



CBDRM TAHAFUZ

این VDMC جو کردار

مجھي معلومات گڏ ڪرڻ

Building Resilient Communities

# TAHAFUZ

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Printing: DOT Advertising  
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**BUILDING RESILIENCE  
THROUGH COMMUNITY  
BASED DISASTER RISK  
MANAGEMENT IN THE SINDH  
PROVINCE OF PAKISTAN**

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

Since the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan, natural disasters have featured as primary shocks to rural livelihoods and have impaired overall development in rural communities. They have caused an immense loss of lives and livestock as well as heavy damages to people's property, assets and crops. The floods of 2010 and 2011, and the heavy rainfall of 2012 highlighted the country's ineffective disaster management system, which failed to prevent the mass-scale destruction which occurred in affected areas. Despite the severity and frequency of natural disasters we were, and still are, facing serious challenges in coping with unavoidable natural hazards. Presently, the trial for rural communities has not only been to recover from the devastation of past disasters, but to also cope with the onslaught of future ones. People needed to be equipped with early preparedness, mitigation and disaster management skills, so that they are able to take on this challenge.

'Tahafuz', which literally means 'to protect', is a community-based disaster risk management project which aims to build the resilience of local communities to resist hazards, bounce back after a disaster occurs, and adapt and change in order to recover effectively. Representing \$1.4 million in assistance, Tahafuz is a partnership between the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN), the largest civil society network in Pakistan. Working in four of the most disaster prone districts of the Sindh province, namely Thatta, Badin, Tharparkar and Umakot, the project has reached an estimated 110,879 households.

Tahafuz put people at the heart of decision making and implementing disaster risk management activities. Residents of drought, flood and cyclone prone areas were empowered through capacity building and small scale mitigation and management activities including the development of disaster risk management plans, construction of community critical infrastructures, and provision of standardized emergency tools kits. To undertake the challenge of preparing communities to deal with natural disasters, RSPN worked closely with two of its partner Rural Support Programmes; the National Rural Support Programme (NRSP) and the Thardeep Rural Development Programme (TRDP), who have been working with communities in these areas for years.

# THE DETAILS

## FORMATION OF LOCAL COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS

Given the geographical span, the diverse population of varying sizes and spatial constraints, reaching out to communities would not have been feasible without a formal structure in place. Therefore, committees were formed at the village and Union Council levels, which would serve as a mechanism for interacting with communities and facilitating communication between stakeholders and community groups, RSPs, NGOs, government etc.

### a) Village Disaster Management Committees – VDMCs

RSPN with the support of its implementing partners, NRSP and TRDP, formed 232 VDMCs in the project districts. This structure facilitated RSPs to operate at the revenue village level, which is an administrative unit which is comprised of 12 to 13 settlements on average, having 80 to 100 households per settlement. In order to form a VDMC, a minimum of 10 people were grouped together. A total of 2,678 VDMC members, (of which 1,331 are women) were nominated and endorsed by the community through signed resolutions.

### b) Union Disaster Management Committees – UDMCs

To enable communities to proactively advocate and network with the district government and other social networks and NGOs, and to be able to present themselves at higher platforms under the context of disaster risk management, UDMCs were formed at Union Council level. Each UDMC has one male and one female member from every VDMC of the respective Union Council. In each project district, 5 such UDMCs were formed.

## CAPACITY BUILDING OF VDMCs and UDMCs

As part of the capacity building program, a comprehensive CBDRM manual and a training tool kit was developed for the master trainers. Under the participatory disaster risk assessment training for VDMCs, 1170 members were trained on how to conduct a risk assessment using tools such as hazard maps, resource maps, seasonal and historical calendars as well as how to manage small scale construction activities. Participants were also taught basic life support skills, first aid, and search and rescue operation techniques.

The UDMCs were also trained on organizational management, and advocacy and networking. Sessions were conducted on leadership, operations, maintenance, communication, financial management, record keeping and conflict resolution. Also, the participants were equipped with skills on how to advocate and resolve their problems by directly dealing with district administration and other stakeholders.

