



Evaluation of ECHO funded Alliance2015 project

“Humanitarian Assistance to disaster affected vulnerable populations in Pakistan”

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Executive Summary

Pakistan has been hit by numerous flood disasters in recent years and in parts of the country (Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)) by conflict creating destruction, displacement and humanitarian need. Alliance2015 has been responding to those needs over a number of years and in March 2013 started its sixth joint project with the European Community Humanitarian Office (ECHO) funding entitled “Humanitarian Assistance to disaster affected vulnerable populations in Pakistan, supporting the early recovery needs of communities affected by floods and to assist Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and their host communities affected by conflict. With Welthungerhilfe (WHH) as the lead agency the project has the overall aim “to provide humanitarian assistance to disaster affected populations in order to support them in addressing their prioritised needs”. The more specific objective aimed to “ensure targeted communities have access to basic shelter, Water Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) and are aware about Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) principles”. Targeting the 3 provinces of Sindh, Punjab and KPK the project was implemented by four international Alliance members namely ACTED, Cesvi, Concern Worldwide and WHH with Concern implementing through 3 local partners and WHH implementing through 2 local partners. The budget for the project was €4.75m in total.

The evaluation itself was carried out by two consultants, one lead, international consultant and one national consultant spending 57 contract days on the assignment with the overall purpose to evaluate the project with a focus on the quality, appropriateness, timeliness, efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability of the interventions carried out. The field part of the evaluation took place in two phases over the course of March, April

and May 2014. The methodologies adopted by the evaluation team included literature review, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, physical observation with supporting photographs and household interviews. It was cross sectional in nature assessing outputs, outcomes and impact at a single point in time by sampling the project at different geographical locations ensuring the work of each Alliance partner and Implementing Partner (IP) was viewed and each component of the project (Shelter, WASH, Fuel Efficient Stoves, Non Food Items (NFIs) and Disaster Risk Management) was also viewed. The scope of the Terms of Reference (ToR), the sheer physical distances to be covered and the restrictive security situation placed significant limits on the depth of analysis that could be done to answer each of the questions asked in the Terms of Reference.

In brief the project was relevant to the core problem and needs of the target groups at the time of project design with shelter and WASH of equal relevance in flood affected areas and water of high relevance in conflict affected areas of KPK. Targeting at a geographical level seemed to be good but there was a lack of documentation to justify this while at the village level targeting was rigorous through self-identification by communities followed by verification by implementing agencies. Involvement of target communities in the assessment process was very comprehensive but there was less involvement in the design stage. Participation levels varied depending on the type of infrastructure being built and training/education being provided. Participation levels were high for shelter in particular, relatively high for latrines and less so for water supply. The beneficiary selection methodology of 100% verification by Alliance2015 members was relevant in a context where complaints on beneficiary selection were high. Involvement levels in the various components are relevant though under the topic of water there should have been greater community involvement across the project cycle including in design and planning if looking for greater sustainability.

In terms of appropriateness of interventions in the social and cultural context there is little doubt that the shelter component is correct in most cases using a vernacular design, using locally available materials in the main and fit for purpose in the context. The water component was appropriate in most locations focused on accessing ground water using appropriate handpumps though in some locations greater emphasis could have been placed on accessing surface water sources and/or household water treatment. The type of water filter provided in KPK was inappropriate as it required electricity and a feed tank that many beneficiaries did not have. The latrine response was in many circumstances inappropriate as it is difficult to expect sharing of latrines between families and also difficult for families to maintain operation and maintenance of this type of latrine. The kits provided were for the most part appropriate and useful, in particular the shelter kit. Some items in the hygiene kit may not have been necessary, such as toothpaste but other items such as jerrycans were useful. The fuel efficient stoves have proved very useful to those who received them. The Disaster Management component made sense to include but is difficult to maintain when implementing agencies have left some areas and Government capacity to follow on is weak.

Output targets were achieved and in some cases exceeded by a considerable margin. In terms of outcomes the vast majority who received shelter support are living in and/or utilising the shelters provided to the greatest extent possible. Health outcomes are less easy to determine due to the weaknesses in the data available and gathered but as a proxy indicator the increase in shelters, improved access to safe water, improved access to sanitation, increased access to and use of hygiene materials such as jerrycans coupled

with relevant hygiene education all combine to suggest health status is no worse than before the disaster. Impacts of the project are significant and all are positive with even some unintended positives extending into livelihoods (brick making) and food security (kitchen gardens). Due to the increased awareness and application of DRR into shelter construction/maintenance and other sectors the impact is likely to be felt into the short and medium term. The impact of the stoves has also been significant impacting on time, health and environment.

