



TAHAFUZ

**Building Resilience through Community Based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM)
in the Sindh Province of Pakistan**

NFR on USAID OFDA Representative's Field Visit to Project Area

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Introduction

In October 2012, the Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) initiated a twelve month CBDRM project in the four districts of Sindh which are most vulnerable to natural hazards. These districts are Thatta, Badin, Tharparkar and Umerkot, and consist of 20 Union Councils in total. Funded by USAID OFDA, the project will benefit approximately 646, 942 people from 110, 879 households

Project activities include the formation of Village Disaster Risk Management Committees (VDMCs) in each of the 232 revenue villages, 20 Union Council Disaster Management Committees (UDMCs), developing and strengthening community institutions, mechanisms and capacities that systematically contribute toward alleviating disaster related losses. Advocacy and linkage development is also a major function of these committees.

RSPN is working with National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) and Thardeep Rural Development Programme (TRDP) for implementation. NRSP will implement project activities in Thatta and Badin districts whereas TRDP is responsible for Umerkot and Tharparkar.

Orientation workshops were organized to introduce newly inducted project staff to the project. Project launching workshops were also organized in all four districts, which were attended by local government officials, NGOs, LSOs and community representatives.

The Project Management Specialist (PMS) of USAID OFDA planned a visit to project area to evaluate the implementation process and interact with the project staff and target communities. Project Manager Tahafuz also joined PMS in this visit which started on 17th December 2012. A brief description of the visit is as follows.

Tuesday 18th December 2012 District Tharparkar

A meeting was held with TRDP core staff and Tahafuz PSU staff. PMS OFDA Mr. Ali gave a brief description of OFDA procedure and working mechanism, after which Project Coordinator Tahafuz Mr. Gulab presented a summary of project activities in the Thar region. He focused on following major points:

- These UCs were selected because they have been repeatedly hit by droughts and cyclones, which has badly affect the livelihoods of resource poor communities, who have consequently been forced to move out of the region.
- 72 revenue villages are included in these target UCs.
- A three step process was observed during formation of VDMCS; i) Introduction of project at individual settlements, ii) Preliminary nomination of representatives for the VDMC and iii) General body meeting of these nominees at village level to finalize the list of members for VDMC.
- He talked about the recent CBDRM ToT event where field staff participated along with one government official nominated by district administration.
- He added that they are maintaining regular contact with DDMA and sharing information with them, and that TRDP is already providing contingency assistance to district administration during emergencies.

- Discussing the Early Warning System, he said that contact numbers of all UDMC members will be shared with DDMA , especially Met Department and vice versa.

PMS asked the project staff for their feedback on the project and what changes they expect to achieve with these interventions. A staff member, Haresh, replied that the level of awareness and capacity of communities will improve, and they will be in a better position to cope with natural disasters. To a question about presence of District Disaster Management Coordinator in Tharparkar, Mr. Sajjad GM Ops TRDP said that this responsibility lies with the District Social Welfare Officer.

PMS recommended the project team to consult the Households Livelihoods Vulnerability data compiled by NDMA and District DRM plans developed by One UN and Government of Pakistan. Project Coordinator said that TRDP was an active partner in preparation of this document and that the current project will definitely strengthen their capacity and efficiency in handling disasters.

PMS stressed the need to keep in mind the end goal of all these efforts, i.e., enabling communities to effectively handle future natural disasters.



Project Management Specialist Meeting with TRDP staff in Tharparkar

Meeting with VDMC Saran, Tharparkar

After meeting staff in Mithi, the visitors accompanied TRDP team to the village Bitri, where a VDMC was recently formed. This village is situated in UC Dabhro and comprises of 16 settlements. Mr. Ramesh Kumar VDMC Manager presented a brief account of his village with

special reference to recurring disasters like drought, cyclones, earthquakes, fire incidents and heavy rains etc. etc. To a question of PMS about how communities handle droughts he said that people have enough cultivable lands but they lack resources and cannot install lift pumps to extract ground water. TRDP representative pointed out that efficient irrigation systems like gravitational distribution have been tested and demonstrated by them in the region, but their uptake is almost negligible due to lack of financial resources. Water Management Programme in public sector also demonstrated some practical solutions but on a very small scale.

