

Pakistan Floods 2010

Six Months On



A Disaster of Unparalleled Magnitude:

As July 2010 drew to a close, the worst floods in the history of Pakistan began on their path of destruction. The unusually heavy monsoon rains that triggered the massive flooding soon caused the deluge to spread. Within a matter of days, nearly one-fifth of the Pakistan's land had been submerged. The scale of the disaster was so huge that at one point, the UN was compelled to pronounce it as 'absolutely daunting.' Unprecedented damages afflicted all sectors of the country's economy. Many lost their homes, farmland was washed away and livestock costing millions of dollars was lost.

Critical infrastructure, including health clinics, power stations, roads, bridges and water supply systems were destroyed. The



education system was badly disrupted with the result that for many children returning to school in the near future became an unthinkable idea. According to the Government of Pakistan, over 20 million people, including nearly 9 million children were affected by the disaster.

Villagers from Punjab province escaping the deluge

Following the waves of the floods, Save the Children first set out to provide lifesaving emergency assistance to the flood victims in the northwestern province of Khyber Pakthunkhwa. Since the agency already had a presence in Khyber Pakthunkhwa prior to the floods due to the IDP crisis caused by the military offense against the Taliban, the agency immediately mobilized existing resources and personnel to provide humanitarian relief in the shape of emergency healthcare and provision of non-food items and shelter. Later, as floodwaters lashed Sindh and Punjab provinces, Save the Children deployed relief workers in the two provinces. As the road network was damaged and many bridges had been washed away, reaching vulnerable communities who had been made homeless by the floods proved to be a colossal task. Save the Children's teams used boats, wooden rafts, mules or even hanging trolleys to reach the stranded communities with medicines and other supplies.

Save the Children's relief efforts were complemented by a series of rapid assessments of the flood-affected districts.

The results shed light on the massive gaps in the provision of basic health, shelter, food, water and sanitation, education and child protection needs of the flood-hit communities. Six months on, Save the Children continues to focus on satisfying these needs in the implementation of its emergency relief activities.

To date, Save the Children has reached over 2,600,000 flood-affected people through emergency medical care, distribution of shelter materials, food, child protection, education, and livelihood support. Save the Children is responding to the floods in partnership with the Government of Pakistan, including national, provincial and district administrations.

The Initial Relief Phase:

The needs of the affected communities have evolved with a continual change in external factors. Save the Children has responded to these changes by modifying strategies in ways that would best serve the flood-hit people at different points in time.

When the disaster first struck Pakistan, homelessness and contaminated water supplies ensured that diarrhea and malaria were two of the most common diseases amongst the affected communities.

To combat the situation, Save the Children focused on supporting Diarrhea Treatment Centers as part of its health response in Punjab and Sindh provinces and on creating awareness about the ways to prevent and cure gastrointestinal infections, amongst other diseases.

Save the Children also distributed long lasting insecticide treated bed nets for the prevention of malaria. In addition, as many of the flood victims were displaced from their homes, the agency provided humanitarian aid through mobile health teams that travelled from one locality to another to deliver lifesaving medical assistance.

The post-disaster mental traumas faced by the flood victims, specifically children, made it biding that Save the Children provide emergency psychosocial support through both its child protection and education programs.

The focus was also on reuniting children, who had been separated from their families, with their loved ones and providing them with a safe and secure environment in which to play and learn.



Baby Ambreen from the mountainous region of Swat is wrapped in blanket provided by Save the Children

Winter Complicates Matters:

Recently, as temperatures have plummeted, floodwaters have receded and many of the displaced communities have returned to their homelands, Save the Children has altered its overall response program in favor of one that caters to the evolving needs of the flood victims. Government demands to revitalize static health facilities have led to the agency targeting health facilities, as opposed to mobile teams, for its support.

Similarly, health education is now focused more on diseases like pneumonia which are a direct consequence of the change in weather. In connection, Save the Children has recently started distributing winterization kits among the flood-affected families which are composed of items like sweaters, quilts, cotton beddings, socks and caps.

In Rajanpur district of Punjab, Save the Children has also started providing shelters made up of bamboo logs and plastic sheeting. These structures are sturdy against the harsh winter winds and are built at the flood affected families' places of origin.

