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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



Building Resilient Communities

**TAHAFUZ**



**Officials of USAID-OFDA Meeting  
with Community during Field Visit**

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# USAID TAHAFUZ – BUILDING RESILIENCE THROUGH COMMUNITY BASED DISASTER RISK MANAGEMENT IN THE SINDH PROVINCE OF PAKISTAN

Every year, owing to natural disasters, millions of people abandon their homes and livelihoods. For majority, including women and children, it means an absolute loss of everything they own. On a global scale, disasters are significantly increasing in both frequency and impact.

In context of the above, to enable resource deficient rural communities to withstand disasters as well as to create an adequate response towards hydro-meteorological hazards involving floods, cyclones and droughts, the project 'Tahafuz', which literally means 'Protection', sought to enhance capacities of the communities by adopting the Community based Disaster Risk Management (CBDRM) approach.

Supported by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the second phase of the project has been implemented by RSPN in partnership with the National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) and Thardeep Rural Development Programme (TRDP) in four of the Sindh's most disaster prone district: Badin, Thatta/Sujawal, Tharparkar and Umerkot.

By implementing the project in 460 revenue villages across 40 union councils, an estimated 1,199,703 men, women and children (205,781 households) have been benefited through capacity building initiatives under the context of DRR, and rehabilitation of variety of Community Critical Infrastructures (CCI). To meet emergency needs at the grass root level, the Union Disaster Management Committees (UDMC), established under the project, have also been provided Emergency Tool Kits.

Tahafuz II has been a 15 month project, which began on April 1, 2014.

# THE DETAILS

## A) Mobilization

Social mobilization plays an important role in community development and smooth implementation of projects. Keeping this in view, to address Disaster Risk Reduction relevant issues and implement project activities, two different community institutions with varying roles and responsibilities have been established at different administrative levels of the district, i.e. revenue village and union council.

### I. Village Disaster Management Committees (VDMC)

With the aim of engaging local communities in early preparedness, mitigation and management activities, in order to enable them withstand disasters and respond to hazardous situation in an efficient and effective manner; the project established 228 Village Disaster Management Committees (VDMC) at the revenue village level. Each committee is comprised of minimum of 10 members based on gender balanced composition, whereas, the selection of members has been solely made by the community members. Roles of VDMC includes: lead community before, during and after disasters, coordinate with UDMC, manage rehabilitation of Community Critical Infrastructures, etc.

### II. Union Disaster Management Committees (UDMC)

The Union Disaster Management Committee (UDMC) structure is an extended arm of VDMCs, which has been established at the union council level with the amalgamation of two members from each VDMC of the respective union council. Using the approach, 20 UDMCs have been established during the project life cycle to create links and improve coordination between government and community as well as to provide leadership for advocating DRR relevant issues to the district government and network with other local bodies like Local Support Organizations (LSO) and active NGO/INGOs for resource mobilization.