Discussing potential options for dealing with the drought situation, the community members suggested proper support for livestock management, such as vaccination and provision of dried forage during drought periods. They also suggested training the local youth in non-farm sector to help them manage their livelihood.

The community members identified stock piles as most appropriate Critical Infrastructure to meet their needs besides water reservoirs and supply system.



A View of VDMC Meeting at Village Bitri in I UC Dabhro, Tharparkar District

After the VDMC meeting visitors proceeded to District Badin.

Tuesday 18th December 2012
District Badin

In the afternoon we had a meeting with Regional General Manager (RGM) NRSP and PSU colleagues. Project Coordinator (PC) gave a presentation on project activities in the region. To a

question from the PMS about expected changes in the community after the project, the PC said they will see a visible change in community attitude, their capacity to face disasters, minimized damages due to disasters and communities links developed with different stakeholders.

The RGM asked how to deal with the lack of awareness among communities about disasters and ways to handle them. There are gaps at the institutional level, ranging from individual households to the DDMA. He expected that at the end of project, awareness level of communities will definitely improve and they will be in a better position to face disasters. He also hoped that VDMCs and UDMCs will be useful in linking communities with all stakeholders.

PMS advised that the team must consult One UN DRM Plans prepared in collaboration with government agencies. This will help in identifying all stakeholders working in the area and duplication of efforts and resources could be avoided. He suggested that Households Livelihoods Vulnerability contingency plans for Badin prepared by NDMA should be consulted while working with communities. He also suggested that the focus should be on the end goal, that is, increased capacity and resilience of communities.

The Manager IRM expressed their wish of involving communities at all stages of the process of risk assessment, from hazard mapping to developing risk management plans to create ownership.

Wednesday 19th December 2012

A meeting was held with the DIU colleagues to evaluate their level of understanding about the project. The staff actively participated in discussion and presented their views and suggestions for better implementation of the project. Some points discussed are given below:

- Communities are aware of disasters but react in a disorganized manner, resulting in losses of lives and assets. The main objective of this project is to enhance capacities and support communities in implementing some mitigation structures.
- Major disasters occurred from 1999 onwards such as cyclones, floods and heavy rains. The recent 2010 floods and then 2011 devastating rains caused heavy disaster.
- Disasters are unavoidable but prepared at the grassroots level can be helpful in minimizing the losses.
- Warnings are issued by authorities but communities do not trust the source. When V/UDMCs will be in place communities will have trust in them as these will represent their villages.
- Live examples are there when communities face disasters very efficiently and as a result bounce back effectively. This is only possible because they are well prepared.



Meeting with DIU Team in Badin

Visit to Bahaal CPI in CO Gul Muhammad Thebo

Members of CO Gul Muhammad Thebo in UC Kadhan had participated in Bahaal Cash for Work project funded by USAID. This community had worked for rehabilitation of their link road which was damaged by heavy rainfall in 2011. The total cost of this CPI was rupees 137, 132 of which rupees 87, 800 was paid as wages to the laborers.

On arrival in the village the CO representative presented a brief account of activities undertaken by the community. Some initiatives undertaken by CO are given below:

- ✓ Education for the children in the village through department of education.
- ✓ Preparation of CNICs for all eligible members.
- ✓ Savings at CO level.
- ✓ Thinking and planning about community needs.
- ✓ Developing understanding about women rights and involving them in the development process. (The community has one CO each for men and women and the CPI under Bahaal project was implemented by female CO).
- ✓ Rehabilitation of damaged link road through USAID assistance

When asked about potential mitigation structures under Tahafuz project they identified a raised platform as rescue point, stockpiling food, and provision of drinking water supply scheme (Underground water is saltish and not fit for human consumption).

