

# PROJECT EVALUATION LEARNING BRIEF

28 April 2020

This learning brief is a summary of the key findings, conclusions, and recommendations prepared by the external consultancy firm SEBCON Pvt. Limited for use by the donor (DFID), IOM project staff and implementing partners. Details on all of the findings, conclusions, and recommendations can be found in the full evaluation report.

<b>Evaluation type:</b>	External final evaluation
<b>Evaluator(s):</b>	SEBCON Pvt. Limited Islamabad, Pakistan
<b>Evaluation visit:</b>	26 December — 8 January 2020
<b>Final report:</b>	31 March 2020

**Commissioned by:** IOM Mission in Pakistan

**Managed by:** Suzana Paklar, Senior Programme Manager

**Evaluation purpose:** To support IOM, implementing partners and the donor to assess the key programme achievements including extent to which the programme interventions were effective, efficient and relevant. The evaluation purpose also included drawing key learnings and lessons for designing more informed, evidence-based disaster response and recovery programming in future through effective multi-layered stakeholder engagement.

**Evaluation criteria:** Effectiveness, efficiency and relevance

**Evaluation methodology:** Desk review of documents, Key informant interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs), field survey

## PROJECT SUMMARY

The **Natural Disasters Consortium (NDC)** in Pakistan is a five-year (2015-2020) humanitarian programme funded by DFID's Multi-Year Humanitarian Funding, Pillar 1. The consortium is led by IOM and is composed of ACTED, HANDS, FAO, IOM and UNICEF; therefore involving key sector leads for shelter/NFI, WASH and food security/livelihoods as well as NGOs with large-scale coverage and implementation capacity. The programme covers disaster preparedness, response and recovery interventions and aims to assist at-risk and affected communities, as well as national authorities to prepare for, respond to and recover from natural disasters across Pakistan. The multi-year funding was designed to enable the consortium to act in a flexible, responsive and strategic manner to risks and needs as they are identified, as well as building systems and learning over the course of the programme.

Needs-based response actions of NDC have been informed by coordinated assessments contributing to integrated recovery and improved resilience. NDC has served as an opportunity to test and refine the consortium's integrated recovery package, while also feeding into preparedness objectives by strengthening ability of vulnerable families to withstand future disasters. The NDC response and recovery interventions were originally planned to take place

### **Project Title: Multi-Year Humanitarian Programme for Natural Disaster Preparedness, Response and Recovery**

**Geographical coverage:** Sindh, Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, (KP), Punjab, Pakistan Administered Kashmir (PAK), Pakistan

**Project type:** Disaster Preparedness, Response and Recovery

**Project code:** DP. 1291

**Project period:** 16 July 2015 to 15 July 2020

**Donor:** DFID

**Budget:** 35 million GBP

over 4 cycles between 2015 and 2019, however a one-year cost extension was granted in 2019.

The humanitarian assistance extended by NDC includes Food Security and Livelihoods (FSL), Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), as well as Shelter and Non-Food Item (NFIs) support. The interventions are designed to fulfil life-saving needs, support community-level recovery and improve resilience through building local capacities to cope with future shocks.

### KEY FINDINGS/CONCLUSIONS

#### Beneficiary Satisfaction:

- ◆ Needs-based response actions of NDC were informed by coordinated assessments contributing to integrated recovery and improved resilience. Overall, about 75% beneficiaries expressed complete satisfaction on NDC interventions. Of the remaining 25%, 24% expressed moderate satisfaction and 1% dissatisfaction.
- ◆ A district-wise analysis shows 62% level of satisfaction in Badin, 89% in Chitral, 56% in Kashmore, 83% in Layyah, 81% in Nushki and 82% in Umerkot.
- ◆ The level of respondents' satisfaction for FSL activities was noted as 87%. About 36% respondents stated that these interventions improved their monthly income. 11% reported replication in different ways (e.g. raised bed farming, techniques promoted by climate field schools, kitchen gardens etc.).
- ◆ Satisfaction level of the respondents for WASH activities was very high (92%). In total 71% respondents reported improvement in health of people in the target communities as a result of WASH activities. 72% beneficiaries were fully satisfied with this component.
- ◆ The level of satisfaction from the beneficiaries with shelter/NFI activities was 72%. This is supplemented with another 28% of the respondents who were moderately satisfied with Shelter/NFI interventions. Only 0.4% respondents stated dissatisfaction.
- ◆ Satisfaction level for cash intervention was 68% as reported by interviewed beneficiaries. Moderate satisfaction was expressed by 28% and dissatisfaction by 4%.
- ◆ The beneficiaries from lower income groups seemed more satisfied with NDC interventions than higher income groups. 95% of beneficiaries who have opted the option "very satisfied" came from 30,000 or lower. The remaining 5% come from higher income groups
- ◆ Beneficiaries have often rated moderate not because the quality of support was inadequate or unsatisfactory – but because they assessed that the quantum of support was far smaller than the magnitude of the problem in their perception.