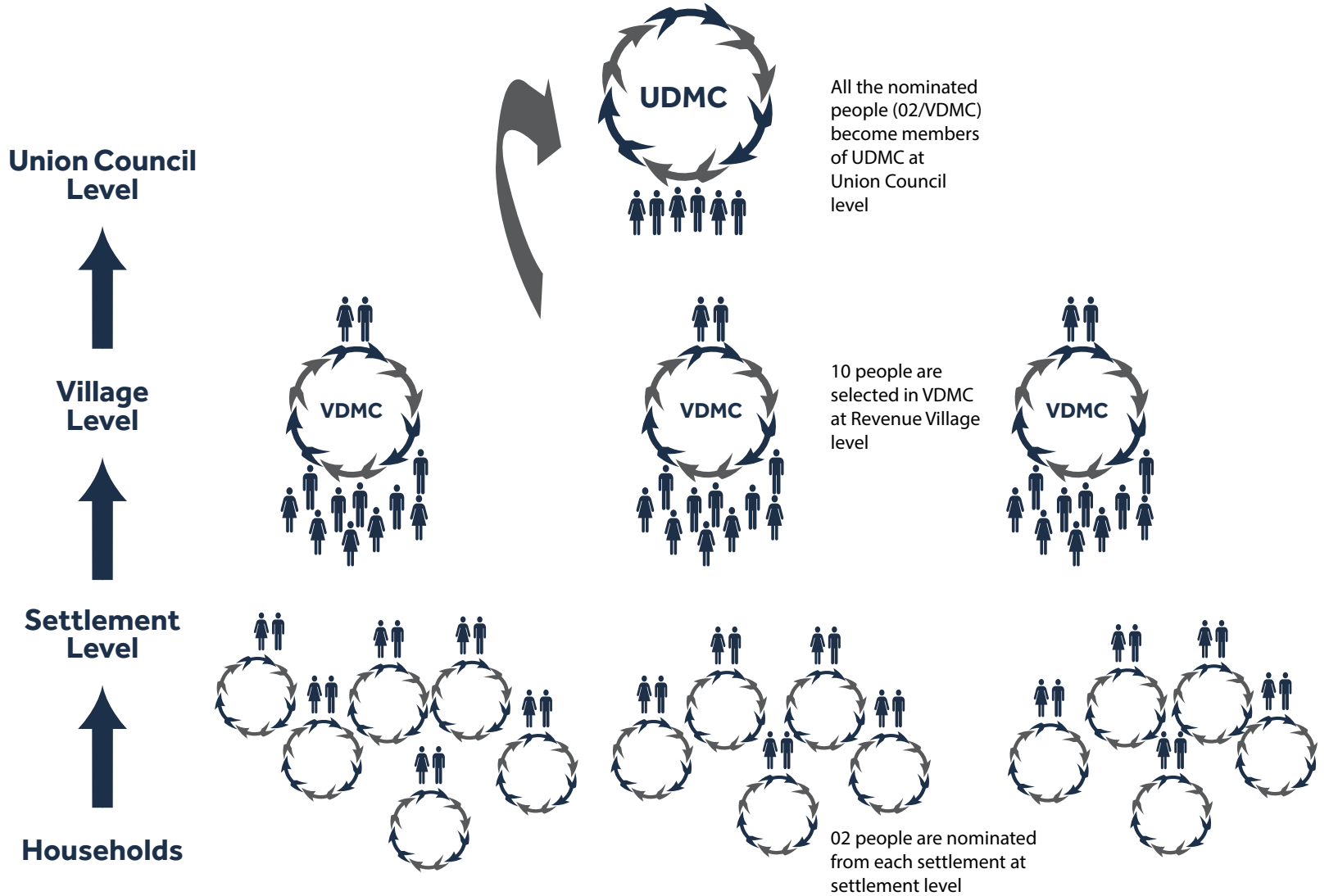
## B) Capacity Building

To refresh CBDRM knowledge of the VDMCs, established during the first launch of the Tahafuz, RSPN conducted short refresher training for members of the 232 VDMCs and similarly for 20 UDMCs. Moreover, as the project made its expansion to 20 new union councils during the second phase of Tahafuz, comprehensive CBDRM training events were conducted for 228 VDMCs and 20 UDMCs. Under both the training, VDMC participants were provided with skills on how to conduct Risk Assessment, prepare Risk Management Plans, as well as perform firefighting, first-aid, search and rescue operations and UDMCs were provided training on leadership, advocacy, networking, and financial management.

### I. Disaster Risk Management Plan (DRMP)

For identification of potential threats and to delegate responsibilities among the community/ VDMC members, each VDMC developed a Disaster Risk Management Plan during the Disaster Risk Assessment activity. Different assessment tools including hazard & resource map, seasonal and historical calendars were used by VDMCs in order to evaluate and prioritize risk and develop a DRMP based on the available information. The plans have been

# The Formation Process of VDMC & UDMC



developed with anticipation to increase communities' disaster resilience through having greater relevant knowledge of disasters as well as better preparation against them by adopting preventive and curative measures. A total of 228 DRMPs were developed during the project current phase.

## **II. Exposure Visits**

The UDMC members, selected with the consensus of other members, undertook intra-district exposure visits to facilitate learning through exchange of information, experience sharing and best practices adopted by different communities, living in similar circumstances to theirs.

## **III. Community Resource Persons (CRP)**

To transfer CBDRM/DRR knowledge at grass roots level, the concept of Community Resource Persons (CRP) was introduced during the current phase. During the project, two CRPs were selected from each VDMC (old & new Phase of Tahafuz), with the help of which 44,241 individuals have been sensitized on DRR under the awareness sessions from 1,793 settlements.