Visit to Bahaal CPI in CO Amir Bux Brohi

Our next destination was CO Amir Bux Brohi in UC Kadhan where community members had rehabilitated their brick pavement under Bahaal CFW project. This CPI was completed with a total cost of rupees 76, 218 of which rupees 61, 500 was paid to laborers as daily wages and rupees 14, 718 was paid as material cost. The CO members have done a good job in rehabilitating their damaged infrastructure and they were happy with the quality of work.



PMS attending CO meeting in CO Amir Bux Brohi, UC Kadhan

PMS gave a detailed introduction of Tahafuz project and different organizations involved in its implementation. He explained role of these organizations which include USAID, OFDA, RSPN, and NRSP. He asked the members to further elaborate community needs during disaster.

Members presented different options like:

- Safe evacuation
- Food supplies
- Complete shelter point with latrines and livestock management facilities, proper clothing, first aid, proper care of expecting women
- Ration stock piles
- ORS/Medicines
- Clean water containers

The female members present at the meeting suggested a shelter point with WASH facilities, clean drinking water, livestock management, fuel for kitchens and birth attendants. When asked to prioritize their needs the members agreed upon following:

- Raised shelters

- Livestock management (fodder and shelters)
- Clean water
- Health facilities
- Stoves and fuel (LPG cylinders)...this was stressed by female members.
- Skill development training for youth (Tractor mechanics, turning, cottage industry, sewing etc.)
- Poultry farming and kitchen gardening for women

Thursday 20th December 2012
District Thatta

The team travelled to VDMC Ghora Bari in UC Kharo Chan. This village comprises of 8 settlements and all settlements are represented in VDMC. The VDMC President gave a presentation about the village. The community is well organized and has past experience of working with many national and international organizations like WWF, IUCN, PPAF, AKF, NRSP and SAFCO. Like other villages in the area, Ghora Bari is prone to disasters such as cyclones, floods and Tsunami etc. They experienced severe damages during past disasters in 1999, 2007 and 2010. Government relief operations were hijacked by influential people and never reached the resource poor. He appreciated role of NGOs during 2012 disaster. The community independently arranged food items and distributed among needy who took refuge in local school building.



A female member of VDMC Ghora Bari talking to the visiting team

A lady from the village narrated her personal experience of recent disasters, where her house was severely damaged and her roof was destroyed. They survived by taking shelter in a nearby school, but this school does not have enough space to accommodate all affected households. Following possible interventions were suggested by the members:

- ✦ Raised platform with improved structure to accommodate human population and livestock
- ✦ Ration stocks for human and livestock
- ✦ Building houses on improved design
- ✦ Provision of V-fone sets as cellular phones stop working during a disaster
- ✦ Provision of fuel wood for kitchens



A VDMC member showing a model of improved structured house

Friday 21st December 2012
District Umerkot

Visiting team travelled to Umerkot to meet with project colleagues, partners and community. In Umerkot we had brief meeting with regional team before moving to village Lala Bah where VDMC members were waiting for the team. After introduction, the VDMC Manager presented a brief description of their village focusing on risks and opportunities. This area is prone to regular drought. Villagers are forced to move out to other irrigated areas with their livestock.

After presentation the floor was opened for discussions and input. PMS asked the members what change they expect from this project. One woman said that they will be better prepared for

all types of disasters like fires, droughts etc..She mentioned an incidence when a fire gutted two houses and the community extinguished the fire.



Meeting with VDMC members in Village Lala Bah UC Kaplore District Umerkot



A group photo with VDMC members of Village Lala Bah UC Kaplore District Umerkot

Another member raised the issue of the availability of drinking water. He said that women have to bring water from a settlement at about 4 kilometers. This problem can be solved by constructing a water reservoir in the middle of 5 villages and installing a desalination plant to make the water fit for human consumption. Similarly, rain water can also be harvested in a large lined reservoir.

Mobility was stated as one major problem as there is no proper transport system in the area. Nearest health facilities are available in Umerkot town but lack of transport system makes it difficult for the patients to reach there.

When asked about livelihood earning opportunities, the members said that they have talent and willingness, and if they are provided assistance they can enhance their skills and earn livelihoods. Rilli making (a traditional skill) and other handicrafts can help them financially if they are linked with market.

