

# Humanitarian Resilience Journal

Issue 6



**Agenda for Humanity**





The flagship regional platform of Asian Preparedness Partnership (APP), was founded by six countries of Asia including Pakistan for improving the preparedness and emergency response to disasters by strengthening the capacity of local humanitarian actors. The initiative is being implemented by Asian Disaster Preparedness Center with support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

In line with the regional initiative, Pakistan Resilience Partnership (PRP) was established in 2018, under the umbrella of NDMA. The objective of the PRP is to improve the interface and partnership between PRP partners namely government, local humanitarian organizations, private sector, media and academia for enhancing their capacities through partnerships, knowledge resources, training, and networking opportunities. The Pakistan Resilience Partnership is contributing towards strengthening the disaster preparedness and emergency response capacity at national and local levels in disaster-prone areas within the country. The PRP strategy aims to develop the local humanitarian networks comprising of National Governments, Local Humanitarian Organizations, Private Sector, Media and Academia, which will result in enhanced coordination and information exchange, during the period of emergencies caused due to disasters.



## Preface:

Humanitarian Resilience Journal is a biannual magazine published with the support of Asian Preparedness Partnership (APP) under the umbrella of Pakistan Resilience Partnership (PRP). This initiative has been undertaken to bring forward different perspectives on the general humanitarian landscape of Pakistan. Each issue of the journal is dedicated to a specific topic of national importance. The contributions to this magazine are purely on volunteer basis.

The sixth issue of the Journal is focusing on the global commitment to 'leave no one behind' which underpins the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the international community's pledged to achieve prosperity for all. The writers have discussed different dimensions of this overarching theme, challenges and bottlenecks, and the way forward to achieve this commitment. The views, opinion and interpretations expressed in this document are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position.

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# Taking Thar Together Leaving No One Behind



Naseer Memon

The Thar is a region of rolling sand dunes, plains and hills, lying across two countries and four states of the South Asian subcontinent. This vast arid land, now considered one of the harshest climates in the world, was once home to the great civilizations of Mohen jo Daro and Harappa. Currently, it ranks 109th out of 114 districts in Pakistan on the Human Development Index with approximately 87% of the population suffering from multi-dimensional poverty. Education which is to be a basic right of every individual on the planet is denied to the residents of Tharparkar with mean years of schooling standing as low as 3.8 years and 0.7 years for males and females respectively. Other necessities such as health coverage; immunization and availability of fresh clean drinking water also remains awfully low, with the inhabitants of Thar living at least 100 years behind the major metropolis of Pakistan. But while life remains difficult in this desert land, its people remain resilient and passionate; hopeful of an era where education, health and basic amenities will abound in every village; every town and every household of Thar, fulfilling the taste of leaving no one behind agenda with its true essence.

Thar Foundation, believes in the potential of Thar and are resolute in their determination to help mother Thar evolve into a region of progress, prosperity and eternal sunshine. Thar Foundation is a subsidiary of Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company (SECMC). To ensure that the local communities get benefit through graduated and sustainable interventions in the fields of healthcare, education, livelihood, community infrastructure, gender equality, clean drinking water & sanitation services and disaster management from SECMC project aimed at inclusive development, a social sector organization Thar Foundation was established by Government of Sindh (GoS), SECMC, Engro Power Thar Limited (EPTL) and other partner companies. Thar Foundation adopted United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) framework to align its CSR program in Tharparkar. By adopting the SDG framework, the Thar Foundation has divided these 17 global goals into key categories.

Prioritized goals under the SDG framework are the Thar Foundation's focus as compliance to these goals will

ultimately lead the Foundation to its final goal – end poverty for the people of Thar, protect the people of Thar and bring peace and prosperity into the region. Thar Foundation focus on the following areas: “Zero Hunger, Good Health & Well Being, Gender Equality, Quality Education, Clean Water & Sanitation, Affordable & Clean Energy, Direct Work & Economic Growth, Industry Innovation & Infrastructure, Sustainable Cities & Communities, Responsible Consumption & Production, Life on Land and Climate Action”.

Overarching goals will be met by all Thar Foundation interventions, which are designed to eradicate multidimensional poverty in Islamkot and its surroundings through a public-private model, comprising: “No Poverty, Reduced Inequalities & Partnerships for the Goals”.

Advocacy goals while not directly and holistically relevant to the scope of Thar Foundation's implementation ambit continue to remain a focus for advocacy efforts through support of relevant organizations, comprising: “Life Below Water, Peace, Justice & Strong Institutions”.

## 1. SDG-3: Good Health and Well-being & Thar Foundation Achievement

**1.1 Mother and Child Clinics at Block II and GORANO Area:** Three basic Out Patient Department (OPD) facilities for mothers and children has been in operation which has improved the lives of thousands of Thari women and children. The Marvi Mother and Child Clinic was started in 2015 at Thar Coal Block II, followed by Gorano Mother and Child Clinic started its services in 2018 and New Senhri Dars Dispensary (in collaboration with Health Dept) in 2019. The Clinic operations are managed by The Indus Hospital and are focused on providing primary health care services.

Clinics under this flagship program are established considering different aspects so that best part of the surrounding communities could benefit from the free of cost medical services like lady doctors, Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI), vaccination, laboratory service and medicines.

1 Block II is the one of several coal least blocks where SECMC operates. There are about 13 allocated blocks of Thar-coal and only two of them are functional and the block-II is the one where the company is working.

2 GORANO is a natural depression which is converted into a pond where the ground water which is pumped out beneath the mine is stored there.

## **1.2 State-of-art 250-Bed Thar Foundation Hospital, Islamkot**

As a longer-term goal towards contributing to SDGs, Thar Foundation has launched its OPD services at Thar Foundation Hospital Islamkot. The services are part of the phased wise construction for operation of 250-bed hospital in Islamkot town – the main hub of commercial activity and central location in Thar. OPD of the hospital has started from July 2019. In 2021, Accidents & Emergency and Gynae & Ops sections are expected to become functional. The hospital is linked with Indus Hospital at Karachi for emergency and advanced treatments ensuring a swift referral system.

### **1.3 Mobile Medical Bus:**

The Thar Desert's vast terrain is sparsely populated, and clinics are only accessible to a few. To ensure that medical care is provided to all, Thar Foundation is developing a network of mobile clinics. First mobile medical bus of Thar Foundation started its operations in 2020 in Islamkot Taluka and is providing free of cost medical service including medicines. This medical bus has built-in facilities of X-Ray, Ultrasound and Electrocardiogram (ECG).

### **1.4 Screening and Vaccination:**

Thar Foundation has joined hands with reputable partners like The Health Foundation, Indus Hospital and other in development and implementation of programs for chronic disease-free and Hepatitis-free Community. Over 15,000 screening and vaccination of Hepatitis, 5000+ screening for Tuberculosis (TB) and more than 3,000 people screened for eyes. 100+ patients have undergone surgery. It has targeted to make Block-II Hepatitis and TB Free area by the year 2021. These camps are a regular feature in Block-II. Camps are also organized for mammography and family planning counselling and services.

### **1.5 Thar Tele-Help Counselling Services on Mental Health**

With an aim to prevent growing trend of suicides in the District of Tharparkar, Thar Foundation is supporting various government agencies by providing proactive counselling/treatment services to the identified patients through a virtual platform. Sindh Mental Health Authority (SMHA), Thar Foundation, Health Department, GoS, Sir Cowasjee Institute of Psychiatry & Behavioral Sciences Hyderabad (SCIPBS), Liaquat University of Medical & Health Licenses (LUMHS) and District Administration have partnered and aimed at providing free of cost psychiatric/counselling/treatment services, follow up, free medicines to identified patients under a one-year pilot project. Thar Foundation contributed in setting up a remote counselling tele-health services in local language, a mobile app for monitoring and reporting of vulnerable cases and logistical support to SMHA and other backing agencies.

### **1.6 COVID-19 Related Support in Thar**

At the request of district administration Tharparkar, Thar

Foundation had handed over its OPD Hospital in Islamkot to establish an Isolation Center for potential COVID-19 patients. Foundation also provided all the available medical supplies and utilities for operating the facility. Thar Foundation's human resource was deputed in Islamkot to assist and coordinate with district administration in its fight against spread of COVID-19. Sindh Engro Coal Mining Company had also dedicated logistical support to the district administration during the lock down period. Community awareness sessions were organized in the surrounding areas on the prevention of Corona outbreak while ensuring social distancing and keeping the employees safe. Thar Foundation also provided transport support to the community individuals who were coming from Karachi and other area for screening at its Marvi Clinic. Thar Foundation has also published corona awareness material and distributed in surrounding communities.