#### Beneficiary and Schemes Selection Process:

- ◆ In total, 64% beneficiaries expressed awareness on the process for selection of beneficiaries. Of these 64%, 93% respondents were fully satisfied with the selection process. The remaining 7% expressed moderate satisfaction. Of these 64%, a significant number of respondents (85%) stated that marginalized, destitute, vulnerable, minorities and people with disabilities were included among selected beneficiaries for assistance.
- ◆ 31% beneficiaries were members of organized communities. Out of six sampled districts, in three NDC used community groups already mobilized by national organizations such as AKRSP. By doing so, NDC utilized existing community structures to identify most deserving beneficiaries for delivering MYHP interventions. Overall, 69% beneficiaries were not the members of any community-based organization and they were selected for assistance through other means such as damage / need assessment surveys etc.
- ◆ Overall, 84% respondents indicated their participation in choosing suitable activities for themselves whereas 75% beneficiaries felt highly involved both in selecting and implementation of the activities. This slightly varied between different programme components (FSL 75%, WASH 81% and Shelter and NFI 87%).
- ◆ The identification and distribution of 1,250 individual schemes was reported by 93% beneficiaries as generally fair and tailored to meet the needs of vulnerable individuals/households including marginalized, destitute, minorities and people with disability
- ◆ Women were prioritized for the provision of emergency latrines to protect and promote their dignity, safety and privacy. Women were also given priority over men in some interventions including kitchen gardening, livestock support, agriculture and complementary inputs and NFIs. Drinking water supply rehabilitation schemes provided were mainly meant to ease burden on women to travel long distances to fetch water.

### KEY FINDINGS/CONCLUSIONS

#### Relevance:

- ◆ All the NDC partners and key informants agree that NDC's Programme in Pakistan is relevant for the country. As a Consortium, NDC served a great opportunity to implement multiple actions in the field in diverse disaster risk contexts.
- ◆ The programme is in line with the national policy framework and is directly contributing to Priorities 3 and 4 of Sendai Framework for DRR 2015-2030. All the NDC partners and key informants found NDC's Programme in Pakistan relevant for the country.
- ◆ 81% beneficiaries reported that the activities catered for their priority needs for improving socio economic conditions/wellbeing of their families/ areas. At the same time, under all the three components they have appreciated training and capacity development support in FSL, WASH and Shelter/NFI.
- ◆ Selection of districts took place in consultation with authorities and was led by signs of disasters or an already declared emergency by the National, Provincial Disaster Management Authorities or District Disaster Management Units.
- ◆ While the selection of geographical locations was led by disaster events, the choice of districts was still relevant since some of the disasters were wide-spread and bigger in scale. With time, the partners have proven their interest, capability and capacity to address location specific challenges including extreme climatic events and change indicators.
- ◆ The process of vulnerability assessment and profiling was assured by the Consortium with multiple tools and methods, jointly steered by partners under the lead of IOM. This further added quality to NDC's actions and to reach out to those who needed the humanitarian assistance most.
- ◆ Partners are well-positioned to continue programming in geographical areas where humanitarian opportunities took them and gave a kickstart: FAO for instance with long-term agenda on climate smart agriculture, ACTED on skills, UNICEF on WASH and HANDS on livelihoods.

#### Effectiveness:

- ◆ The NDC facilitated several FSL activities including the construction /rehabilitation of irrigation channels, building access roads, improved livestock and farming etc. The real purpose was to improve village-wide means of livelihood, whereas wages only incentivized to initiate the task and to survive the most difficult first few weeks after the disaster event.
- ◆ Agriculture, kitchen gardening, water and livestock management and vaccination trainings improved complementary knowledge and skills of people to enrich and multiply their sources of livelihoods.
- ◆ Led by UNICEF, NDC provided safe drinking water through large scale rehabilitations or installation of water schemes by UNICEF and ACTED. This was critical especially in the context of drought when the water tables dropped too low with higher levels of Total Dissolved Solids (TDS), making the water saline and undrinkable.
- ◆ Behavioral Change Communication (BCC) measures were also adopted through training, demonstration, reinforcing practices and by distributing Information, Education and Communication (IEC) material. Communities were mobilized to construct latrines within their own households with the provision of subsidies to those who could not afford the cost.
- ◆ Anecdotal evidence in all the districts suggests enhanced use of safe-drinking water, increased use of hygiene and sanitation practices and continued display and distribution of IEC material. With improved sanitation practices, the practice of Open Defecation (OD) is coming down, slowly but gradually.
- ◆ Households already affected by heavy rains and massive floods (2010-2011 and 2015) were facilitated to construct stable, robust and disaster resilient one room shelters. Materials and methods used were economical, locally acceptable, climatically appropriate and environment and culturally friendly.
- ◆ NDC included cash-transfers in its interventions under CfW for Shelter, Livelihood, and WASH activities. 87% respondents were very satisfied, 8% were moderately satisfied whereas 5% were dissatisfied with Cash interventions.