# **C) Mitigation Measures**

## **I. Community Critical Infrastructures (CCI)**

Depending on the needs identified in the DRMP, prepared by the VDMC, on an average one Community Critical Infrastructure involving rehabilitation of public buildings, dug wells, water reservoirs, culverts, rescue places and earthen roads has been undertaken in each revenue village as a disaster risk mitigation measure. During the project, a total of 259 schemes were rehabilitated.

## **II. Emergency Tool Kits (ETK)**

To cater for emergency needs of the flood and drought prone project areas, one standardized Emergency Tool Kit has been provided to each UDMC. The key items included in the tool kit contains: First-aid bag, tents, life jackets, safety helmets, flash lights, climbing ropes, megaphones, chain pulley, folding stretchers, ladder bamboo, wheel barrows, shovels etc.

# **D) Linkages Development**

For timely delivery of threat alerts to disaster prone communities, the contact details of VDMC and UDMC members have been exchanged with the local government and DDMA officials. Moreover, during the project, various events including celebration of International DRR day and Advocacy & Networking workshops were held at the district level in order to promote the significance of DRR among all the concerned stakeholders. The overall arrangement has bolstered confidence and encouraged VDMCs and UDMCs to interact with the local government more actively for obtaining their support.

# TAHAFUZ'S FOOTPRINT

BUDGET

**\$1.6**  
MILLION

PROJECT AREA



MOST VULNERABLE DISTRICTS OF  
THE SINDH PROVINCE OF PAKISTAN

DURATION

**15**  
MONTHS

April 2014-June 2015

NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES

**1,199,703**

VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS

# IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

**RSPN**  
RURAL SUPPORT PROGRAMMES NETWORK

National Rural Support Programme  
**NRSP**

Thardeep Rural Development Programme  
**TRDP**

# PROJECT TARGET DISTRICTS





## FORMATION OF LOCAL COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS

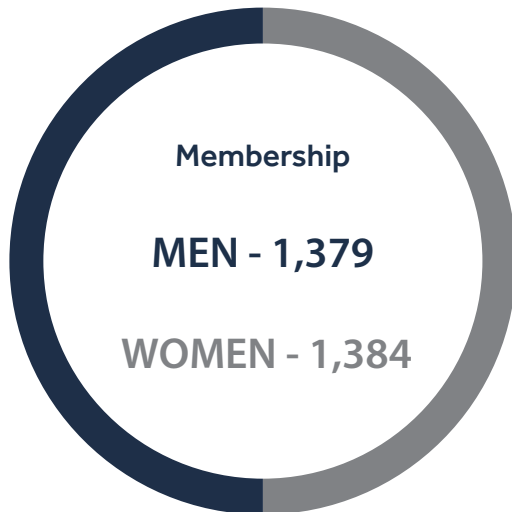


Local Community Members While Taking Part In Formation Of Village Disaster Management Committee