Thar Foundation distributed ration package to 2,730 families in Islamkot taluka after conducting a scientific and consultative field survey. The quantity of ration was sufficient to cover basic needs of a family for 6-8 weeks.

## **2. SDG-4: Prioritizing Education, Inspiring Change**

The region of Tharparkar has long been educationally deprived as well. To combat this pattern, SDG4 ensures inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong opportunities for all. The Thar Foundation is establishing a network of schools in the main towns of Thar, which will focus on providing quality primary and secondary education at a low cost.

### **2.1 Thar Foundation Schools**

Thar Foundation has setup 27 school units in Block-II, Islamkot and Mithi, having capacity of 5,500 students. Three big campuses of secondary level (five schools each) are being managed by The Citizen Foundation (TCF), a renowned education sector charity. These campuses consist of three primary and two secondary school units and has the capacity to accommodate 1,000 students each. Going forward, the Thar Foundation plans to adopt and operate all government schools in Islamkot. Currently more than 3,000 students are enrolled in Thar Foundation schools with one-third of them girls.

### **2.2 Accelerated Learning Program (ALP)**

Thar Foundation has initiated as one-year program in 07 villages of Block-II and Gorano to provide education to 210 out of school children up to grade 3 between the ages of 10-16. The program is a collaboration between Thar Foundation and Alight Pakistan; an organization that is working since 2002 on different components such as Wash, Safe Drinking water, Health and Education.

In 2019, Thar Foundation operated four adult literacy centers in collaboration with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). 100 adult students including women benefited from the course of basic literacy.

### 2.3 Mother Tongue Based Multi-Lingual Education

Thar Foundation is working with TCF to design a customized 3-Language curriculum to be used at all Thar Foundation schools which is based on a global best practice of teaching children in their mother tongue (Sindhi) besides national language (Urdu) and English. TCF has developed the curriculum through a rigorous research process which has been introduced in TCF schools of Thar Foundation.

### 2.4 Birth Registration for Students

Thar Foundation facilitated getting Birth registration certificates to 4,500 children of Block-II. The birth registration certificates being a legal document will enable the people in not only getting Form-B; a document necessary for admission in schools and other government related programs.

### 2.5 Scholarships for Higher Education in China

Engro in collaboration with Chinese universities has sponsored (partially/fully) 22 students for higher education in China. These students are enrolled in 2-3 years Master's degree program in various disciplines of Engineering and Business Management. 16 students are from Tharparkar district, 5 from Sukkur and one from Quetta.

## 3. SDG-8: Livelihood Created, Human Resources Enriched

### 3.1 Vocational -Skilled Trainings

This was most challenging to manage. Due to the lack of industry and commercial opportunities in Thar, the main challenge was to find skilled manpower for both the mining and power plant. To ensure that the project would empower & economically benefit locals, Thar Foundation collaborated with following technical training institutes and others to provide onsite and offsite specialized vocational training;

- Descon Training Institute (DTi)
- National Logistics Cell (NLC)
- Sindh Technical Education & Vocational Training Authority (STEVTA)
- AmanTech
- Hunar Foundation
- Saylani Welfare Trust- IT programs

So far more than 1600 Thari youth have received skill development trainings and subsequently got employment in Block-II operations.

### 3.2 Khushal Thar

For provision of skilled trainings and job employments "Khushal Thar" centralized facility which registers local Thari through a database was established. The centralized

database is linked both to the project for industrial manpower requirements and to the community. Once entered the database, the individual is trained and then presented for evaluation to be employed. Most of the skilled manpower working on the mining and power project are from Block II, and the communities around the project. More than 1600 Thari youth have been trained for Scaffolding, Masonry, Steel fixing, Pipe fitting and Driving.

### 3.3 Thar Trainee Engineers

The employment of locals is not just confined to skilled labor. Thar Foundation also invests into developing local youth to mainstream them in both engineering and management cadre of the company. For this purpose, 25 young Thari Trainee Engineers were identified through a transparent and competitive process, after which they underwent a year-long training program at site, through several partnering organizations such as Institute of Business Administration (IBA) Karachi and Carnelian Institute. This is a rigorous process divided into 4 stages: Functional Projects, Quarterly Evaluation, Mentorships and Placements.

Followed by this Thar Foundation/SECMC sent 75 engineers from Tharparkar and adjoining districts to get trained on Operate & Maintain (O&M) of the power plant. 73 of these engineers completed their training and are employed as engineers to operate and maintain Engro's power plant in Block-II.

### 3.4 Thar Information Technology Program

Thar Foundation has launched the 'Thar Information Technology Program' which is an 18-months program for 25 local students at Saylani Institute in Karachi. The program is aimed at diversifying the skillset of Thari youth and thus, covers fields of Mobile App Development, Web development, JavaScript, Soft Skills Training and On-Job Training.

### 3.5 Thar Associate Engineering Program (TAEP)

The Thar Foundation is also training 170 young Thari as diploma engineers under the Thar Associate Engineering Program (TAEP) on 100% scholarship basis. 30 students completed their diploma in Associate Engineering at Engro Daharki Technical College, while 140 are enrolled to Technical Training College Mithi under Sindh Technical Education and Vocational Training (STEVTA) through a transparent selection process. Govt. Polytechnic College Mithi has been provided support by constructing a block and starting a new discipline of Mechanical Engineering, improving faculty and laboratories.

### 3.6 Training Local Engineers at Power Plant

Engro PowerGen Thar Limited (EPTL) through a transparent competitive process selected 73 young engineers (Electrical and Mechanical) of Tharparkar and adjoining districts of

Sindh and sent them for six months intensive training in China. Those trained engineers have joined EPTL and serving at power plant.

### **3.7 Livelihood support to Locals**

On the entrepreneurial front, Thar Foundation is providing grants to locals for establishing their own small businesses. More than 20 differently able people, widows and poor households have been provided grants of PKR 50,000 - 75,000 along with technical support. Thar Foundation has also developed local vendors to provide business opportunities to locals. Under local vendor development program, Thar Foundation has capacitated and registered more than 100 local vendors. Over the past three years, Thar vendors have been given business of more than 2.5 billion rupees. In addition to that more than 50 locals have been allowed to operate small businesses within the boundary of area of operation. These are mostly dhabaas and small shops.

### **3.8: Skills training for entrepreneurship and paid employment (STEP)**

A 6-months vocational and technical training program for 450 local Thari people including 50 females in collaboration of Engro Foundation. Under the project 450 Thari youth will be trained with 75% of employability (Jobs & Self-employed). The training skills include basic IT, livestock, stitching etc. Trainee's selection process is ongoing, and trainings will be implemented subsequently.

## **4. SDG-2, Zero Hunger: Bio-saline Agriculture, Creating Food Security**

### **4.1 Bio-saline Pilot Project**

A revolutionary step using technology transfer has also been launched in Thar to introduce bio-saline agriculture. Thar has traditionally been dependent on rain-fed agriculture – an unreliable form in an area where drought is endemic. Highly saline ground water drawn from the depth of 180-200 meters as part of mining activity is being used to grow fodder and crops. A pilot project initiated in Nov 2016 and different species like Guar (Cluster Beans), Bajra (Millet), Fruit of Gidro (Melon) and Moong (Lentil) Pea, Apple Beeris and Moringa have been successfully grown. Seeing positive results, project was expanded to larger scale with addition of sunflower, moong, toriyo, lady fingers and other crops. Thar Foundation has joined hands with Pakistan Agriculture Research Centre (PARC) to conduct further research and mainstreaming of bio-saline agriculture in Thar.

### **4.2 Fisheries – Aqua Culture Development**

Followed by the successful Bio-saline agriculture at Thar Block II, the Thar Foundation has initiated breeding fish in the Gorano Reservoir, where the groundwater extracted from the depth of 180 m, containing 5000 ppm, is stored by the coal mining company. An unbelievable development and

success achieved as “Fisheries in Thar desert”. Seven fish species including Morakhi (Mrigal Carp), Rohu (Labea Rohita), Theli, Kuriro, Gulfam, African Catfish, and Dangri (Barramandi) recommended by Sindh Fisheries Dept. are being raised in the project. Initially 100,000 fish seeds were released in Gorano Pond after rigorous testing of fish species in Saline water ponds. Fishes were raised on organic feed as no artificial chemical is being used at any point of breeding. 3rd party testing of fish meat was carried out by SGS and GEMS labs and declared the fish as fit for human consumption. The extension plan has already been launched under “Desert Fisheries Initiative” in collaboration with Livestock and Fisheries Department, Government of Sindh where 200,000 seeds have been released in May 2019. In two years more than 20,000 KGs of fish catch was distributed to local villages free of cost.