Health and Nutrition:

Soon after the floods, there was a lack of access to quality primary healthcare services at community health facility level mainly due to the unavailability of essential clinical staff, essential medicines and supplies, and ambulance services in the affected areas. Quality mother and child health services were also rarely accessible to pregnant and lactating women and newborns.

A lack of awareness on the prevention of communicable and common illnesses and lesser tendency towards health-seeking behavior and utilization of primary healthcare services was a matter of concern, ultimately leading to unhealthy practices.

This and a lack of food supplies was also expected to have serious implications on the already compromised nutritional status of children and pregnant and lactating women.

Save the Children's emergency health program aimed to improve the situation by offering a variety of health services including general outpatient consultations, mother and child healthcare services, emergency referrals of complicated cases, revitalization of health facilities that were damaged by the floods, and complementary

health education. Presently, Save the Children is operating through 16 mobile health teams and 72 static facilities.

So far, Save the Children's health program in Pakistan has reached a total of 735,012 beneficiaries since the inception of its flood response. The humanitarian organization's nutrition response, which has focused on providing nutritional care to children and pregnant and lactating women, has thus far provided aid to an additional 38,371 beneficiaries.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene:

According to a World Health Organization report the high density of population in the formal and informal IDP camps, coupled with the pre-floods widespread practice of open defecation rendered the public health situation critical. For those who managed to leave camps and return to their original settlement, every day has been struggle for survival: they have lost everything, and the purchase of hygiene items, the rehabilitation of their water supply and sanitation infrastructure and the improvement of hygiene practice is out of their reach without external support.

Save the Children is working to improve water, sanitation and hygiene promotion facilities for the flood affected people in relief camps, schools, health centers and villages in Punjab and Sindh provinces.

To date, approximately 117,500 people have benefitted from enhanced WASH facilities.

Shelter and Non Food Items:

Shelter and Non Food Items (NFI), clean water, food, and medical care were the most immediate needs of the affected communities. To date, Save the Children has provided 85,478 families (683,821 people) with shelter materials and non-food items. After assessing the needs, shelter teams are providing tents or shelter kits containing plastic tarps, poles, hardware or other non food items to help families construct temporary shelters. Other commodities, distributed individually or packaged into household kits and hygiene kits, are helping families cook food, prevent diseases caused by insect bites or due to poor hygiene care, and keep their shelter and environment safe and healthy.

Food:

Save the Children continues to provide food assistance to over 140,000 families. This has been made possible through rations provided by the World Food Programme which include wheat flour, high energy biscuits, vegetable oil and a peanut-based, ready-to-use-supplementary food for children.

Livelihoods:

The floods affected some of the most fertile and productive lands of the country and devastated the livelihoods of small traders, subsistence farmers and herders. The overall damages levied on the economic sector and infrastructure, including power supply lines, also impacted casual laborers' access to employment opportunities.

Extensive damage was done to agricultural equipment and infrastructure, such as generators, water mills, field retention walls and irrigation systems. Hundreds of thousands of livestock also died in the floods.

In response to the widespread destruction, Save the Children helped expand livelihood options for those who had lost all means of subsistence. The agency's livelihoods program for vulnerable flood affected communities focuses on the development of market based solutions that are realistic and sustainable.

Since the beginning of the flood response, Save the Children has distributed 34,265 food vouchers to families including 268,640 people in the most vulnerable communities of KPK, Sindh and Punjab.

Education:

The floods partially or fully destroyed many school buildings all across Pakistan. Besides

this considerable physical damage to school infrastructure, children were traumatized and needed a protective learning environment.

Save the Children has been implementing a large scale education program in the flood affected areas with a view to improving access to education for the most vulnerable and neglected communities. The focus is on emergency education, school rehabilitation, capacity building, community awareness and educational needs assessment. To date, Save the Children has reached 123,448 people, including 114,299 children, in its emergency education program.

Child Protection:

Lack of physical security has been a widespread threat, together with family separation and cases of unaccompanied or separated minors. Children are at heightened risk of exploitation and abuse, and may be removed from school or forced into early marriages as a result of livelihood pressures and displacement.