# LOCAL COMUNITY INSTITUTIONS

VDMCs

**228**



UDMCs

**20**



## CAPACITY BUILDING



Facilitator Demonstrating CPR During Training Session

# VDMC Training Achievement PDRA and DRM&P

## Regular



TOTAL MEMBERS TRAINED

**2,279**

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NUMBER OF MEN

**1,146**

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NUMBER OF WOMEN

**1,133**

## Refresher



TOTAL MEMBERS TRAINED

**1,094**

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NUMBER OF MEN

**555**

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NUMBER OF WOMEN

**539**

# UDMC Training Achievement OM&D and A&N

## Regular



TOTAL MEMBERS

**201**



NUMBER OF MEN

**104**



NUMBER OF WOMEN

**97**

## Refresher



TOTAL MEMBERS

**191**



NUMBER OF MEN

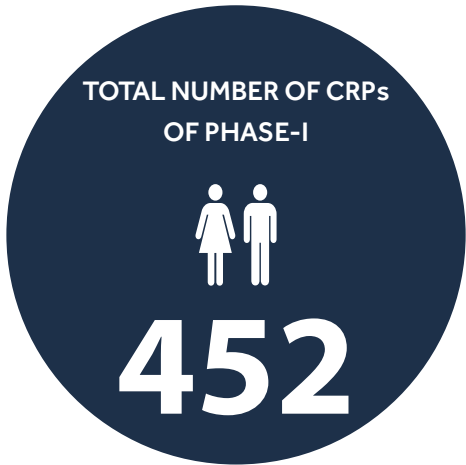
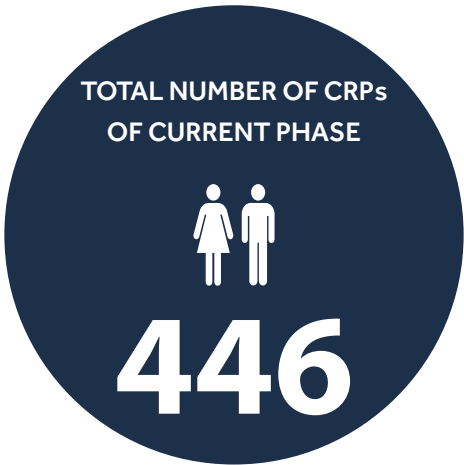
**99**



NUMBER OF WOMEN

**92**

# Selection of Community Resource Persons (CRPs)





**A CRP delivering awareness session in a settlement**

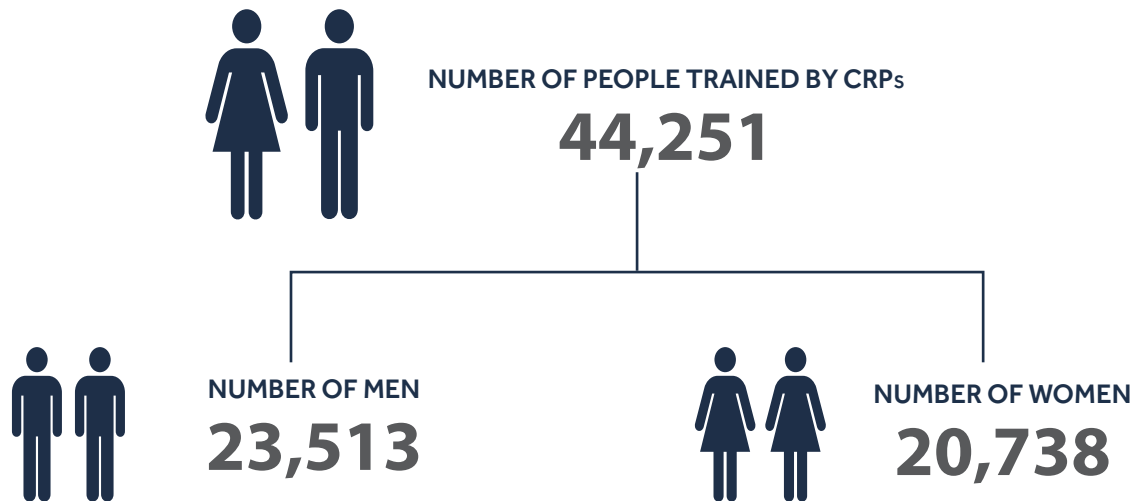
## DRR Awareness Sessions

**8,965**

SESSIONS DELIVERED BY CRPs

**1,793**

TARGETED SETTLEMENTS COVERED





## MITIGATION MEASURES



Tahafuz Project Supported One Of Newly Formed VDMC in Construction Of Rescue Point

# Mitigation Measures

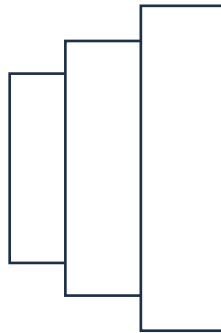
**Community Critical  
Infrastructures**

**259**

**Emergency Toolkit**

**20**

**Types of  
Schemes**



- Rescue Places
- Dug Wells
- Flood Protection Walls & Embankments
- Raised Platforms with Emergency Shelters
- Culverts
- Earthen Roads
- Rehabilitation of School Buildings
- Water Reservoirs

## SUCCESS STORIES



UDMC Members Along With Local Community Observing International Disaster Risk Reduction Day