## **5. SDG 5, Gender Equality**

### **5.1 Women Dump truck Drivers Program**

Currently, in a revolutionary step in this remote region, where females do not even know how to drive, the Thar Foundation has provided training for dump truck driving to more than 50 Thari women. 21 of them have successfully completed their training and they are now recruited as regular drivers in the company to transport coal. Another batch of 16 women drivers is under training these days. These women are provided stipend, uniform, day-care facility for their kids and lunch. A true trend-setter for socio economic empowerment of local women. Thar Foundation has started campaign to recruit new batches of women drivers.

### **5.2 Women RO Plant Operators**

Following a successful program of women dump truck drivers, Thar Foundation took a new and novel initiative of training and employing Thari women to operate and maintain its Reverse Osmosis (RO) plants. Thari women once again accepted the challenge and demonstrated their abilities. After a rigorous process of training, Thar Foundation has trained 18 local women in operation and maintenance of RO plants. As of now 12 of them have been employed at RO plants in Block-II area.

## **6. SDG 6, Clean Water and Sanitation**

Thar Foundation has installed 17 RO plants including 10 handed over by the Govt of Sindh. These RO plants in Block-II and Gorano areas are providing WHO standard drinking water free of cost to a population of more than 30,000.

## **7. SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities**

### **7.1 Master Plan for Islamkot Town**

In collaboration with Sindh Government's Directorate of

Urban Policy & Strategic Planning, the Thar Foundation is facilitating development of a Master Plan for Islamkot Town to:

- Optimize future industrial growth
- Plan of residential and commercial areas
- Guide urban, economic and infrastructure development

Policy Board of Urban Planning Unit has approved the Master Plan in Dec 2019 and it awaits final approval by GoS.

## 7.2 Infrastructure Development- Resettlement Village

The Thar Foundation also plan infrastructure development in the region. As a first step, the plan is to relocate two villages as part of the mining project requirements under the supervision of the Foundation. Both international and national laws and guidelines on involuntary resettlement have been complied with and a comprehensive plan developed to ensure community led ownership.

In the first phase, the entire population of the village has been relocated. 172 households of village Senhri Dars have involuntarily relocated to the new village. It was done through a participatory approach, including both males and females of the community. The design and construction process for Phase I (Village Sehnri Dars) has been carried out by renowned housing & town planning experts who will ensure state-of-the-art structures, enhancing the quality of life without compromising the natural ecosystem, social fabric, lifestyle and traditions of the Thari people.

These new facilities not only provide houses but also numerous common facilities such as:

- School
- Clinic
- Reverse Osmosis plants
- Water Supply System and Solarized Wells
- Park
- Waste Management system
- Men and Women Community Centers
- Market
- Streetlights
- Single Unit Solar System

The aim is to create one of the most inclusive and eco-friendly communities, sensitive to culture yet creating a state-of-the-art resettlement village that can serve as a model. Process of resettlement of second village Tharyo Halepoto has also been started. Master plan of the new village has been finalized after a series of community consultations.

## 7.3 Villages Improvement Plan

The villages in Block-II are being improved to provide quality life to our neighboring communities. The village communities would be living in a well-developed place with all civic and social sector facilities including the following.

- Drinking water projects – RO plants
- Street solar light system
- Pit latrines for every household
- Drainage & sanitation facilities
- Smokeless stove for every household
- Solid waste management system

Under this initiative 60 solar lights and 140 pit latrines have been provided in two villages Seengaro and Mansingh Bheel in Block-II.

## 7.4 Cultural Promotion

Thar Foundation has developed a coffee-table book on Thar with the support of Endowment Fund Trust. This includes never-seen-before photographs from as far back as 30 years, selected verses translated by Elsa Kazi and text written by experts on culture and history – undoubtedly one of the finest works on Thar.

## 7.5 Disaster Management

Together with long term sustainable plans to ensure improvement of social and cultural conditions in Thar, it is important to understand that there are many natural and human induced disasters that the area is prone to. These include earthquakes, fires, drought, and famine etc. For this reason, Emergency Response and Disaster Management Cell has been formed under the ambit of the Foundation. The cell provides rescue, relief, and rehabilitation support to affected communities in Taulka of Islamkot. It works closely with the line departments at local level. This cell worked on the rehabilitation of two villages namely Odhani and Vakrio to rebuild new homes and restore their livelihoods after both villages almost burnt to ashes. To combat such disasters, the Thar Foundation will establish fully equipped emergency response and rescue teams, thus enabling Thari communities to mitigate and manage disasters. Several affectees of fire incidents have been provided relief and rehabilitation support.

### 7.5.1 Drought Relief Project

To mitigate drought conditions of the region, Thar Foundation team undertook a challenging work to ensure timely distribution of fodder in four Union Councils of Taulkas of district Tharparkar. Livestock and Fisheries Department, Government of Sindh (GoS) entrusted a task to Thar Foundation and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) under Thar Fodder Distribution Project (TFDP). To support heard-owner poor households in Taulka of Islamkot, Thar Foundation has successfully completed TFDP with the support of Livestock & Fisheries Department, Government of Sindh. A total of 21,100 households were benefitted from TFDP in 6 Union Councils of district Tharparkar well above the target of covering 4 Union Councils. Beneficiaries were selected through a scientific survey under a fix criterion and distributed 75Kg of nutritious Vanda fodder so that their animals produce healthy meat and milk.

### 7.5.2 Flood Relief Project

In August 2020, main spinal drain of Left Bank Outfall Drain (LBOD) project suffered a 350ft wide breach after above normal rains in lower Sindh. The breach inundated vast areas of Kaloi taluka of Tharparkar below Naokot town rendering more than 10,000 people homeless in the area. Adding flood affected people in Mirpurkhas, Umerkot and Sanghar, more than 70,000 people were uprooted. Thar Foundation identified a long strip of roadside near Naokot where 2,000 people were living under shabby shelters. These 2000 affectees were provided freshly cooked meals for approx. two weeks. More than 1100 people were provided health assistance through mobile health facility of Thar Foundation. District Health Office, Pakistan Rangers and Indus hospital also supported this health assistance work.

## 8. SDG 13: Climate Action

Thar Foundation also strives for conserving natural resources of the area as a response to climate change challenge. SECMC & Thar Foundation are committed to conserve eco-systems and biodiversity in Thar. Vulture Conservation is the first step in this direction as this is a threatened bird. Thar Foundation has partnered with IUCN, a globally recognized organization with mandate and capacity to support us to achieve this objective.

Under the project, the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) with the support of Sindh Wildlife Dept. and Bannh Beli has completed a provincial level Vulture Baseline Survey in 2020. Safe Breeding Habitat - Identification of 112 vulture nests on trees and in Karoonjhar. Measures have been taken for promotion of Sustainable Livestock Management Practices for reduced use of harmful vaccine. Also, community / public awareness and education material on Vulture Importance (02 workbooks) have been developed for School Environmental Education in Sindhi and English.

Under another initiative, IUCN is developing a Baseline of fauna and flora of Tharparkar with the involvement of Sindh Wildlife Dept, Zoological Survey of Pakistan and local universities.

## 9. SDG 15: Life on Land:

### 9.1 Thar Million Tree Project

A million-tree plantation project initiated for green Thar. The Thar Foundation plans to plant 1000,000 trees to combat climate change, the Foundation has created an oasis in the desert. Plantation till-date made is around 850,000. The survival Rate of plant is more than 65%. Saplings have also

been provided to district government, taluka administration, local NGOs, youth groups and individuals to increase green cover in Thar. Adoption of innovative research's in field of forestry to maximize the survival and minimize the water utilization. Thar Foundation has also established Sindh's largest private sector nursery which provides saplings to local communities and organizations free of cost to make Thar a green area.

### 9.2 Bashir Ansari Green Park

Thar foundation has built the Bashir Ansari Green Park, the first park in the region, to promote recreational activities for children and adults alike on 65 acres area. More than 80,000 saplings are planted till date and every day it is increasing. Domesticated Birds Conservation is also being done at the park with species like ducks, deer's, peacocks etc. A mini zoo is also developed inside the park for visitors and kids. A very purpose-oriented Kids Playing area is developed with a variety of kid's swings.

The park has been converted into a public-recreation place. Motorized Merry Go Round has also been installed and mini food street is in progress. Play area for families has been developed, which is being visited by many local people and visitors.