## **SMALL SCALE PREPAREDNESS AND MITIGATION MEASURES**

### **a) Disaster Risk Management Plans - DRMPs:**

Each VDMC collaborated with its village residents to develop a Disaster Risk Management Plan (DRMP), which was based on their learnings from conducting a Participatory Disaster Risk Assessment (PDRA). The DRMP required the participants to list all potential hazards and prioritize them through a risk assessment/evaluation. The community members also suggested corrective measures and assigned responsibilities among themselves in order to counter the most critical threats they were exposed to. By focusing on early preparedness and planning, DRMPs gave communities vital knowledge of natural disasters, making them far better prepared than they previously were.

### **b) Community Critical Infrastructures - CCIs:**

In order to reduce losses resulting from a disaster, a community critical infrastructure with an average cost of PKR 200,000 was constructed in each of the 232 VDMCs. The CCI could be anything which the community identifies as necessary for preventing human and livestock casualties and reducing their food and water dependence on external sources. VDMCs were entirely responsible for all construction related activities, from procuring the raw material, hiring skilled and unskilled labour, maintaining financial records as well as reviewing the progress of their activities in VDMC meetings. Under the project a total of 296 schemes have been constructed.

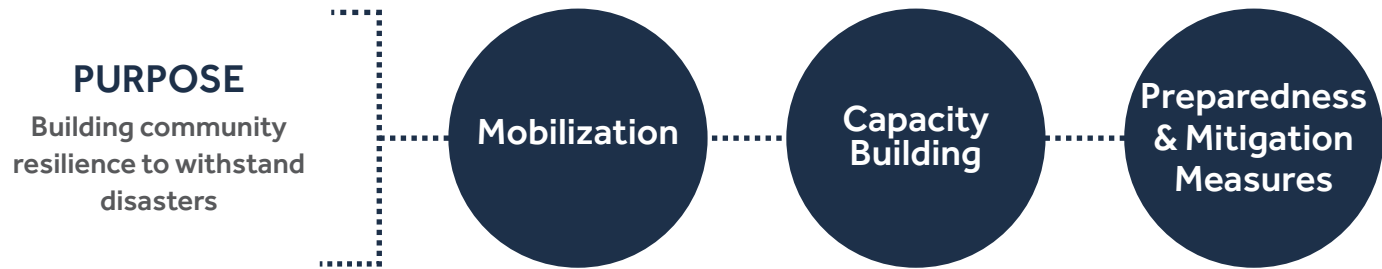
### **c) Emergency Tool kits:**

All 20 UDMCs were provided a standardized tool kit worth PKR 500,000 to enable them to tackle hazardous situations. The tool kit contains items that are needed in emergency situations, particularly those which occur in the climate of the target areas, such as a first aid bag, safety helmets, flash lights, climbing ropes, a bucket, mega phone, chain pulley, life jackets, folding stretchers, ladder bamboo, shelter kits, sandbags, wheelbarrows, foot pumps, pocket radios, shovels etc.

## **EARLY WARNING SYSTEM AND LINKAGES**

Recognizing that capacitated communities can better respond to disasters, recover faster and protect their livelihood assets more efficiently; an early warning system was developed. Various events at the district, provincial and national level were held in order to promote the significance of disaster risk management among all concerned stakeholders. VDMC members have also been linked with the local government and DDMA officials, so that hazard relevant information can be swiftly sent to communities and the impact of disasters can be mitigated. The arrangement has encouraged VDMCs to interact with the local government more actively in gaining their support.

# TAHAFUZ'S FOOTPRINT



**DURATION**  
**16**  
**MONTHS**  
SEP 2012 TO JAN 2014

**NUMBER OF BENEFICIARIES**  
**646,942**  
**VULNERABLE INDIVIDUALS**

# TAHAFUZ'S FOOTPRINT

ASSISTANCE AMOUNT

**\$1.4**  
MILLION

ASSISTANCE AREA



MOST VULNERABLE DISTRICTS OF  
THE SINDH PROVINCE OF PAKISTAN

**4**

1. Formation of Local Community Institutions VDMCs & UDMCs
2. Capacity Building of VDMCs & UDMCs
3. Small Scale Mitigation & Preparedness Measures
4. Early Warning System and Linkages



# IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS

# RSPN

RURAL SUPPORT  
PROGRAMMES NETWORK

NRSP: National Rural Support Programme

TRDP: Thardeep Rural Development Programme

## MOBILIZED

Communities into  
VDMCs & UDMCs to  
produce a cadre of  
CBDRM experts

## CAPACITATED

**100,000**  
Households of Sindh  
for Disaster Risk  
Management

## MITIGATION MEASURES INCORPORATED TO BUILD

Disaster resilience in  
rural Sindh



## FORMATION OF LOCAL COMMUNITY INSTITUTIONS



# DISASTER MANAGEMENT COMMITTEES

Established 232 VDMCs  
with a total membership of

**2,672**

Including

**MEN - 1341**  
**WOMEN - 1331**

Established 20 UDMCs  
with a total membership of

**464**

Including

**MEN - 232**  
**WOMEN - 232**



## CAPACITY BUILDING OF VDMCs & UDMCs



# VDMC

Members Trained on  
Participatory Disaster  
Risk Assessment

**1,170**

Members Trained  
on Disaster Risk  
Management & Planning

**1,170**

# UDMC

Members Trained on  
Organizational Management  
and Development

**203**

Members Trained  
on Disaster Risk  
Management & Planning

**103**

## **CAPACITY BUILDING – HASEENA’S STORY**

“In my village, we have always relied on men to help us in emergencies,” says Haseena, who is from a village in Tharparkar. When she joined her local VDMC, Haseena knew very little about natural or manmade disasters and how to deal with them. “Life is not easy here; everyone is very poor and we constantly live in danger of famine and drought. Being in the desert, it is also very common for our homes to catch fire, because they are made of thatch and wood. When I joined the VDMC, I wanted to learn how we could cope with these uncertainties in our desert life”.

As a member of the VDMC, Haseena received training on CBDRM techniques. “I learned basic first aid, how to bandage a wound or broken bone, how to extinguish a fire, and most importantly, how to be vigilant and prevent accidental fires.” After each training, Haseena would convene the women of her village and teach them what she had learned. She even taught them how to use the tool kit provided to her VDMC. Thanks to her work, other women also take precautions to prevent accidents, and know exactly what to do if a disaster does occur. Haseena is proud of the change she has seen in women since she has started passing her knowledge on to them, “Before we had the VDMC, whenever there was a problem such as a fire or someone was injured, women used to panic. Now we know exactly what to do and we have the confidence to take care of anything that comes our way”.

## **CAPACITY BUILDING – BHAGO’S STORY**

When Bhago became president of her local VDMC, she had no idea of the challenges she would have to overcome to help the people of her village. She was nominated by her fellow VDMC members to be trained on participatory disaster risk assessment and disaster risk planning, for which she would have to travel to a village located about an hour away. In rural communities all over the country, women are often confined to their homes, and are not allowed to travel unaccompanied. In Bhago’s case, her family was unwilling to let her travel that far every day for a training program which they considered to be a waste of time, and forbade her from doing so. Nevertheless, Bhago persisted, and eventually convinced her family to let her attend the training program.

A few weeks after her training, she was at home when she heard people shouting nearby. She ran towards her neighbors, to find a 7 year old girl in cataleptic condition. In villages such as this one, resources are scarce and hospitals are far away, but Bhago had recently learned first aid at her training. She administered CPR to the little girl and revived her. Soon after her successful recovery, everybody who had once opposed the idea of Bhago going for training, including her family were thankful for her determination and strength, and recognized her as a valuable resource for the community.



# SMALL SCALE MITIGATION & PREPAREDNESS MEASURES



Construction of Small  
Scale Community Critical  
Infrastructures

**296**

Worth

**\$597,857**

In 232 VDMCs

Provision of  
Emergency Tool kits

**20**

Worth

**\$83,099**

In 20 UDMCs

Development  
of Disaster Risk  
Management Plans

**232**

To Cater to  
preparedness needs  
of 232 VDMCs

## TYPE OF SCHEMES

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





**A mock exercise being conducted during the disaster risk management training for VDMCs and UDMCs**

## **DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND MITIGATION – BHAGI BHEEL’S STORY**

When the residents of Bhagi Bheel were trapped in their village with no escape route during the 2010 floods, they vowed not to let such devastation occur ever again. Bhagi Bheel is situated next to a stream which overflows during floods. “Had the road leading out of the village been elevated, it wouldn’t have flooded and we would have been able to get to safety in time,” says Ghaman Das. After the floods, Ghaman Das became a member of the local VDMC because he wanted to prevent losses if there was ever another emergency in his village.

