



## **Tahafuz**

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



#### **FIELD VISIT REPORT**

*13 February-22 February 2013*

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## **Introduction**

In the recent past, Pakistan has witnessed a variety of natural disasters which have caused immense losses of lives, livestock, property, assets and crops in different parts of country. This started with the earthquakes in 2005 which brought disaster in many parts of the country. The effects of this incident were worst in Azad Jammu & Kashmir and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, where more than eighty thousand people lost their lives and hundred thousands were left homeless. Innumerable losses occurred to houses, crops and livestock.

The year 2010 was another disastrous year due to heavy floods which brought devastation to many parts of the country. Rehabilitation was still underway when unprecedented torrential rains wreaked further havoc, starting from the mountainous Himalayan region down to the coastal areas. These rains affected millions of people throughout the country. About 19 million people have suffered as a result of rains, floods and cyclones during the past decade in the province of Sindh alone.

Although post disaster relief and rehabilitation was being taken care of no steps were being taken to build the capacity of communities to face future disasters. There was a need to build community resilience, to enable people to face such situations more efficiently and bounce back effectively.

Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) presented a proposal to USAID OFDA for their financial support in initiating a project in the most vulnerable areas of Sindh. A total of 232 revenue villages from 20 most vulnerable Union Councils in four disaster prone districts were selected for the project. The selected districts are Thatta, Badin, Tharparkar and Umerkot.

NRSP is working in two districts; Thatta and Badin whereas TRDP is implementing this project in Tharparkar and Umerkot. Both partner RSPs have vast experience of working with rural communities in these districts.

As part of planned activities, a team from the Islamabad PMU comprising of the Project Manager and Capacity Building Specialist visited the project districts to observe the field activities and performance of PSUs and DIUs in the districts. The team commenced with their visit on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2013 and spent ten days with the district teams.

### **13<sup>th</sup> -16<sup>th</sup> February 2013, District Umerkot**

The team arrived in Umerkot in the evening of the 13<sup>th</sup> of February. On the 14<sup>th</sup> we had a meeting with DIU colleagues and discussed progress in the district. The DPO of TRDP (Core Team) Mr. Ali Muhammad was also present in this meeting and contributed positively in the discussions. The Community Mobilizer, while stating effectiveness of current trainings narrated story of a trained lady who treated a goat by splinting its fractured leg.

DPO TRDP pointed towards issues and problems being faced by the field teams. Major issues he mentioned included sectarian and religious differences, lack of proper public transport facilities and difficulties in bringing people together. He said that all possible efforts were being

made to resolve these issues and the core team is providing all possible support to the project team.

A team member spoke of a community (Deh Nabi San Thar) which is willing to contribute to the cost for digging of a well that exceeds the average CCI cost of rupees 0.2 million. Water scarcity is a major problem for this drought prone village. The Project Manager asked them to wait till we seek clarification from senior management on this.

The Project Manager stressed the need for transparency in identification of CCIs and their implementation. He said that proper documentation of all steps is crucial for ensuring transparency.

After this meeting the team attended the Participatory Disaster Risk Assessment training arranged for VDMC members. In all, 33 VDMC members were participating in this training of which 16 were female and 17 male. Mr. Ayaz was facilitating the training sessions. He tried to keep all participants involved in the session. Proper banners and handouts were prepared for the session. He also used videos on disaster management which were liked by the participants. Group work and practical demonstrations were also carried out by the participants. The Project Manager and Capacity Building Specialist also talked to the participants, emphasizing further dissemination of knowledge down to the common individuals in their villages.