Thar Foundation has emerged as a powerful force for good in the region of Tharparkar where its interventions across a broad array of high impact areas has already proven to be an effective impetus in bringing about a positive change in the region and accomplishing the definition of LEAVING NO ONE BEHIND. Adopting global best practices for social development, testifying its commitment with welfare of the local population, the Foundation has pledged to pursue the selected SDGs for Islamkot and make it the country's first SDGs-accelerated Tehsil by 2024. The Foundation, established to improve life standard of the indigenous communities, pursues various sustained interventions in key sectors of human development like Health, Education, Safe Drinking Water, Sustainable Livelihood, Wome Empowerment, and Human Resource Development.

Hidden away in a cocoon away from civilization, Thar and its people represent an ageless, timeless beauty and a way of living that has long been lost. Yet what remains a striking feature of the desert landscape is the resilience and tenacity of its people who continue to live a century behind the rest of the country. Regarded as one of the poorest districts in Sindh yet the harsh reality has not changed the humble, harmonious nature of the Thari people who revel in little that they have – portraying an effortless spirituality that is born out of their synchronicity with the desert and the lessons it teaches them.

# Climate & Environment Change a Risk Multiplier



Sana Zulfiqar

*Climate change and environmental change* are not synonymous, though they do feed in to and feed off each other. Climate change acts as a risk multiplier, accelerating the pace of environmental change in the form of decline and degradation of natural resource environments in rural and urban contexts. It poses a threat to the full enjoyment of human rights and has a disproportionate impact on the poor, and particularly those who have the weakest coping mechanisms and high dependence on natural resources.

*Leave no-one behind* (LNB) is undoubtedly a formidable goal - but it is by no means unachievable. Given that the narrative on LNB is still evolving, and convergence of LNB and Climate & Environment (C&E) policies and programming are still being discussed across governments, policy makers and communities. Through a concerted and collaborative effort on understanding, empowering and including for change, it is to integrate LNB across climate and environmental programming and policy interventions, whilst at the same time helping to mainstream C&E into wider sustainable development actions and initiatives to further progress on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Only then can we make progress towards delivering equitable sustainable development.

*A new way of thinking* about vulnerability and exclusion is needed, which involves inclusive policy and planning, better targeting and reaching all on equitable grounds, and helps to realize the full potential of poverty alleviation approaches and interventions especially in a fast changing global context. This is where the concept of 'Leave No-one Behind' comes in.

*'Mounting inequality is not just a side effect of weather and climate but of the interaction of related impacts with multiple deprivations at the context-specific intersections of gender, age, race, class, caste, indignity, and (dis)ability'* (Olsson, 2014, p. 807)

There is a consensus that climate and environmental change is a significant barrier and challenge to achieving the aims of sustainable development. It has the potential to reverse the equity gains and the progress achieved so far in the delivery of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), and threatens the anticipated outcomes in the context of the SDGs, particularly in the context of 'leaving no-one behind'. Climate change and environmental change can expose vulnerable groups to new risks and worsen existing vulnerabilities resulting in deeper marginalization, poverty and inequalities.

The dynamic interactions between environmental change and existing socio-economic structures governing resource access and use means that it is the already marginalized communities who are the most at-risk of being stuck in a vicious cycle of poverty and exclusion (Adger, 2005). Climate change impacts, similarly, affect the extreme poor disproportionately, compounding the pre-existing vulnerabilities and drivers of marginalization – in fact, estimates suggest that up to 720 million people are at risk of facing extreme poverty from climate impacts between 2030 and 2050 (Granoff, 2015).

The capacity of extreme poor communities to recover from climatic shocks and stresses is hindered by their limited financial and social resources to protect themselves, respond to and recover from climate shocks and stresses, as well as the extent of their dependencies on natural resources. Thus, disasters tend to have enormous impacts on their lives in terms of asset or livelihood loss. Some people in extreme poverty reside in remote zones that are often neglected due to a lack of connectivity and inaccessibility, and are thus particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Such extreme poor often do not have sufficient finances and support to move to safer areas, and hence are in need of further support. COVID19 is one of the eye opening example.

Among the extreme poor, socially excluded or marginalized groups are particularly vulnerable to the threats of climate and environmental change. The *Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change* (IPCC) confirms that: "People who are socially, economically, culturally, politically, institutionally, or otherwise marginalized are especially vulnerable to climate change and also to some adaptation and mitigation. Differences in vulnerability and exposure arise from non-climatic factors and from multidimensional inequalities often produced by uneven development processes" (IPCC, *Fifth Assessment Report (AR5): Impacts, Adaptation, and Vulnerability, 2014*). Further, poorly designed and implemented climate and environmental interventions can themselves worsen inequality and increase poverty and exclusion.

Climate & Environment interventions are a significant opportunity to reduce inequality and empower the poor and excluded. They can help to address pathways to ensure: 'leave no-one behind'. This can be mutually beneficial for achieving both C&E and sustainable development objectives. Importantly, we must emphasize that the focus

on LNB within the climate and environmental context is not about seeing the extreme poor and socially excluded as a problem. In fact, a focus on the drivers of poverty and marginalization can be mutually beneficial, and deliver a range of positive outcomes such as value for money, empowerment, inclusive and sustainable development and more effective outcomes from climate and environmental interventions.

It is prerequisite to identify the core drivers of poverty and exclusion and how these could be addressed, as well as undertake political economy analysis to identify barriers within different institutions for different actors. Therefore, here some particularly important groups are outlined however these would need to be examined carefully for each context, as poverty and exclusion can be much localized: women and girls people with disabilities older people children youth (including adolescents), minority groups based on ethnicity, faith or caste displaced persons etc.

A World Bank study (*World Bank, 2010, p. 133*) states that “where women and girls have less access to and control over resources (material, financial, and human), and have fewer capabilities than men, these impediments undermine their capacity to adapt to existing and predicted impacts of climate change, and to contribute important knowledge and insights to adaptation and mitigation decision-making processes. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that climate change also reinforces existing gender inequalities in the key dimensions that are most crucial for coping with climate-related change, including inequalities in access to wealth, new technologies, education, information, and other resources such as land”.

*Plan International (2011)* further highlights that girls and young women often suffer more from the shortages of food and from a lack of privacy and safety of toilet and bathing facilities and sleeping arrangements in the aftermath of disaster. This is because boys tend to receive preferential treatment in rescue efforts. Moreover, in many countries, girls are discouraged from learning survival skills and can often lack of knowledge and skills to deal with climate risks. In relation to other target groups, gender was the well-documented in terms of its evident links to C&E. Further it is also evident that gender has cross-cutting relevance across each of the other groups. Therefore, the gender dimension and integrated within each the groups where possible is carefully considered. Due to pre-existing vulnerabilities and inequalities, people with disabilities face disproportionate impacts of climate change. For instance various reports highlight - Increasing displacement / migration or instance of necessary migration prevented due to disability in times of disasters. (*GPDD, 2009*) Human security and protection issues during disasters can increase difficulties of disabled people. (*GPDD, 2009*) Reduced access to infrastructure,

shelter and basic services (*CBM*). According to the Women's Refugee Commission (*2008*), the potential for discrimination on the basis of disability is heightened at times of disasters due to resource scarcity. Women, children and elderly with disabilities may be abandoned and they may face difficulties in accessing health care, food and shelter.

The World Disasters Report highlight that for every child killed by a natural disaster, three become impaired (*ADD International, 2014*). It is likely that climate and environmental change can affect food security. Decreasing food security and resulting malnutrition can lead to impairments, particularly as malnourished mothers give birth to low birth weight babies who in turn may become cognitively impaired, as well as physically stunted. (*UNICEF, 2015*) (*UNICEF, 2009*). People with disabilities show in a mortality rate two to four times higher than that of the nondisabled population in many disaster situations. (*Sagramola, Alexander, & Kelman*).

Older people can be confronted by poverty, discrimination and marginalization. 26 million older people are affected by natural disasters every year, and their ill-health, disability, lack of mobility and sometimes limited social support networks affects their chances to adequately prepare for, respond to and recover from climate-related extreme events. Age International highlights that older people have specific vulnerabilities to disasters, shocks and stresses.

