VDMC, she has achieved good level of confidence to lead teams and initiate dialogue with other community leaders and tehsil and district line departments on disaster related planning to reduce women and children vulnerability.

She is very motivated to work on expanding her dream of girls' education through a channelized mean of engagement with tehsil education department for establishment of girls' school in her village with 100% enrolment. She is aware that sustainable social and economic development comes through educating young generation and increasing women role in market based technical skills for which she is supporting girls' and women selection for vocational training.

Sumera Naz is a role model for her community and VDMC women members for her interest, dedication and commitment to the program activities and women empowerment for her area. Her leadership in the days to come will set new milestones for her and women in her community and social structured the project has formed.

# SPO Response to COVID-19

Compiled by: Shahid

Organization: Farmers Development Organization

SPO responded to COVID-19 as early as April 2020 with the funding support of Norwegian Church Aid (April – Oct 2020) and WaterAid (April – Jul 2020) in Lahore, Rawalpindi, Islamabad, and Karachi. Later on, the COVID-19 response was extended to Multan, Quetta, and Peshawar with the support of Dawood Hercules Group and the International Rescue Committee (IRC), respectively. The response was designed as per government protocol and WHO guidance. At the onset of the response, respective district governments highly appreciated the health & hygiene intervention. They declared it a timely, appropriate, and relevant intervention in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following intervention were undertaken in response to COVID-19;

- Hygiene messages through mobile loudspeakers in the villages: village groups, women committees, and community volunteers/activists made announcements on portable loudspeakers/megaphones from central points of the villages about hygienic practices per WHO guidance to prevent the spread of COVID-19. These hygiene awareness campaigns and other essential topics include sanitization messages on practicing social distancing, frequent handwashing with soap and detergents, use of hand sanitizers, use of masks, etc., in homes, hujras, and mosques.





- Spreading hygiene messages through FM radio: it is an effective way of sharing information in rural areas, especially in villages. Fortunately, FM networks are available in almost all locations. These messages were designed per government protocols and WHO guidelines and were repeated on a daily basis.
- Involving local religious leaders (Mullah/Imaams): As people attentively listened to the religious leaders, it was an effective way to spread hygiene messages in the community.
- Installation of banners/IEC material: banners having approved awareness messages were installed at prominent locations in rural and urban areas in collaboration with respective district governments and Tehsil Municipal Administration (TMAs)
- Community Mobilization on social distancing: alongside other hygiene messages for the prevention of COVID-19, people were extensively mobilized to observe social distancing while purchasing groceries and visiting other inevitable public locations.
- Awareness Campaign through Social Media: WhatsApp groups were created, and information related to the pandemic and safety measures were shared as issued by the GOP and WHO on regular bases.
- In Multan, SPO established an ICU for COVID patients with the support of Dawood Hercules Group. It was a highly needed intervention that the district government applauded upon operationalization.
- Alongside the aforementioned measures, SPO provided psycho-social support to COVID-19 patients in Karachi, Quetta, and Peshawar.
- Coordination with Line department: SPO closely coordinated with government line departments during the COVID-19 response during these critical times.

# Construction of dike to save lives of the people

**Compiled by:** Shahid

**Organization:** Strengthening Participatory Organization

Village Ali Sher is situated in Union Council Naushara at a distance of 10 km in the north of Bhag Town. The village is easily accessible on Pir-Tiar Ghazi Road. A significant portion of the access road is metalled but highly deteriorated. The last 4 km consists of the earthen track, which is motorable in fair weather.

All the households belong to Abra, a clan of Jamote. Ali Sher village has fertile agricultural land, and people live on the bank of river Bolan.

Due to floods in 2018, several houses were either completely damaged and partially, rendering them dangerous to live. So many of the people migrated to nearby Fatwani village. At the time SPO assessment, only nine households were residing in the village. It is worth mentioning that the village is highly vulnerable to floods whenever the water level rises in Bolan and Nari Rivers. During floods 2018, the earthen dikes from North-West have washed away, and water flooded in the village.

SPO selected the village for the intervention and decided to restore the dikes with the support of OXFAM-GB funded project "Flood Relief in District Bolan" based on its vulnerability and poor population. The village is connected to the national electricity grid and has a primary school for boys and girls. The school was provided by (BEF), Balochistan Education Foundation.