The response was delivered with a significant time delay since targeted communities were affected by either floods or conflict. However, within the timeframe of the project activities were carried out in a timely fashion without the delays in release of funds previously encountered. The exception was in KPK where start up was significantly delayed only allowing implementation to be carried out over a 7.5 month period.

The appropriateness of methodologies and technical designs varied with shelter being the most appropriate building upon lessons learned in other projects by getting more community participation in construction and higher quality outputs. The water component had good technical designs but could have been improved with the inclusion of added design features such as fencing or walls, laundry washing areas, animal watering areas and better drainage. The water component could have benefited more from higher levels of community participation as a means to improve sustainability. In latrines the technical design was good and modified during the project to provide a bigger superstructure to enable bathing also. However, a pour flush latrine with septic tank is questionable as was the expected sharing of one latrine between a number of families. The fuel efficient stoves were quick and easy to construct with communities able to retain the construction techniques and moulds following training.

In the area of resilience the infrastructure provided is broadly more resilient than in previous projects. Shelters are better located and better constructed and the expanded provision of shelter kits to individual households increases the likelihood of maintained resilience. Water points are well constructed also with good quality aprons and more frequently raised up to limit infiltration by flood waters. Disaster Management activity was limited to training with very few villages going on to develop disaster management plans. However, awareness has been increased and some communities have been enabled to be more resilient through the preparation of disaster management plans and provision of some aids like flotation devices, radios and torches. The stoves component of the programme lacked the incorporation of resilience in a systematic way.

In the area of mainstreaming the overall finding is that priority mainstreaming issues have not been mainstreamed systematically throughout the project cycle. There are some very good examples of mainstreaming certain issues and concurrently there are examples of weak mainstreaming. Disaster Risk Reduction is perhaps the best mainstreamed priority issue and good examples of improvement in comparison to previous projects relate to the enhanced resilience of shelters articulated earlier. Weak areas can include environment mainstreaming as ideally water source development should have been accompanied by an environmental impact assessment.

Under Accountability there remains a strong commitment within the Alliance though in some aspects such as signboards informing communities of interventions, there is less evidence of thorough implementation than previous projects. All partners have Complaints Response Mechanisms but each mechanism varies making comparisons difficult. All have similar ways in which complaints/feedback could be made via phone, complaint box and

email etc. with complaints about the beneficiary selection process being the most common. Complaints from women directly appear low and accessibility to complaints mechanisms such as phone lines appeared restrictive. Overall the suggestion is to develop a common complaints response mechanism, possibly utilising the “Shafaf” system already developed by RWF not only to receive and respond to complaints but also to analyse complaints on an ongoing basis, perhaps monthly and make project adjustments in real time.

Needs assessments were overly focused on primary data gathered and greater reference could have been made in needs assessment reports to secondary sources of data to help verify some of the primary data findings. Primary data collection tools need continual revision before each use and one suggestion is to adjust some of the questions in relation to health. Indicators of performance need an overhaul for future projects of a similar type to make them more contextually specific, less rooted in the Sphere Standards and more focused on the use of facilities and not just numbers of water points and latrines. Indicators need to examine coverage expressed as a percentage with regard to water and sanitation as a proxy indicator to help determine public health impact. The WHH document “Planning for Permanence”¹ is suggested as something all partners could utilise for planning and monitoring WASH projects of 12 months or more. Joint Learning trips planned under ECHO VI but not carried out should be re-included and carried out in future projects and in relation to data collection KAP surveys in particular should be carried out by an independent third party to try and reduce the bias inherent in the current system of conducting pre and post KAP surveys.

Geographically the Alliance in Pakistan does not appear to have a focus going into the future with some partners moving out of Sindh for example to other places of need. The consequence of this is that many relationships and background understanding of places and communities is lost. Linked to the change in geographical locations are the issues of connectedness, coherence and sustainability. Many agree that a one year project is not enough to build resilience and reduce future vulnerabilities in one geographical area. As said before the shelter component has been successful in helping to reduce vulnerabilities into the future but the other components of the project needed greater investment towards sustainability and simply more time to help establish sustained infrastructure and behaviours.