“Climate change threatens children's survival, development, nutrition, education, and access to health care – all of which are children's rights and enshrined in the Convention on the Rights of the Child (*CRC*)...The impacts of climate change will likely continue to worsen over the lifetime of today's children, and future generations. The decisions made now will have greatest impact on our children” (*UNICEF, 2015, p. 11*). The World Health Organization (WHO) has estimated that 88% of climate change-related disease burden will be experienced by children under five years of age (*UNICEF, 2013*). *UNICEF (2015)* estimates that over 500 million children live in extremely high flood occurrence zones and as high as 160 million live in high or extremely high drought severity zones. There is therefore a high probability of flooding, drought and heat stress in some of the most dense child population areas globally. The study notes that overlapping crises, such as floods combined with conflict and/ or poverty can exacerbate the vulnerability of children. *UNFPA (2009, p vi)* states 'Young people between 10 and 24 years constitute over 1.5 billion people in the world, of which 70 percent live in developing countries. Thus, young people, especially young women, are particularly vulnerable to projected climate change impacts'. Within this group, the sub-group of adolescents (*defined by UN as young people of the age 13-19*) is significant to consider in the context of climate and

environmental change. According to UNICEF, 9 out of 10 adolescents live in developing countries facing the brunt of climate change. Climate-related disruptions can compromise health and nutrition levels and interrupt the education of adolescent boys and girls (UNICEF, 2011).

Some existing studies suggest that the often close relationship of some indigenous people and minorities with their natural environments makes them especially sensitive to the effects of climate and environmental change. For example, a briefing by Baird (Baird, 2008) suggests that minorities tend to live in areas which are more marginal and exposed to climate impacts. The *IPCC 5th Assessment Report* further recognizes that disproportionate effects of climate change can occur based on racial identity and income status.

The common barriers and challenges for embedding LNOB in C&E policies and programs of different sizes, sectors and scope alongside the opportunities to address them. The challenges include issues such as data, scale, heterogeneity,

communication and physical access. Opportunities are based on contextualizing the LNB strategy and framework in C&E terms to set a robust approach to positively embrace the role of extreme poor and excluded groups as future agents of change. To ensure the extreme poverty and social exclusion are addressed in an integrated manner in the environment and climate context there is a need to understand the action by building on data, context and evidence, to empower for change by enabling voice, empowerment and accountability and inclusion for opportunity by catalyze inclusive growth, institutions and services (based on DFID entry points) so that any adverse impacts are minimized, and the opportunities to leverage the full potential of the most vulnerable groups are maximized. These mentioned principles can provide an excellent foundation for inclusive policies and programs providing better value for money, enhanced impacts on poverty alleviation and sustainable development whilst harnessing the full potential of the most vulnerable and marginalized.

# Distribution of COVID-19 Vaccine and Commitment to Leave No One Behind



Saleem Shahzad

***“Everybody is going for a finite pie. The pie is fixed for now and everybody wants a slice of it”.***

*(Dr. Faisal Sultan Special Assistant to the Prime Minister on Health Government of Pakistan).*

Despite all humanly possible efforts to contain Covid-19 neither through Non Pharmaceutical Interventions or use of antiviral drugs neither herd immunity could be achieved nor could the pandemic be eradicated. Consequently, Covid-19 vaccine is being looked upon as a savior of mankind. However, access to the vaccine by all remains questionable. According to the reports, rich nations have accumulated vaccine in excess to their genuine requirement while poor countries are yet to receive quantities barely sufficient to partially cover their population. In this article, different dimensions of access to vaccine by all will be discussed.

According to John Hopkins University of Medicine, there are 102 million Corona cases in the world while 2.2 million people have so far died. A glimpse at country-wise breakup of deaths transpires that USA remains the worst hit with 436,000 deaths followed by Brazil with 222,000 deaths. Next nine countries in the list are Mexico, India, UK, Italy, France, Russia, Spain, Iran and Germany with deaths ranging between 53,000-156,000.

A total of seven vaccines are available for public use, in limited quantities. At least 55 nations have invested billions of dollars into developing new vaccine technologies, testing in thousands of volunteers, scaling up manufacturing, and then bringing them to market in record time. None of these vaccines, on its own, is enough to inoculate a global population of some 7.8 billion people. But together they

represent humanity's best chance of ending a scourge that has claimed more than 2million lives and triggered global economic calamity.

With the start of the global vaccination campaign, countries have experienced uneven access to vaccines. Israel has surpassed other countries in rate of inoculations with 37.1 doses administered for every 100 people. It may, however, be highlighted that most countries haven't yet given their first shots. Delivering billions of vaccines to stop the spread of Covid-19 worldwide will be one of the greatest logistical challenges ever undertaken.

While every country is making frantic efforts to secure vaccine, 8.49 billion doses have already been set aside. That would be enough to cover more than half the world's population (most vaccines use two doses), if the vaccine shots were distributed evenly. However, unfortunately this is not the case. Rich countries have accumulated extensive supplies, and ultra-cold storage requirements make some vaccines difficult to deliver to far-flung places. Some countries may have to wait until 2022 or later before supplies are widely available. AstraZeneca's two-dose shot is the early leader, with pre-purchase agreements that would cover 1.52 billion people—more than twice as many as any other candidate. In total, Bloomberg has identified more than 100 agreements.

S. No.	Vaccine	Manufacturing Country
1	AstraZeneca	UK
2	CanSinobio	China
3	Pfizer	USA-Germany
4	SinoPharm	China
5	Sputnik	Russia
6	Johnson & Johnson	USA
7	Novavax	USA

S. No.	Country	Coverage (%age)
1	Canada	330
2	Australia	230
3	UK	302
4	France	183
5	Germany	183
6	Italy	183
7	Spain	183
8	Norway	183
9	Sweden	183
10	Denmark	183
11	Japan	151
12	Pakistan	26
13	India	85

Source: Bloomberg

#### Global Vaccination Campaign:

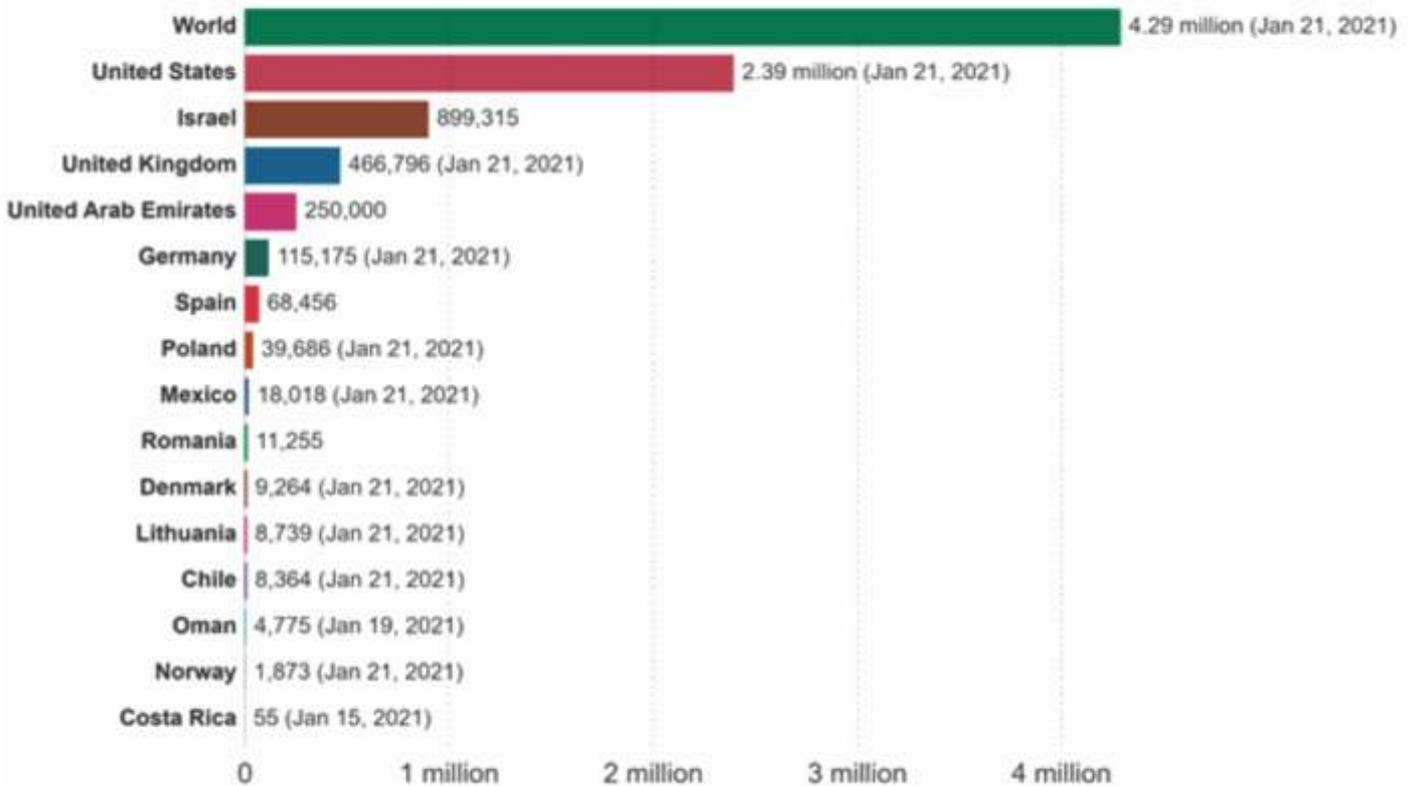
Country	No. of doses administered	Per 100 people	Last updated
<i>Global total</i>	<i>60,314,484</i>		<i>Jan. 22</i>
U.S.	19,841,721	6.04	Jan. 22
China	15,000,000	1.07	Jan. 20
EU	7,949,034	1.79	Jan. 22
U.K	5,849,899	8.76	Jan. 22
Israel	3,361,226	37.14	Jan. 22
U.A.E.	2,339,078	21.76	Jan. 22
Germany	1,501,639	1.81	Jan. 22
Italy	1,312,275	2.17	Jan. 22
Turkey	1,202,470	1.45	Jan. 22
Spain	1,165,825	2.51	Jan. 22
India	1,043,534	0.08	Jan. 22
France	963,139	1.49	Jan. 22
Russia*	800,000	0.55	Jan. 21
Canada	765,791	2.04	Jan. 22
Poland	644,999	1.70	Jan. 21
Mexico	552,335	0.43	Jan. 21
Romania	385,936	1.99	Jan. 22
Saudi Arabia	295,530	0.87	Jan. 18
Argentina	279,602	0.62	Jan. 22