### KEY FINDINGS/CONCLUSIONS

- ◆ To improve disaster preparedness, NDC conducted training courses in 27 districts with participants (including district governments) from 112 districts across the country. According to the stakeholders interviewed, the skills acquired in these training courses have added value to their actions in case of local disasters.

#### Efficiency:

- ◆ No big delays in start-up and implementation of interventions were noted since the teams, most of the stocks, capacities and SOPs were already in place.
- ◆ Competent national staff have led the work in collaboration with international advisors to bring international know-how
- ◆ NDC remained very successful in assuring quick rollout in the field as one or two partners rolled out immediately due to their prior physical presence. Hence, delays due to NOCs for one or the other partners did not delay the response time.
- ◆ NDC leverages mutual information sharing at all levels by using information channels of five organizations coming together to avoid overlaps, make assessments, communicate with government, generate timely updates.
- ◆ Cost / resource sharing has been assured for efficient process. Shared office spaces in the regions during response (e.g. in case of Karachi floods 2017), location of NDC M&E teams in partners' offices (e.g. Quetta, Hyderabad, Sukhar) and joint DRMCs have helped sharing costs and resources to make the process more efficient
- ◆ Bi-lateral monthly meetings between Consortium members and the Secretariat (IOM) took place to plan, address problems and to identify existing needs. The frequency of meetings increased manifold in case of a disaster event. Situation reports (Sitreps) have been a standard requirement for all disaster events and frequency has varied from multiple sitreps in a day to daily, weekly and bi-weekly.
- ◆ Along with the additional Joint Activity Monitoring (JAM) and learning visits, the Consortium members implemented a comprehensive needs and gap assessments and analyses during the course of implementation to mainstream protection activities in trainings, agreements on sector-specific interventions and integrating monitoring feedback in the activities.
- ◆ The Technical Working Groups have been critically reviewing and ranking shelter and WASH designs of the participating agencies and depending on need, the sector leads coordinated with the relevant TWGs and transmitted sector-specific expertise all through the partners.
- ◆ IOM maintained coordination and communication between the Secretariat and the partners to ensure smooth mutual collaboration without any major friction or disagreement. DFID and the individual partners expressed that this role was well performed with good achievement of results.
- ◆ NDC saved at least £17 per day by storing emergency stocks in the HANDS and ACTED warehouses in Sindh. NDC has seen an estimated cost saving of £2,300 per month in office costs by having IOM field teams sharing HANDS sub-offices in Sindh and Balochistan.
- ◆ Multi-year financing helped NDC partners to transition from response to recovery seamlessly.
- ◆ NDC has harmonized the beneficiary selection approach between ACTED and HANDS, ensuring the consortium adheres to a single and strict vulnerability assessment for beneficiary selection.
- ◆ With the support of HANDS and ACTED under MYHP, the PDMA of Balochistan and Sindh, for the very first time, formulated their Provincial Disaster Response Plans and aligned them with their DRR and the Disaster Response Plans and Guidelines to effectively manage and respond to disasters. provinces.