Several forms of harmful child labor have been uncovered by Save the Children since the emergency started. These activities are not only a danger to the child's immediate health and well-being, but they also pose longer-term risks of children remaining out of school.

Save the Children addressed the issue of child protection through the establishment of Child Friendly Spaces and child

protection committees. Save the Children has established 174 Child Friendly Spaces across the country. About 130,300 children have so far benefited through the agency's psychosocial interventions.

The Way Forward:

Over the course of the next two years, Save the Children will aspire to target the most vulnerable and marginalised communities and provide them with a holistic package of support with the theme of 'Build Back Better' as the major consideration. Save the Children will strategically select those geographical areas that have the largest gaps in services and a significant vulnerable population, and will concentrate all its programs in those locations.

Save the Children will aim to increase communities' resilience against any future disaster through integrated DRR programming. By the end of the strategy period, Save the Children will seek to have improved communities lives—to a better level than before the floods—and empowered them with a greater ability to ward off the impacts of any future disaster.

Save the Children's goal for the next two years is to address the immediate, intermediate and longer needs of four million most vulnerable flood affected people through multi-sector integrated programs in a sustainable manner by the end of 2012 in the targeted districts of Khyber Pakthunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh provinces of Pakistan.

Save the Children plans to target 4 million people, with a particular emphasis on the vulnerable categories of children and their families, women, orphans, and disabled persons in the targeted districts of Khyber Pakthunkhwa, Punjab and Sindh provinces of Pakistan. This represents over 20 per cent of the affected population of which at least 55 per cent (2.2 million) are children.

A Silver Lining:

Our work over the next two years will be about applying Save the Children's core values—accountability, ambition, collaboration, creativity, and integrity—so that our programs are of the highest quality, and address children's holistic needs and rights.



We must help children not only recover, but also thrive, so that one day, they see that the devastating 2010 floods did have a silver lining: they were a catalyst for change in their homes, schools, and communities, helping them become safer, healthier, happier, and more educated than they were before.

Children in Pakistan Pay High Price in the Wake of the Disaster:

Naila is ten years old. She lives in village Mirpur Buriro in Tehsil Thul, district Jacobabad. She has three brothers and five sisters. Her father's name is Jamal Khan and her mother's name is Haseena.

"I had faced the worst days of my life, after the

Shahbaz from Jacobabad has been attending one of Save the Children's Temporary Learning Centers which is converted into a Child Friendly Space after school hours.

Naila.

"We shifted to the city of Hyderabad, to my sister's house, as she is married there and lives there with her husband. But she has small home and our family is very large so we could not live there for long. We shifted to a relief camp near to her house. Those were the worst days I have ever spent in my life."

"We lost most of the things in the flood water, as we could not take our belongings with us to Hyderabad and when we came back, everything was either washed away or ruined by the water and mud. In our village, the water was higher than me."

"I have experienced the life in the camp and know how people live in the camps. When I was living in the camp in Hyderabad, the behavior of people was very bad; they used to tease the poor people and women, I did not like the environment of that camp, it really annoyed me. I used to get scared and cried a lot".

Upon returning to the village, Naila began to attend the Temporary Learning Center and Child Friendly Space established by Save the Children with her brothers and sisters. "I like coming here, I enjoy being here, sometimes I want to study and play for the whole day".

"I really enjoy the games we play and the books we read."

"Now I feel good that I can go to school and resume back my studies. I have a place to play and I feel very happy, I have almost forgotten the bad memories of flood I used to carry in my head."

"The thing I like the most in this CFS is that we can continue our education and we can play together. And I like the teacher there, she loves



me a lot.” said Naila.



Save the Children is the leading independent organization creating lasting change for children in need around the world. For over 75 years, Save the Children has been helping children survive and thrive by improving their health, education and economic opportunities, and in times of acute crisis, mobilizing rapid assistance to help children recover from the effects of war, conflict and natural disasters.

Save the Children is the leading independent organization for children in need, with programs in 120 countries. Save the Children is made up of 29 member organizations working together worldwide.

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