#### **Observations and Suggestions on Training Sessions**

1. Overall quality of training was satisfactory. In Umerkot the field team had prepared banners reflecting training items. These helped the participants understand the sessions easily. Similar banners should be prepared and used at all training events.
2. It is natural for women to hesitate in being vocal in the presence of other men. It was noted that some women kept silent only listening to the facilitator. The facilitator should make all efforts to focus on such participants and bring them into the mainstream discussion by asking them direct questions.
3. Quality of Village Disaster Maps was not up to required standards. CB Specialist has discussed how to prepare these maps with the field staff. His instructions must be followed and proper amendments made accordingly.
4. It is suggested whenever facilitators/ participants draw a hazard map it must include the following basic things/components :
  1. Direction
  2. Categorization of hazards i.e., high, medium, low
  3. Highlighting/identification of safe place in map is very important
  4. Safe evacuation route/ road that could be used in case of any type of emergency
  5. Index with suitable symbols and colors
5. It is suggested to prepare banners on different topics for better understanding of the participants
6. There is a need to make the training more practical, include practical activities and demonstrations
7. Handout should be prepared for the participants and need to share on daily basis covered topics; Sindhi version of CBDRM manual is available with partners and can be used for making presentations and handouts
8. Field teams should pay more attention to improve the quality of training in terms all aspects of the training

On 15<sup>th</sup> February the team went out to a randomly selected VDMC Kharoro Charan, where 4 female and 3 male VDMC members were waiting for us. Ms. Rasheeda the VDMC President welcomed the team and appreciated the idea of CBDM. She is an active lady working as community activist since 1998 and has vast experience of managing community affairs. She

said that despite their routine commitments and busy household schedules they decided to join this committee. While appreciating the capacity building program of VDMC members, she said this has brought a clear change in their perception about disaster and now they have an improved perspective. Responding to questions from the Capacity Building Specialist, members gave appropriate responses which showed that the training was effective and members have retained the learning.



#### **Picture of Meeting with VDMC Kharoro Charan in Umerkot District**

In this VDMC we also interviewed one VDMC office bearer and discussed with him about process of VDMC formation, role of VDMC in disaster management. The respondent Mr. Rattan Bheel is General Secretary of this VDMC and an active person. During his interview other members also presented their views and ideas. The members of this VDMC had a clear understanding of the VDMC approach and their responsibilities. They are holding regular meetings and maintaining a register on their own as VDMC register was not provided by RSPN.

Another member of VDMC Sonpur UC Khajrari was also interviewed on 16<sup>th</sup> February. This is a newly formed VDMC, so the interviewed person, who was President of this VDMC, was not very clear about the whole concept of VDMC and its functions. Field staff needs to pay more attention to such communities in order to raise their awareness level. In this village registers were also not provided by RSPN.

**16<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup> February 2013 District Tharparkar**

On 16<sup>th</sup> team travelled to Mithi and went straight to a training session. This session was being facilitated by Mr. Abid. In this training, 12 female and 13 male members participated from 5 VDMCs. This was the third training event in district Tharparkar and a total of 80 have been trained in these events.

On 17<sup>th</sup> February Mr. Khemchand facilitated the training and Capacity Building Specialist also provided technical support in formulation of village hazard mapping. Handouts were given out to the participants. Practical demonstration was also carried out by all participants in groups. Overall quality of training was satisfactory and CB specialist provided on site input to further improve the training.



### **Female participants in the training on Disaster Risk Management and Planning in Mithi-Tharparkar**

On 18<sup>th</sup> February team went to a randomly selected VDMC to interact with community members. The selected village was Deh Chaho and this VDMC was formed on 27 December 2012. The team went to settlement Chaho Rahiman which is prone to disasters such as cyclones, fire, drought, earthquake and creeks. It was observed that the members had a clear concept of disasters and management. They mentioned rain water reservoir as their topmost need to face droughts. The community has constructed a protective bund on a seasonal river.

They have also formed a committee for conservation of forest resources and are trying to protect vegetation in the area.

In this VDMC we interviewed the President, Mr. Saleem and also General Secretary of the LSO. He is an active person attached with a local NGO working in the areas of Health and Education. Mr. Saleem was very clear on the roles and responsibilities of the VDMC and its members.

In Mithi we also held meetings with Mr. Zafar Ali Junejo CEO TRDP, Mr. Narumal GM Finance, Mr. Burji Senior Manager P&A and Mr. J. Parkash Senior Manager Internal Audit and Quality Control. We discussed the project activities, progress and issues. Procurement of emergency tool kits was major focus of our discussion.

### **19<sup>th</sup> February 2013 Regional Office NRSP Badin and DIU Badin**

Here the team had a meeting with the RGM NRSP and other team members in Badin. We discussed progress and issues in the implementation of the project. The RGM's attitude was very supportive, and he assured full support for the effective implementation of Tahafuz activities. A condolence meeting was arranged by the regional office for the recently departed Tahafuz colleague Mr. Ashique Ansari who had died of heart attack a few days ago.