Possible interventions

- ✓ Food stock piles for human and livestock
- ✓ Skill development, handicraft
- ✓ Linking skills with potential market
- ✓ Plantation and reseeding of indigenous grasses which are disappearing from the area.
- ✓ Small ruminants
- ✓ Safe evacuation sites with required facilities
- ✓ Firefighting equipment
- ✓ Pre/Post natal care facilities



Meeting with TRDP team in Umerkot

Debriefing at District Office Umerkot

PMS appreciated the performance of project staff and the core team. CEO TRDP Mr. Zafar Junejo was also present in the meeting. PMS advised the project staff to update W3 matrix and share this with VDMCs/UDMCs so that they all are aware of all actors in this field.

He also observed that staff needs further clarity on how to mobilize V/UDMCs for developing linkages with all stakeholders. He added that project staff will have to play a proactive role in linking DMCs with all stakeholders.

He added that providing services and relief is responsibility of the government and communities have a legal right of claiming this from government. But this is only possible if communities are properly guided in this direction.

General observations

- Generally the staff in all districts had a clear understanding of the project.
- The visited communities also showed reasonable understanding and expressed their interest in learning and benefitting from this initiative.
- Communities have a good understanding of disasters and have been managing these but not well organized.
- Mostly communities showed dissatisfaction about relief activities by the government departments.
- Communities had very weak links with government agencies.
- The community members showed their firm willingness to benefit from Tahafuz project so that they are in a better position to face future disasters.
- The staff members were satisfied with the recent training on CBDRM and were confident that they will efficiently transfer the knowledge to communities.
- Senior management of partner RSPs is extending full support to project staff and they all want to make it a success.



Village map produced by VDMC members of Lala Bah in UC Kaplore District Umerkot



Female members of VDMC Lala Bah UC Kaplore District Umerkot



Female members of VDMC Ghora Bari UC Kharo Chan District Thatta



Village map of Ghora Bari UC Kharo Chan District Thatta

Annexure

Itinerary

Visitor: Ali Gohar Khan, OFDA Islamabad

Trip to: Karachi, Hyderabad, Tharparkar, Umerkot, Badin, Thatta

Trip Date: Dec 17-22, 2012

Monday, Dec 17, 2012

- 1000 Depart Islamabad
- 1155 Arrive at Karachi Airport
- 1915 Arrive at Desert Guest House Mithi district Tharparkar by road from Karachi using Javed Hussain Rent a Car Service. Night stay

Tuesday, Dec 18, 2012

- 0900 Depart Desert Guest House Mithi
- 1000 Arrive village Manjthi, district Tharparkar, field visit/meeting
- 1300 Depart village Manjthi
- 1530 Arrive United Hotel District Badin. Meeting with RSPN staff. Night stay

Wednesday, Dec 19, 2012

- 0800 Depart United Hotel Badin
- 0900 Arrive village Kadhan, district Badin, field visit/meeting
- 1030 Depart village Kadhan
- 1100 Arrive village Miti, Badin, field visit/meeting
- 1315 Depart village Miti
- 1530 Arrive SRO Guest House district Thatta

Thursday, Dec 20, 2012

- 0800 Depart SRO Guest House Thatta
- 0900 Arrive Garho, district Thatta, field visit/meeting

1100 Depart Garho
1145 Arrive Karo Chan, Thatta, field visit/meeting
1345 Depart Karo Chan
1645 Arrive Indus Hotel Hyderabad

Friday, Dec 21, 2012

0800 Depart Indus Hotel Hyderabad
1100 Arrive village Kaplore, district Umerkot, field visit/meeting
1200 Depart village Kaplore
1230 Arrive village Chhore, field visit/meeting
1400 Depart village Chhore
1700 Arrive Indus Hotel Hyderabad

Saturday, Dec 22, 2012

1200 Depart Hyderabad
1500 Arrive at Karachi Airport
1600 Depart Karachi
1755 Arrive Islamabad Airport