Source: Bloomberg

## Number of people fully vaccinated against COVID-19, Jan 22, 2021

Our World  
in Data

Total number of people who received all doses prescribed by the vaccination protocol. This data is only available for countries which report the breakdown of doses administered by first and second doses.



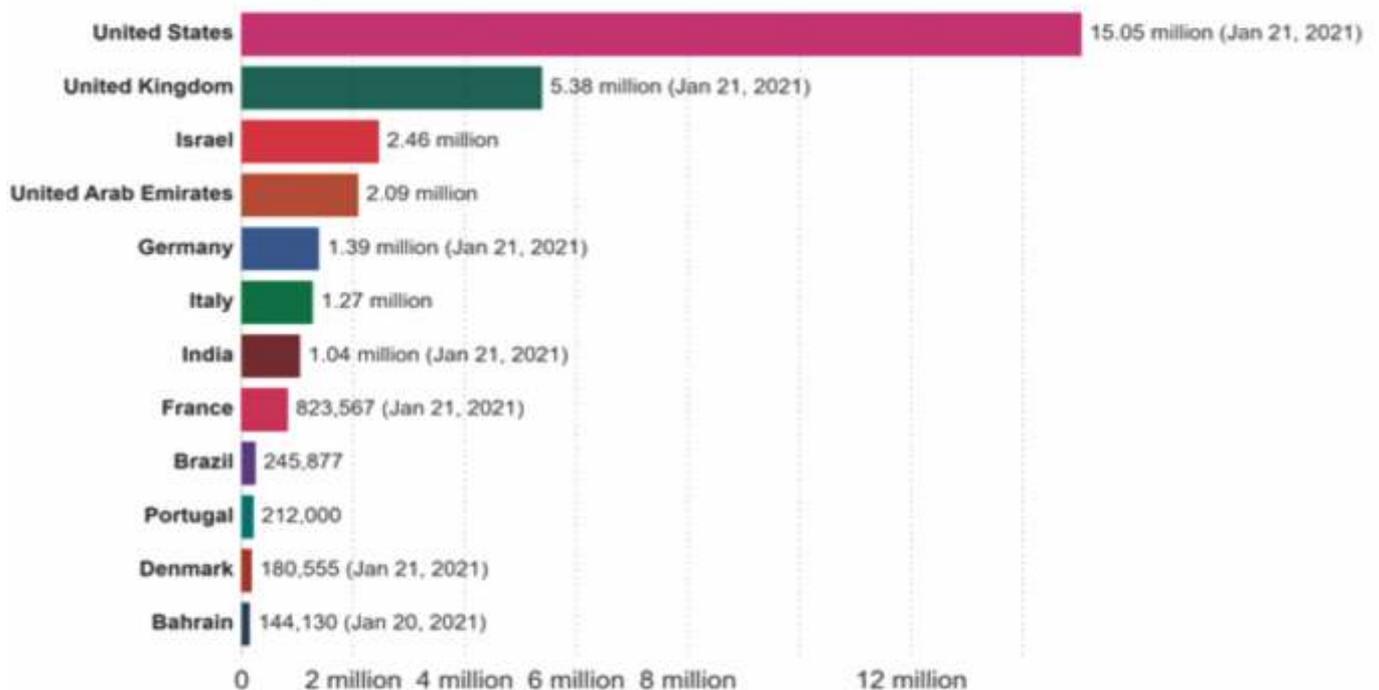
Source: Official data collated by Our World in Data – Last updated 22 January, 19:03 (London time)

OurWorldInData.org/coronavirus • CC BY

## Number of people who received at least one dose of COVID-19 vaccine, Jan 22, 2021

Our World  
in Data

Total number of people who received at least one vaccine dose. This may not equal the number of people that are fully vaccinated if the vaccine requires two doses.



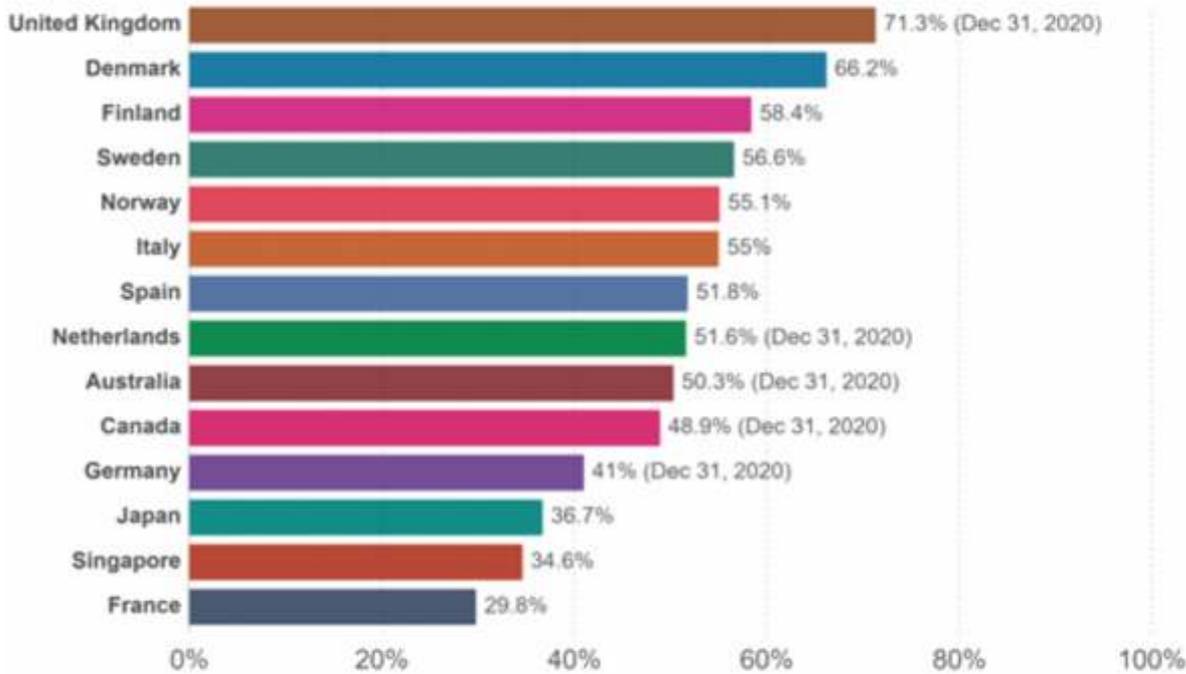
Source: Official data collated by Our World in Data – Last updated 22 January, 19:03 (London time)

OurWorldInData.org/coronavirus • CC BY

## Share who would get a COVID-19 vaccine if it was available to them this week, Jan 14, 2021



Share of survey respondents who agree with the statement: "If a COVID-19 vaccine were made available to me this week, I would definitely get it."



Source: Imperial College London YouGov Covid 19 Behaviour Tracker Data Hub – Last updated 18 January 2021, 09:52 (London time)  
 Note: Months containing fewer than 500 survey respondents are excluded. Respondents were presented with a 1 to 5 scale, ranging from "Strongly agree" (1) to "Strongly disagree" (5). We consider responses of 1 or 2 to be in agreement with the statement.  
 OurWorldInData.org/covid-vaccinations • CC BY

It is quite evident from the aforementioned tables that the countries, who were hit hard by Covid-19 in terms of death toll, haven't been able to secure access to vaccine. For example, Brazil was the 2<sup>nd</sup> in the list after USA to bear the brunt of Covid-19 but its name is not included among the countries who secured vaccine. Likewise, Canada, UK, Australia and European countries have gathered vaccine which is sufficient for 200-300 percent of population.