SPO team worked hard and mapped out the terrain in coordination with the local people, district/tehsil government, and local representatives. The dikes were restored and handed over to the local community. These dikes have raised platforms, are structurally more resilient than the last dike, and provide protection and peace of mind to the local people.

The village is now protected against the high floods. The dike will restrict water flow to the river and protect the population from disaster. Those who migrated to Fatwani will return to their village and re-construct their house.

The PMC members and local protection team visited the village during and after construction, found the work very relevant, and appreciated the SPO for taking these measures.



Figure 1: Before the construction of Dike



Figure 2: After the construction of Dike



# Awareness is the First Step in Healing

Compiled by: IT Department

Organization: Pakistan Red Crescent Society

Since, the recent cross border firing/shelling has increased the threat of the existence of the drifted landmines, mortars & explosives of the communities along the line of control (LoC) in AJK. Hence, it has been necessary to raise awareness of the population on risk awareness & safe behaviour in order to reduce the incidents of civilian casualties in unattended and contaminated areas, where there is limited access and source of dissemination due to unpredictable security threats.



In order to address the most vulnerable communities to provide them with indirect Risk Awareness & Safe Behaviour messages, the Pakistan Red Crescent Society AJK State Branch in collaboration with Special Communication Organization (SCO) broadcasted the risk education/safe behaviour SMSs to the hazardous and weapon contaminated areas of AJK for protection of the civilian population through SCOM messages in the light of signed MoU between PRCS AJK & SCO in 2017.

The objective of these broadcasting messages was to create a synergy to join hands to reduce the impacts of, these (static, drifted and dislocated) explosive devices in AJK.

In continuation of broadcasting messages, one of the Risk Awareness & Safe Behaviour's oriented teachers Ms Mahwish, a resident of Tehsil Athmaqam & District Neelum received an alert message by 'Hillal e Hahmar Alert'. Further, she started to deliver this message to students in 'Asra Public School' Athmuqam, Neelum AJK on the 29th of December, 2021.

During her reading of RASB messages on mobile phone in the class, students recieved information that could help reduce causalities and disabilities and participated enough to quote about survivors of landmines who they know in their vicinities.

Students from far-flung areas have attended this informal session and ensured to stay away from the explosives and determined to walk on the safe paths in the hazardous areas. They also committed to not touching the suspicious items and bobby traps in open fields. Furthermore, the students reiterated to spread this information to their fellows and family members. Consequently, such a chain of information will impact positively and people will adopt safety measures to save their lives.

After this session, Ms. Mahwish spoke to Qazi Bilal District Liaison Officer of Pakistan Red Crescent Society Neelum and enlightened this success factor of the program. "The Program is of the great importance in the region for vulnerable communities living along the Line of Control and there's a dire need to orient the community members about safe behaviours during firing and shelling".

This story indicates reducing the frequency of the incidents through indirect Mine Risk Education, helpful to maintain records, evaluating the impacts of the project and creating sustainable effects through community ownership.

The quality of the project service delivery being implemented and also monitored the progress towards the intended outcomes of SBRA-SB Program AJK.

# No More Mourning on Flood Losses

Compiled by: Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability

“Not this time!”, said Ashraf Ghani resolutely responding to a fellow villager who had reached his home amidst heavy rain in the middle of the night to see if he could do something to avoid the usual damage such rains brought upon their village Hafizabad – prone to heavy rains, flash floods, and landslides. Their villa ge falls in Union Council Garlat, Tehsil Balakot, District Mansehra of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province in Pakistan.

Ghani was sure that he could handle the situation, as he knew he had trained people as well as provided the necessary equipment to deal with the impending disaster. He had already mobilized the Village Disaster Management Committee (VMDC) which was formed a few weeks earlier, during the training sessions on disaster preparedness organized by the Global Educational Economic and Social Empowerment (GEESE) with the support from Ambassador’s Fund Grants Program. The trainings were provided as part of an eight-month project to make communities disaster resilient by establishing and training 12 VDMCs on disaster management, planning, and mitigation. Each VDMC was also provided emergency response kits.

n a short while, a team of volunteers rushed to the natural water streams, which could flood the village. They looked for the weaker parts of the embankments, and strengthened them using the toolkits they had received during the training on disaster preparedness. They had planned to do that while making disaster management plan for their village. However, rains arrived before they could implement their plan.