## **Struggling Against Thirst!!!**

“People living in cities cannot understand the value of water” this statement was given by a villager working on rehabilitation of their dug well in revenue village Mahlnoor Veena, District Tharparkar. “Just try to walk for miles with water pots on your head and then you will realize how precious it is”. While driving in air conditioned cars crossing the Thar Desert, one can find Tharri women carrying heavy pots on their heads. This is because either they do not have water in their settlement or the water available is brackish. In some settlements they have old dug wells rendered unserviceable due to damages caused through aging so the women are left with no option then to walk for miles to fetch the water. Recent prolonged dry season over the past three years with almost no rains has aggravated the situation and local communities are in a miserable condition. The USAID/OFDA funded Tahafuz project is working with communities in disaster risk management. As part of drought disaster mitigation measures, communities are receiving support in rehabilitation of their water sources e.g. dug wells and water reservoirs. Most of the project communities in Tharparkar have given priority to the rehabilitation of their water sources. Work is in progress on repairing of a dug well in VDMC Lakhmia, District Tharparkar under small Community Critical Infrastructure component of Tahafuz project. Furthermore large number of dug wells and water harvesting structures are planned to be rehabilitated or repaired in the villages. Rehabilitation of water sources will help the communities in easy access to drinking water for the households and their livestock. The residents are grateful to USAID for providing this generous support for the vulnerable communities in Thar..

## **Accepting Challenge Averting Disaster**

Ms. Soomari is a resident of village Mir Din Muhammed. The village is situated in Union Council Satiryoon which is situated 18 kilometers far from Umerkot’s Headquarter. The village comprises of seventy households with an approximated population size of five hundred and sixty. The majority of local people rely on agricultural activities for income generation.

Ms. Soomari is a house wife and she spends her day in house chores and looking after her family. Despite her commitment to her family she showed a keen interest in becoming part of the program in order to be able to learn new techniques and skills. She remained very active and participated in various training activities. She has also been committed to share the knowledge gained with other members of her village.

Recently one day when she was busy in her household chores she heard some disturbing noises in her neighborhood. She instantly went to inquire about the incident and found that her neighbor Ms. Motan’s house was on fire. She immediately contacted other VDMC members and helped in extinguishing fire by throwing water and sand. Luckily, they managed to extinguish fire within 15 minutes, which eventually resulted in discontinuing fire spread to nearby Chownra (mud houses with straw roof).

Ms. Soomari stated that the achievement of saving human and economic loss has greatly increased her confidence. Community members and Ms. Soomari paid thanks to USAID - RSPN initiative and TRDP for enabling them to cope with such a disastrous situation.

## **The Role of Local Institution in Reducing Vulnerability!**

During the recent uproar of the Nilofar threat, an old UDMC named Kadhan that had been capacitated on CBDRM during earlier phase of the Tahafuz project held an emergency meeting on 27th October 2014. The meeting aimed on discussing the significant role that their UDMC could play in helping out vulnerable communities from the neighboring areas since their location happened to be out of the danger zone. Conclusively, they decided to provide selected emergency tool kit items to a village named Mallah of VDMC Waryar from the union council Bhugra Memon based on its recognition as the most vulnerable village due to its close positioning to the sea shore and people's dependence on fish hunting for their living.

In pursuit of transporting emergency tool kit to village Mallah, the UDMC Kadhan President Mr. Mithon along with the LSO Chairman Mr. Raza Mohammad Shah undertook a two and a half hour drive to reach the destination. They both were welcomed by Mr. Imtiaz Ahmed, manager of the recipient UDMC Bhugra Memon that has been newly established under new award of the Tahafuz project. While at village Mallah, the President of the UDMC Kadhan explained the purpose of their visit first and afterwards distributed some items from the emergency tool kit that was earlier provided to UDMC Kadhan under the initial phase of the Tahafuz. The kit items included 04 life jackets, a radio and a torch as well as a mega phone. Concerning to the care of kit items, Mr Imtiaz assured that items will be safely returned back to UDMC Kadhan as soon as the threat alert fizzles out safely. During the interaction, the UDMC President Mr. Mithon and the Chairman LSO also demonstrated the use of the emergency items that were temporarily provided to them.

The manager of the recipient UDMC, Mr. Imtiaz Ahmed, while expressing his feelings mentioned that he has been overwhelmed by the support shown by the UDMC President and the LSO Chairman. He mentioned that following the same principle their UDMC too will keep extending their arms and support to other vulnerable communities. In the end he paid special thanks to USAID and RSPN for enabling the people on how to become helping hands for each other.