Man Bai, another VDMC member, commented on the destruction that resulted from the flood, “We had no way out,” she said, “we will never forget that terrible time.” When the VDMC members were asked to propose a CCI structure in their revenue village, they unanimously decided to build an elevated earthen road that would lead them safely out of their village. The men and women of the village worked together over the next 20 days to construct the road, which now links Bhagi Bheel to a nearby bridge, bringing immense relief to the residents of the entire area.

## **INSTITUTIONAL DEVELOPMENT – UDMC CHORE**

Chore is a Union Council located in Umerkot, Sindh. The Union Council is home to social activists such as a man named Mitha, who has been struggling to improve the area for years. During the 2010 floods, Mitha rallied a group of volunteers and distributed non-food items and cash to the flood affectees. However, because he did not have access to a formal institutional platform, much of his efforts went unnoticed by larger organizations.

When a UDMC was formed in Chore, it was integrated into the Union Council’s Local Support Organization. The LSO is a permanent organization run by the people of the Union Council, which works for the development of its people on a much broader scale. Now that the UDMC was a part of the LSO, disaster management activities such as those undertaken by Mitha, would become a part of the LSO’s core activities and could take place in a more systematized, sustained manner.

Under the UDMC’s guidance, the VDMCs from each Union Council were trained in participatory disaster risk assessment, DRR planning, risk management and emergency response. After the training each VDMC developed a disaster risk management plan for their village, after evaluating their vulnerability to hazards and conducting a capacity assessment to take stock of their resources.

Owing to the combined efforts of the UDMC and the LSO, disaster risk reduction efforts have gotten significant attention from Umerkot’s media and the local government, who maintains close ties with them to minimize any future losses during disasters.



## EARLY WARNING SYSTEM & LINKAGES



## **ADVOCACY AND NETWORKING – A UDMC’s STORY**

Dei Jarkas is a Union Council in Badin, Sindh, with a population of over 52,000 people. The UDMC here has been particularly successful at partnering with other local organizations to share their disaster risk management plans and experiences, and have them incorporated into government systems. When the UDMC was first formed here, it was integrated into the Local Support Organization, also operating in Dei Jarkas. Since the LSO was an established entity, the UDMC was able to collaborate with it and create important linkages with the government and other organizations in the area, who were working toward disaster risk management. Since its inception, the UDMC has actively participated in Union Council and district level forums, such as the DRR forum of Badin, which is an alliance between 15 civil society organizations.

The UDMC runs on funds generated by the community, and also works with its VDMCs to collect as much information about its constituent villages as possible, particularly regarding disabled persons. This information is shared with relevant organizations so that when a disaster strikes, everyone can work together and minimize its adverse effects. The UDMC has even signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the district government, and has registered all its constituent VDMCs therein, to ensure better coordination when an emergency arises.

## **EARLY WARNING SYSTEM AND LINKAGES – A VDMC’s STORY**

On 26th May, 2013, 90 households were destroyed in two settlements as seawater flooded an embankment in Thatta, Sindh. Water hit the two settlements in the middle of the night, catching everyone unawares. When he realized what was happening, Siddique, a member of the local VDMC called the president of his Union Councils UDMC for help. The UDMC responded quickly by gathering other members to barricade the flooded embankment with sand bags and stones. Meanwhile the members of the UDMC and the VDMC approached the government for food items, which were provided to them. The VDMC distributed the food and safe drinking water to the affected households, all the while maintaining a record of all the distributed items.

The VDMC’s close coordination with the UDMC and the government enabled them to respond swiftly to the flood. Working as a team, they were able to support their community at the time of an emergency, linking people with resources proactively, instead of waiting for help to arrive.

## **WHO WE ARE**

**The Rural Support Programmes Network (RSPN) is the largest development network of Pakistan, with an outreach to over 33 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 around the belief that poor people have an innate potential to help themselves, that they can better manage their limited resources if they organise and are provided technical and financial support. The RSPs provide social guidance, and technical and financial assistance to the rural poor. RSPN is the strategic platform for the RSPs: it provides capacity building support to them, and assists them in policy advocacy and donor linkages.**



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