The Alliance in Pakistan continues to build on learning from previously implemented projects and the key reported lesson brought forward from Alliance partners from other projects into ECHO VI was the establishing of the Technical Working Groups set up at Islamabad and Field Level. At this juncture ECHO VI has not been as good as other projects at gathering lessons for learning collectively as a lesson learned workshop has yet to take place, though one is now due to take place at the beginning of August. Some suggested recommendations to take forward into future projects for the Alliance are 1/ to conduct an EMMA during project design, 2/ retain monthly finance meetings between Alliance partners and 3/ incorporate an exit strategy into project design.

Strategically the Alliance in Pakistan is at a crossroads and perhaps it is time for the Alliance to move beyond project by project funding applications to thinking several years

¹ Planning for Permanence: Minimum Requirements WASH produced by WHH in December 2013 provides a checklist of 25 different minimum requirements needed for WASH projects of 12 months or more. The requirements listed include basic, technical design, sustainability, impact and quality assurance issues.

ahead and structuring the relationship in a way to maximise the funding it can secure and the impact it can make in the coming years. In order to move forward the Alliance should learn from the structure and running of the Pakistan Emergency Food Security Alliance (PEFSA) and decide on issues such as sectors to work in, geographic focus, context focus, core management structure and marketing strategy for example.

As an Alliance in Pakistan the levels of cooperation and communication remain good. However, the lead agency and the coordinator role within the lead agency is pivotal to maintaining good relationships and cooperation within the Alliance. Finding suitable people with the right people skills to undertake the role is difficult and compounded by the lack of job security the role entails. The suggestion of a “flying coordinator” where the coordinator remains the same for each project and simply rotates with the lead agency is suggested combined with a clearer job description or mandate for the post holder.

The harmonisation process continues to evolve within the Alliance and much progress has been made, particularly at the Islamabad and field office levels with the establishment of the five TWGs alongside the harmonised tools for needs assessment and greater cooperation on finance issues. At the field level harmonisation is less evident as approaches and designs differ even in locations that appear to be identical. Different shelter designs have been followed in some cases, some prefer to rehabilitate wells with others constructing new wells, Information Education and Communication (IEC) materials for hygiene education differ in the message being delivered and the approach to sanitation has also differed with some adopting a one latrine per family strategy. An obstacle to improving harmonisation and learning from one another has been the absence of formal cross learning visits that had been planned but didn’t take place.

ECHO as the donor for this project had a role to play in “pushing” the harmonisation agenda through the review of proposals, monitoring visits and routine communication with the Alliance. ECHO’s monitoring visit was hampered by security problems limiting the support they could give in this regard but perhaps there is scope for ECHO to support harmonisation further through formal feedback mechanisms, on reports and proposals for example, and support for learning visits. Collaboration with local partners remains strong (there were 5 involved on this project) and Alliance partners could learn much from them and specifically learn about “Shafaf”² with regard to a common complaints response mechanism. Communication with local partners could be improved and consideration should be given to inviting them onto the TWGs. Collaboration with Government seems relatively limited and there is a lack of connection to Government policies and strategies that seem relevant to the contexts (post flood context for sure) in which the Alliance has been working.

Partly due to the gap between the start of ECHO VI and the evaluation and lessons learned process for ECHO IV many of the lessons identified from ECHO IV still need to be applied into future Alliance wide projects. Additionally there are a number of recommendations to be brought forward out of ECHO VI, some of which are categorised as management or procedural recommendations and others categorised as technical. Some of the key management recommendations include the need for clearer communication on geographical targeting, the need to plan for exit during project design, the need to plan

² Shafaf meaning “transparent” in Urdu is a web-based complaint and feedback management system partly developed by WHH partner RWF which uses “intelligent software technologies” to utilise the data gathered in complain response mechanisms.

better for permanence, the need to mainstream more systematically, the possibility of harmonising the complaints response mechanism and making it a decision making tool, maximising the Technical Working Groups by setting objectives and communicating better between TWGs, ensure cross learning visits take place, develop an Alliance2015 wide strategic plan and strengthen the “software” side of the Alliance.

Some of the key technical recommendations include greater quality control over shelter construction, include other options for access to safe water (surface water sources and household water treatment), providing more appropriate water filters in KPK, rethink the mechanism for delivering sanitation objectives, perhaps utilise external parties to conduct KAP surveys and set indicators for fuel efficient stove success and include a “software” component.