### GOOD PRACTICES

- ◆ *Access to flexible resources crucial to address diversity* - NDC had a unique facility in MYHP to reach anywhere in the country to address any kind of disaster. Therefore forming consortium alone may not guarantee performance. It is the availability of flexible resources to increase responsiveness and efficiency.
- ◆ *Use of local techniques and material for shelters may lead to quick results:* In the logic of adaptive planning, decentralized options to let beneficiaries use indigenous techniques was a good option since it brought the onus of success on the beneficiary him/herself.
- ◆ *Using collective influence of the partners,* NDC has successfully worked in *close collaboration with NDMA and PDMAs* to generate demand and call for extending immediate humanitarian support and mobilize partners. NDC has thus gained enormous influence to enhance readiness within authorities on subjects not limited to disasters.
- ◆ *Developing understanding may takes time therefore needs patience* - All the NDC partners agreed that they went through a steep learning curve during their NDC life and performed better on each response. Initially for instance, the partners faced coordination issues which continued to diminish with time. A mutual understanding among partners grew and coordination became more natural
- ◆ *NDC's learning is not readily available* for other stakeholders working in the area of emergency resilience, preparedness and response - An option is to set up a *knowledge repository* and a portal which may be hosted by suitable institutions. A repository concept note has already been shared with the NDMA, which is a step in this direction.
- ◆ *Improving Operation and Maintenance set up* for infrastructure is crucial. This is necessary for improving sustainability of interventions.
- ◆ A complete *reliance on existing social capital* (CBOs, organized communities) cannot guarantee identifying the most vulnerable beneficiaries. Sometimes exclusion in CBOs may lead to exclusion in NDC interventions. Although organized communities are essential to manage sustainability of community driven infrastructures.
- ◆ *Cash interventions are empowering, but also most difficult to manage* in terms of satisfying beneficiaries; these invited few grievances in the implementation process. No doubt the partners have done their best to brief beneficiaries on cash interventions to rationalize expectations, the experience shows that more needs to be done to clearly explain them the purpose and spirit behind CfW.
- ◆ *Responding to slow onset disasters* (e.g. drought, heat-wave, change of rainfall patterns, pest attacks etc.) warrants long-term solutions and institutional arrangement - This is an area for a relatively longer-term response using an LRRD or CCDRM approaches, which may be fit in the next programme design.
- ◆ *Social mobilization needs to be a consistent process over years.* In short-term humanitarian programmes however, such a process is not consistent over years, and it is not rational to expect
- ◆ *Engaging women was difficult due to their limited mobility and cultural constraints* - Going slow but consist on taboo subjects such as menstrual hygiene is; gradually gaining confidence of communities (even when through related men first) is more sustainable to achieve objectives.

### LESSONS LEARNED

- ◆ *The Response Trigger did not fit to the changing humanitarian context* - the trigger needs to be revised to position NDC to effectively respond to relatively small scale but intense disasters. This revision, however, must leave space for local actors trained by NDC or other actors to respond to smaller and localized disasters.
- ◆ There is *duplication of efforts on IEC material and delivery in the field* - Unfortunately, all the humanitarian agencies try to create their own IEC kits. One way to avoid this is to engage Clusters in this discussion or motivate local Disaster Management Units or also relevant sectoral actors. There may not be a best solution – but this topic needs deliberation.

## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

### *Recommendations for IOM Senior Management:*

1. *Revisit Disaster Trigger Mechanism* in order to be more inclusive and responsive and encompassing smaller scale of disasters
2. *Synergy and coordination with DFID's BDRP* and government departments may be improved/strengthened.
3. NDC partners would like to see *more integration among partners* in thematic tasks through internal clusters. WASH, for instance, is not a standalone topic; it has impact on nutrition, health, education (girls drop-outs) and overall well-being of people and their social coherence. Expanding horizon of similar central themes may increase value of this partnership.
4. *Revisit NDC name* : The name of NDC only refers to disaster that may be too limiting for the opportunities NDC may co-create with its partners. Partners support exploring longer term entry points from the experience already gained.
5. It is recommended to *prepare some of the agreed NDC standards* – this is only useful if NDC partners are interested in retaining and strengthening the Consortium as an entity and use the platform for the future opportunities.
6. *Build a profile as NDC* and document its added value. Positioning on CCDRM may be one option to open up new venues based on earlier experiences.
7. NDC may consider *engaging in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)* to utilize the period between one disaster to the other is an opportunity to induce disaster preparedness and risk reduction.
8. *Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD)* approach may be replicated based on earlier experience in multiple sectors.

9. *Further aim at improved resilience*: Although this is too broad and may be addressed through several entry points (e.g. economic resilience, stocks and safe heavens, institution building, access to information and early warning, improved access to nutrition and water security, etc.), it is important to define strategic choices on where to build. Expand more in preparedness, increasing local response capacity, and providing technical assistance to disaster management authorities.

10. *Build a profile as NDC* and document its added value. Positioning on CCDRM may be one option to open up new venues based on earlier experiences.

### *Recommendations for IOM Project Staff:*

1. *Protection activities should be mainstreamed* in the programme interventions. It may be useful to document a brief set of guidelines on this aspect with definitions and minimum standards
2. *Prepare a good knowledge management / retention plan* for identifying future opportunities. The remaining period must be used to further complete the existing knowledge cascade and prepare essential position papers for future opportunities.
3. As an asset not to be lost, it is important to *consolidate the list of trained individuals* from 112 districts earlier indicated in order to activate the link when required.
4. Open Defecation Free (ODF) environment and sanitation, is still a big issue in Pakistan. There is enough room to *try cost effective models* for creating an environment where experts may work together and offer services by carving solutions in upstream technological solution-finding work.
5. *Scope of research / documentation of learning*: NDC and its individual partners have accumulated a wealth of experience in the field of humanitarian assistance. It may be worthwhile prioritizing a few topics for the benefits of other actors (and to gain visibility).