As regards to strategies to secure vaccines, this widely varies. The U.S. struck unilateral deals for all of its supply. Dozens of countries will get vaccines through Covax, a consortium backed by the World Health Organization to ensure equitable vaccine distribution. Bloomberg has identified more than 100 agreements.

# Role of Local Actors in Leaving No One Behind



Ejaz Khan

There are people in the world compelled to take refuge due to manmade or natural disasters or due to unfavorable geo political environments or conflicts. All these people have been given a common characteristic by the societies where they took shelter whether whatsoever they belonged to developed or third world nations and tag as “refugee”. Similarly, in various conflicts and disasters, the people displaced due to unfavorable situations which are later categorized by their own countries as “Internally Displaced People (IDPs)”. People living without availing their fundamental rights are called the “Marginalized/cornered people”. The existing hurdles and lack of opportunities to access basic human needs and services are called “poverty”. People having physically challenges/impairments to live their lives as living by others in a normal situation are called disable people.

The phenomenon of “Leaving No One Behind” means ending extreme poverty in all its forms, and reducing inequalities among the individuals (vertical) and groups (horizontal). Key to Leaving No One Behind' is the prioritization and fast-tracking of actions for the poverty stricken and the marginalized people – known as progressive universalism.

The pledge to leave no one behind is embedded at the heart of the Sustainable Development. It means that the international community has agreed to make a concerted effort to identify and lift up those who are furthest behind first (SDGs). The pledge to leave no one behind is a commitment to end extreme poverty in all its forms and to act explicitly to ensure that those who have been left behind can catch up to those who have experienced greater progress.

When we are implementing the programme on the local level, it is imperative to make sure to reach out to the furthest behind first. This approach offers opportunities and poses challenges, e.g. regarding the question of how to measure the implementation of LNOB.

Away from home, refugees and internally displaced people are often faced with barriers to access basic services. States have a responsibility to ensure that all refugees/IDPs are granted the rights to adequate services, without regard to

their legal residence, nationality or other classifications that may serve as hindrances. Like all individuals, refugees/IDPs should have access to information and the opportunity to participate in decision-making processes that affect their rights.

There are some gaps like finance and funding, insufficient data, evaluation mechanism, lacking of coordination of actors, inclusivity of marginalized groups not well defined, lacking political will of governments to implement, lack of proper accountability mechanism, missing/not well defined Indicators, insufficient civic space for participatory implementation & monitoring, lack of awareness in population etc.

Lack of coordination amongst the actors may not help in this regard. The entry points for joint action amongst all the actors involved are:

1. Focus on “Leave No One Behind” as universal aspect.
2. Data needed to close knowledge gaps.
3. Inclusive approach: raising voices/empowerment.
4. Holding governments to account.
5. Increase accountability of NGOs towards marginalised groups.
6. Coordination across all actors and levels.

## Key conclusions:

“Leave No One Behind” is not properly addressed in monitoring, review and implementation. To make implementation relevant to marginalised groups, it must be mainstreamed across all national policies (plus international commitments). To inform policy planning, more locally rooted data and research is needed. Our work showed that community members, when armed with proper tools and knowledge, have the capacity to monitor the implementation in their own area - and inform local decision making and planning.

# Pension Reforms to Improve Older People's Life in Pakistan



Waqas Qureshi

Of the 15 million older people living in Pakistan, only three million of them currently receive a pension. This overall lack of social protection means that many older people lead very precarious lives in Pakistan.

Pakistan urgently needs to adopt policy reforms to create a better social protection system that would ensure every older person can receive a pension and live with dignity as they grow older.

Rising unemployment and inflation are making it increasingly difficult for families to care for older relatives, causing increasing stress and anxiety.

Pakistan has typically relied on its strong family system to care for and provide financial support for people in their older age. Parents dedicate their lives to raising their children and ensuring they get a good education, so they expect their children to support them when they get older.

None of this has been helped by the recent COVID19 pandemic. As Sher Shah, a 73-year-old man from Nowshera explained, "Usually we are dependent for household finances on our children and young people. They work and support us. But they have been unable to continue their work or business due to Corona and the lockdown, and this has resulted in depression, as we are unable to meet our financial needs. We are not getting medicines on time. Money is required for medicines and food, of course."

## Inadequate pension system

Pakistan only has two pension schemes which reach a bare three million of the country's 15 million older people.

One is a tax-funded scheme for government employees, which reaches only seven to ten per cent of older people. The second is a contributory Employee Old Age Benefit Institute (EOBI) scheme, for employees in the private sector.

All businesses with more than five employees are supposed to register for the EOBI. But the reality is that only 84,000 employers have signed up to the scheme which reaches no more than eight million people - out of a labour force of 75 million. With this low engagement, it is seriously exposed to the risk of failure.

•An employee must contribute to this scheme for at least 15 years to become eligible to receive this pension on retirement - at 60 for men, and 55 for women. And if employees only make the minimum contribution, they will receive only PKR 8,500 (\$52 USD) a month on retirement, representing less than half the minimum wage.

The cost of the pension for government employees is proving to be a source of concern for the government. Public sector pensions are exclusively funded through the national budget and are by far the government's largest social protection expenditure. In the 2019-2020 budget, the Federal Government allocated PKR 421 billion (USD2.733 billion) to pensions; this constituted 5.7% of the total current expenditure in the federal budget or about 3.2% of GDP.

Based on current population trends, this is likely to increase to around 11% of GDP by 2050.

Of even greater concern, however, is the fact that even though the cost of pension payments is high, the actual reach is very low, covering not more than 10% of retirees.

## Pension Reforms Proposal for Financial Sustainability

As it is currently designed, the country's pension system is not capable of ensuring even basic income security for all older Pakistanis. Without reforms, the ageing population will face uncertainty and deprivation as they grow older.

Based on the context and performance of the current pension system, HelpAge is advocating for a reform of pension policy in Pakistan, proposing four complementary reforms:

### 1. Finance the pensions of government employees through their contributions instead of general taxes

This proposal explores turning the government's non-contributory scheme into a contributory one.

In this scenario, Pakistan's government would receive contributions from two million government employees. This could reduce the government liability and the contributions could be used to cover the payment of a social pension to informal workers, thereby creating a more sustainable system.

### 2. Expand the coverage of the contributory pension scheme

To increase pension coverage in the private sector, the government should ensure that all businesses register for the EOBI.

Pakistan has a big private sector, with a labour force of around 75 million people, and people want to contribute to their pension so that they can receive an

income in later life. But most employers are not registered for the EOBI.

The government should explore ways of enabling small and medium size businesses to enroll their employees in the scheme, while strengthening monitoring and enforcement systems to compel employers to register for the scheme.

### **3. Introduce a subsidized pension scheme for informal workers**

The majority of Pakistan's labour force works in the informal sector - including agriculture - and is self-employed. This proposal calls for the government to introduce a subsidized and simplified contributory scheme for informal workers.

This scheme would also contribute to a gender responsive pension system, as many women and transgender people work in the informal sector.

### **4. Immediately a social pension to provide basic income security for older people without a pension**

In a representative survey of older people in Pakistan conducted in 2019, nearly 40 per cent reported having no income at all, while a further 28 per cent had average monthly incomes of less than PKR 10,000 (USD 65). The situation of older women is even more precarious, with two-

thirds having no income at all.

To ensure that all older people have at least basic income security, the government should follow the example of more than 100 countries globally and implement a social pension. The social pension can be “pension-tested” and be restricted to those who do not have any pension. With the above recommendations, the coverage of the contributory pension would grow over time, leaving fewer people dependent on the social pension.

Almost every second older person in Pakistan lives with a disability, older women are unlikely to have any income security like a pension, and older transgender people are frequently discriminated against and excluded, leaving them dependent on community charities. Something must be done.

These four policy reforms would contribute to a better resourced social protection system without creating an undue burden on the government. If they were put into practice, we might be able to live in a country where it would be possible for each older person would be able to say: “I have a pension”.

# Local Humanitarian Action Leaves No One Behind



Khalid Bin Majeed

Natural or manmade disasters are sudden extreme events causing serious disruption to the functioning of a community or a society. Though they have been stalking humankind since time immemorial, the dramatic damage caused by them in the recent past has become a cause for national and international concern.