## **Building Resilience of the Community**

One of the projects identified by VDMC members on the Rehabilitation of Two Culverts in VDMC Janki was approved by majority of households, and then the demand was sent to the District Office in the form of resolution. Prior to the identification of the project the VDMC members received training by NRSP on Participatory Disaster Risk Management and Planning covering areas of first-aid, Search and Rescue, Camp Management and Early Warning. Then they prepared Disaster Risk Management Plan which entailed developing Hazard Maps, Seasonal Calendar, Resource Mapping and highlighting their deficient areas. The third step was the identification and prioritization of one Community Critical Infrastructure (CCI) which as a result of consensus came out to be the Rehabilitation of Two Culverts. Then the social, technical and financial feasibility was conducted. The total cost of the culverts was Rs. 252,884. Although there are 3-4 ways that link the revenue village to the city but all the passages had issues. But VDMC Janki is formed over seven settlements and is heavily populated due to which the residents highlighted the need for the rehabilitation of this particular culvert. The city is 15 kilometres far from the village. The sustainability of the project was ensured by constituting local body committees for early recovery, search and rescue and camp management at the village level. Accordingly community resource persons were identified who were responsible for conducting orientation sessions with the communities to raise awareness of how to deal with shocks and become resilient to cope up with a disaster.

The project consisted of the Rehabilitation of Two RCC Culverts of 2-ft span with 24-ft in length. In RCC culverts, the brick masonry abutment walls were constructed to serve as load bearing walls for supporting the 6" thick R.C.C. solid slab. Ten inches thick bed flooring was provided in the culverts to prevent the foundations of structural walls from expected erosion in the future. 1.5-ft high and 13.5" thick Brick Masonry Parapet wall was constructed

for safety purpose. The VDMC members had formed a project committee whose responsibility was to look after the overall Implementation and Maintenance of the project. The project was completed in 3 months. The objective of the intervention was to meet the demand of community people for safer evacuation in the times of flood as well as easy and economical transport of agricultural products to the city.

Miss. Mariam one of the members of VDMC stated, "I extend my profound regards to USAID for implementing this project in our village. This is the first project of its kind being implemented here. Residents of our village had to face difficulties previously during a natural disaster and several people used to fall in the water course but the rehabilitation of the culverts have brought great sigh of relief in people's lives who will now have safer evacuation in the time of floods".

## **UDMCS: Bridge between Communities and Authorities**

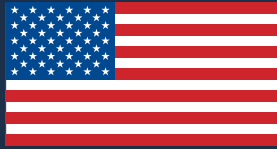
USAID funded Tahafuz CBDRM Project is working with most vulnerable communities in four districts of Sindh Province. Capacity building at grass root level is the main focus of this project. Different types of capacity building sessions are designed for the community members at village and Union Council (UC) level. One of the focused areas of these events is Advocacy & Networking where the community representatives are taught how to raise voice for their rights and how to convince the authorities for addressing needs of deprived communities.

Recently heavy floods caused havoc in different parts of the country. Condition was worst in the province of Punjab where large area under crops was inundated by floods bringing irreparable losses for the rural communities. Some urban areas and cities were equally damaged. This created an alarming situation in the project area as two Union Councils namely Keenjhar and Ali Bahr lie in the way of River Indus. The provincial disaster management authority and district disaster management authorities issued warnings to the potential target communities. Similar action was taken in Sujawal (Thatta) where district administration called a consultative meeting with all stakeholders.

The Union Disaster Management Council (UDMC) members from these vulnerable UCs participated in these consultative meetings and offered their services for gathering first hand data from these UCs. District administration appreciated this offer and provided them transport facility to go from house to house and collect information. These teams visited all endangered villages in UCs Ali Bahr, Bijora and Belo and came up with authentic data for developing emergency relief plans. Here it is worth mentioning that UDMC has been formed in only one of the UCs i.e. Ali Bahr. The local administration hauled the support provided by UDMC members and assured them of full support from the authorities in case of any emergency. They exchanged contact numbers to build firm relations. Even the authorities at provincial level asked for their contacts. "They will be our eyes and ears in the real field conditions", said the Director Operations PDMA Sindh, "and we will benefit from their first hand information for handling any emergency."

## **WHO WE ARE**

**The Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) is the largest development network of Pakistan, with an outreach to over 38 million rural Pakistanis. It consists of 12 member Rural Support Programmes (RSPs) that espouse a common approach to rural development: social mobilisation. Social mobilisation centres on the belief that poor people have an innate potential to help themselves, that they can better manage their limited resources if they organize and are provided technical and financial support. RSPN is the strategic platform for RSPs: it provides capacity building support to them, and assists them in policy advocacy and donor linkages.**



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