Still, the morale of the volunteers was quite high. Despite heavy rain, they continued to monitor the water channels, and kept strengthening the embankments where needed.

Another team of trained volunteers was helping people who lived near the water channels to save their belongings, and move to safer houses

in case of flooding. As a proactive measure, they evacuated the persons with disabilities and elderly people to safer places on a priority basis.

They arranged for food, medicines, and were in touch with the local administration in case they needed any emergency services like ambulance or support in evacuation.

Finally, the rains ended, and everybody took a sigh of relief. The entire village was happy to know that no household in the village reported any loss of life or property. This was an extraordinary achievement for the people and especially for the VDMC members and volunteers. They celebrated their success and vowed to continue their efforts to protect their village from disasters. Moreover, they decided to implement their disaster management plan immediately as another spell of rains or landslide could take place anytime.

For the coming days, they plan to clear the water channels from any impediments, which may hinder the water flow to the river Kunhar down in the valley. Additionally, they are going ahead with the plantation drive to diminish the chances of land sliding. They intend to get the saplings from the local forest department during the next round of national tree plantation drive, and plant them at the steep- sloped and unstable places, to prevent land sliding.



# Disaster Resilience Becomes Lifeline for the Community

Compiled by: Trust for Democratic Education and Accountability

"It was a horrible night. My husband complained of pain in his chest, and before we could do something about it, he fainted", said Bilquees – a mother of five and resident of Basti Ludhani Chandia which is a small far-flung riverine community without proper health care facilities in Tehsil Kot Addu, district Muzaffargarh.



She described her husband Nazar Hussain's situation as being lifeless with minimal breathing. It created panic in the family. Children were terrified; the younger ones started crying. However, Bilquees remained in her senses and recalled the first aid training she had recently received.



She began performing Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) on Nazar. The first attempt failed, but the second attempt showed signs of improvement in the patient. She continued with it and soon Nazar started breathing again. It was a huge relief for the entire family. “It was like a second life for the entire family. Children’s tears turned into smiles”, said Bilquees as she recalled the fateful night.

The next morning, she took Nazar to hospital where the doctor confirmed that Nazar had a cardiac arrest, and that CPR played an instrumental role in saving his life. Since then, Nazar has been visiting the hospital regularly and taking medicine. After a couple of days’ rest, he returned to his job and is now taking care of his responsibilities as the sole breadwinner of the family. He feels immensely grateful to Bilquees for saving his life.

Bilquees Bibi gives credit – for saving her husband’s life – to the training camp arranged by Society for the Advancement of Nature, Justice and Health (SANJH), with the support of Ambassador’s Fund Grant Program (AFGP). She, as a member of Community Resilience Committee (CRC), was among the 189 women belonging to 14 villages of Kot Addu, Muzaffargarh who received disaster preparedness trainings which included provision of first aid and performing CPR, among other things.

SANJH, during the six-month project, aimed to improve the mechanisms to reduce risks and enhance capacity of communities to respond to emergencies and disasters for protecting lives, property, and taking measures to contain the damage and disruption.

The target communities are confident that they can deal with disasters especially floods and soil erosion, minimize losses, and protect their people, crops, and livestock from damage and destruction caused by natural and men-made disasters.

Asian Disaster Preparedness Centre (ADPC) with support from Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) is implementing the program 'Increased Locally Led Actions to Prepare for, Respond to and Recover from Disasters in selected high risk Countries of Asia' in 6 South and South-East Asian countries namely- Nepal, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Cambodia, Philippines and Myanmar.

The program utilizes a unique network approach by creating the Asian Preparedness Partnership (APP) - a multi-stakeholder regional partnership through the program. APP strives to improve inter-organizational coordination and dialogue between Governments, Local Humanitarian Organization networks and Private Sector networks for enhancing capacities through partnerships, knowledge resources, training and networking opportunities. The program's goal is to strengthen the emergency response capacities in these countries to better prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters.