Over the past decade, the number of natural and manmade disasters across globe has increased inexorably. From 1994 to 1998, reported disasters averaged at about 420 per year but from 1999 to 2003, this figure went up to an average of over 700 disaster events per year, showing an increase of about 60 per cent.

Disasters appear in shape of earthquakes, tsunamis, volcanic eruptions, floods, droughts, atmospheric disturbances, cyclones, fires, internal military conflicts, and wars. Their impact appears in shape of massive killing of human populations, loss of agricultural lands, livelihood and shelter, poverty, hunger, disease breakout, internal displacements and migrations and associated crimes like gang wars, abductions, kidnapping, rapes, thefts, and murders.

In such disturbing scenarios, the widespread negative impact often exceeds the ability of the affected countries to effectively respond. As a result, humanitarian organizations like the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies [IFRC] and its 191 national societies line up to provide assistance to tens of millions every year, mobilizing billions of dollars into the disaster-hit countries. A major part of this international assistance comes in the form of trained manpower, state-of-the-art equipment, health specialists, doctors, paramedics, trained volunteers and military personnel for assistance in relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction.

When we talk of disaster-hit countries and assistance by the international community and humanitarian organizations, we can not ignore Pakistan, which like other South Asian countries, continues to suffer from a plethora of natural and human-induced hazards threatening the lives and livelihoods of its citizens.

Pakistan in particular is highly vulnerable to natural disasters like floods, earthquakes, landslides, health emergencies and droughts, but also to man-made disasters such as fires, large-scale industrial accidents, civil unrest, conflict and terrorism, creating large numbers of refugees and internally displaced people.

According to official data, a total of 117,038 people were killed and 2,869,142 affected during the five major earthquakes which struck the country between May 31,

1935 and October 8, 2005. The country witnessed 11 floods during the period between 1950 and 2010, leading to the deaths of over 10,000 people and affecting 45,320,446.

The country is also vulnerable to tsunami and other sea-based hazards along its long coastline. The country's 960-km coastal belt, particularly along Sindh, is occasionally battered by cyclones. In 1999, a cyclone ravaged large tracts in coastal districts of Thatta and Badin causing widespread loss to life and property. The cyclone of 1999 in Thatta and Badin districts wiped out 73 settlements, killing 168 people and 11,000 cattle, affecting around 0.6 million people and destroying 1,800 small and big boats and partially damaging 642 boats, causing a loss of Rs 380 million.

Given the frequent incidence of quakes, floods and other hazards, the Pakistan Red Crescent Society – the major humanitarian relief organization in Pakistan – together with the NDMA, the IFRC and its sister national societies wasted no time in responding with the provision of emergency relief to the affected population.

In many other parts of the country, PRCS-trained staff and volunteers are also active in Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK), flood and drought-affected districts in Balochistan province, providing food and non-food items and shelter to thousands of people.

In spite of the fact that the international humanitarian relief agencies leave no stone unturned to provide food and non-food items and shelter to the affected communities, thousands of deserving people may not be reached due to a number of factors, leaving them marooned and exposed to elements and threats of various nature.

The 2018 World Disasters Report released by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) says millions of people who need humanitarian assistance are being 'left behind' in their moments of greatest need. According to the report, even those who are prioritized to receive assistance do not always get the help they need.

The report lists five factors that explain why the international humanitarian sector is leaving millions of people behind.

The first and most obvious explanation is money. The gap between the funds needed by aid groups and the funds made available to them is growing every year.

In 2017, only about 60 per cent of \$23.5 billion appealed by UN-led humanitarian actors was received.

The second factor is access. In many a crisis, humanitarian

aid cannot reach everyone in need. This could be for geographical or political reasons, because of conflict and insecurity, or even because of bureaucratic and legal bottlenecks.

The third factor relates to information. In some settings, aid groups cannot reach people because they do not know they exist. For example, poor or non-existent mapping, particularly in remote areas and fast-growing urban slums, can render entire communities' invisible.

The fourth factor is more about how humanitarian organizations work. Often, aid groups unintentionally exclude groups of people because they lack the language skills and detailed understanding of the society to understand what is going on.

The final factor outlined in the report relates to people considered outside of the scope of humanitarian work. These are people who are not affected by conflict, disasters or health emergencies, but who nevertheless live in crisis and do not receive help from anyone. The report includes a

number of recommendations ranging from improving how data is collected to encouraging governments to prioritize and incentivize support to the people considered to be 'hardest to reach'. However, I would like to focus on one recommendation above all: the need to invest more time, more resources and more trust in local humanitarian organizations.

Local humanitarian groups, including the Pakistan Red Crescent Society, are uniquely placed to overcome the limitations outlined in the report. Their permanent presence means they can respond much quicker than their international counterparts and need less money to do so. They are also already present in many areas that international groups find inaccessible. They know who the most vulnerable people are, and how to reach them. They are present before, during and after the crises. They are the best hope for ensuring that those most in need of help are no longer left behind. It is time we all make true the pledge of making the last mile the first mile.

# Hussain Ullah – A True Image of Leaving No One Behind

The world has started working on the ambitious agenda **Leave No One Behind**, one of the underlying principles of the Sustainable Development Goals, adopted in 2015. There are many individual experts who realized the issue and spend their life on exploring ways to pledge and operationalize it in whatever capacity they can. Mr. Hussain Ullah's name can be considered among those.

21 March 2021 shook the humanitarian sector with the news of sad demise of Hussain Ullah, a colleague from UNOCHA Pakistan whom I titled as “Baba-e-Humanitarian Sector”. This news reminded us of the time when we got affiliated with this noble soul. A man coming from remote Allai region of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa was remembered by Mr. Usman Qazi, as “a shining but humble human being and a most committed humanitarian. I mentored him in his initial days but he soon surpassed many of us through unrelenting commitment and tireless work. The global humanitarian community lost a gem”.



Mr. Kamran Shariff recalls that he had the unique capacity to grasp issues at their core. Combined with a down-to-earth work method, he secured impressive outcomes. He also exhibited meticulous administrative skills that allowed him to plan and execute complex assignments very efficiently. Hussain was equally adept in dealing with a wide range of stakeholders: the humanitarian fraternity or civil and military functionaries. Therefore, for many external stakeholders, he emerged as UNOCHA Pakistan's first point of contact. Hussain Ullah was certainly cut for a much larger canvass. That was not to be, unfortunately. Dr. Manzoor Ahmed Awan considers him as one of the founders of National Humanitarian Network (NHN) – a sole representative of national humanitarian civil society organizations in Pakistan. He says that Hussain worked with NHN representatives on behalf of UNOCHA in laying the foundation stones of NHN, supporting NHN representation in Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), generating resources, developing strategies and fostering linkages. I and other colleagues spent some good time with him during early days of NHN. After hearing about his sickness, I called him and he never mentioned it to me. Instead he showed a lot of courage and talked a lot about humanitarian architecture in Pakistan with his signature vision and energy. During the year he handled this very well with courage and kept himself busy building a house for his family. I was impressed to know that he installed a drinking water cooler in his house lawn for the public. He did a lot during this short span of his life.

Mr. Naseer Memon expressed, “I am shocked to hear this tragic news. During my association with NHN, I had numerous interactions with him. A man always wearing a smile on face with a deep humility. It is hard to believe that he is no more with us. No words to express the grief.”

“No matter how up you get never forget where you came from” is proved by Hussain which was witnessed by those who attended his funeral. Kamran Shariff met a seminary teacher at funeral and asked him as to how he knew Hussain. He said, 'woh eik buhat acha insaan tha'. Translation: he was a great human being. Beside those with family and local affiliations, many came as Hussain cared for them, and worked for their betterment. I am a living example of his support as he facilitated introduction of my not-for-profit E-Learning programme in five schools of his remote region. It included one in Kanai where Hussain received his early education. Similarly, Sameen Ullah describes Hussain as a pillar of his life who not only saved him from the brutality of traditional approaches but strongly held his hands to clear the obstacles of his life with strong will.

A critical pathway to leaving no one behind is always considered as road to policy actions, introducing & developing strategies and procedures, raising voices on higher platforms, adopting a vision that is appreciated by all at high level forums and acknowledged in documents, However, before the death of Hussain, I never realized that how a person sitting in a system is taking small steps within his own capacity to ensure that people around him shall not be left behind and simultaneously advocating wherever he is going as a well-known dedicated humanitarian professional to bring a systematic policy change in the country. Every mouth was uttering small but powerful words to remember him - "supportive, kind, humble, great man, smiling face, helping, guiding, great contributor" etc. and is widely admired.

Hussain will always be remembered for his dedicated services and down to earth personality.

By: Sana Zulfiqar