We could not visit the field that day, and were forced to return to DIU as protesters had blocked the road at Nindo Shehr town and would not allow traffic to pass through. The team came back and sat with the DIU colleagues and observed their documentation process and filing. So far DIU has successfully formed 31 VDMCs against their set target of 53. These VDMCs comprise of 354 members of which 50% are female. Till today, 55 male and 55 female members have attended training programmes on participatory disaster risk assessment and disaster risk management and planning. The VDMCs have prepared 17 DRM plans which are being reviewed at DIU for improvement. Communities have so far identified 13 CCIs to be initiated of which 7 have been verified by field engineer. In many cases hand pumps were identified as CCI. DIU staff was advised to revisit these villages and come up with some other potential CCI as hand pumps do not fall under category of CCI given in agreement.

Here we found many flaws in documentation and advised concerned staff to take note..A list of shortcomings is attached with this report as **Annexure- A**. This indicates issues at one DIU but should be properly looked after at all districts.

### **20<sup>th</sup> – 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2013 District Thatta**

In Thatta we met with DIU colleagues and discussed project progress. So far 97 VDMC have been formed in this district. DIU conducted 8 training events each, for participatory disaster risk assessment and disaster risk management and planning, where 110 male and 104 female participants from 45 VDMC attended. Till date the VDMCs have identified 50 CCIs for which they have sent resolutions to DIU. Identified and prioritized needs included hand pumps, rehabilitation of school building, culverts and earthen roads.

One UDMC has also been formed in the district.

On 20<sup>th</sup> February the team visited a randomly selected VDMC, Khado in UC Garho. Khado is a large village with about 488 households residing in 19 settlements. The major disasters narrated by community members included cyclones, rains, flash floods in Ocho River (Dormant River). Community members were satisfied with the approach adopted by this project and hoped to benefit as much as possible, especially from the awareness raising sessions on disasters.



### **Meeting with members of VDMC Khado District Thatta**

The President of this VDMC, Mr. Abdullah Gabool, stated in an interview that their village was always adversely affected by disasters. However, he was unclear about the idea behind VDMC and the partners involved in the process.

On 21<sup>st</sup> February a visit was made to VDMC Makhara in UC Ghulam Muhammad Baran. This VDMC was formed in November 2012 and covers 240 households scattered in 12 settlements. Two female and 3 male members received training in participatory disaster risk assessment and disaster risk management and planning. Ms. Bhagu the VDMC president saved the life of a 12 year old child who fell unconscious and had a high fever. The lady who received first aid training administered artificial breathing to the child and he recovered.

In Makhiara, a member Mr. Sabu was interviewed to assess his perception on the VDMC and its role in disaster management. Here again the interviewee was not very clear about the functioning of VDMC.



**Meeting with VDMC members in Village Makhiara, Distict Thatta**

***General Observations about VDMC Process***

- 1. In most of the VDMCs it was observed that the VDMC members were not clear about the functioning of VDMCs. There is a serious need for field staff to focus attention on clarifying any doubts and confusions about this project.*
- 2. PMU failed to provide VDMC registers in time and the communities could not document their proceedings. In some cases they managed their own registers and documented the minutes of their meetings.*
- 3. The project staff is putting all possible efforts in efficient implementation of activities but still need more focused attention.*

## **ANNEXURE-A**

### **Observations on filing systems seen at DIU Badin and Thatta (other DIUs should also take care of these points)**

1. In many cases resolutions were not signed by President and Manager of VDMC
2. In some cases resolutions were not signed by the Community Mobilizer's or Field Supervisor
3. In certain files parentage or name of spouse was missing
4. Social Mobilizer's comments were not present on many resolutions
5. A checklist is attached in VDMC files but it is not ticked properly. Does not show what documents are present and what are missing.
6. 80% involvement of household not ensured during formation of VDMCs
7. In all checked resolution number of present members was 20.
8. Names of settlements in resolution did not match with the names given in village profile.
9. DRM plans had various issues which need further attention of field staff.