



# Transformational Change Through Volunteerism

UNV Support to the UNDP's Flood Response in Pakistan Project Final Report



**UN**  
**Volunteers**

inspiration in action



**COVER PHOTOS (L-R):** United Nations (UN) Volunteer Altaf Hussain captured the resourcefulness of children, who use carefully tied string to help keep their balance as they cross a bridge, fashioned from a log, over a flooded area of their community in Kashmore district in northern Sindh following monsoon floods in September 2012. Meanwhile, in Jacobabad, residents loaded their belongings onto rafts and got a push and pull from friends and used donkey carts to flee to dry ground in photos snapped by UN Volunteers Ahsan Ali Shah and Mansoor Ahmed Chachar.

## CONTENTS

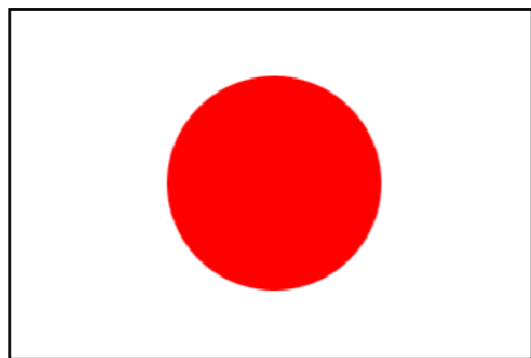
Introduction .....2  
 Bridging gaps during disaster .....4  
 Strengthening grassroots preparedness and resilience .....10  
 Addressing basic needs, bolstering coordination .....17  
 Supporting management of drought, breaches in canals .....20  
 Aiding provincial authorities after devastating tragedies .....22  
 Web Map Hub goes live, aims to eliminate duplication .....24  
 Docudrama dolphin delivers DRR message .....26  
 Showcasing flood-affectedees, celebrating volunteerism .....28  
 Championing for early flood preparedness .....30

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) programme is the UN organization that contributes to peace and development through volunteerism worldwide. Volunteerism is a powerful means of engaging people in tackling development challenges, and it can transform the pace and nature of development. Volunteerism benefits both society at large and the individual volunteer by strengthening trust, solidarity and reciprocity among citizens, and by purposefully creating opportunities for participation. UNV contributes to peace and development by advocating for recognition of volunteers, working with partners to integrate volunteerism into development programming, and mobilizing an increasing number and diversity of volunteers, including experienced UN Volunteers, throughout the world. UNV embraces volunteerism as universal and inclusive, and recognizes volunteerism in its diversity as well as the values that sustain it: free will, commitment, engagement and solidarity.



UNV is administered by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

**Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.**



The Government of Japan funded the UNV Support to the UNDP's Flood Response in Pakistan project.



United Nations (UN) Volunteer Project Coordinator Tomohiro Yamanaka (front, second from right) poses with student volunteers from Youth Empowering Spaces (YES) at a photo exhibition organized by UN Volunteers in Karachi to commemorate International Volunteer Day in December 2012. Launched in April 2011 as an initiative of the Government of Sindh's Youth Affairs Department, YES is being implemented in collaboration with Habib University Foundation and aims at "Enabling Youth to Aspire for a Healthy and Productive Life".

# Introduction

## TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE THROUGH VOLUNTEERISM

Over the course of the 2010 monsoon season, Pakistan experienced the worst floods in its history. Heavy rainfall, flash floods and riverine floods combined, creating a torrent roughly equal to the landmass of the United Kingdom.

**The Islamabad team included the Project Coordinator, Communications Officer and GIS/Information Management Officer. The Islamabad-based UNV Field Unit managed most of the project's operational issues. The PDMA Sindh Karachi-based team included two Field Information Management Officers, one of whom served as Field Team Leader, and a Field Communications Officer. Each district team had a DRR Advocacy Officer, Livelihoods/Entrepreneurship Officer and Survey/Data Collection Officer.**

The floods, which began in early July 2010, affected 84 of Pakistan's 121 districts and more than 20 million people or about one tenth of Pakistan's population. More than 1,700 men, women and children died and at least 1.8 million homes damaged or destroyed.

A little more than a year later, heavy monsoon rains inundated regions in northern and southern Sindh province. A second sustained rain spell from mid-August to mid-September affected the entire province with devastating humanitarian consequences. Several breaches in irrigation canals and an outfall drain compounded an already disastrous situation, making the rapid delivery of relief aid to flood-affecteds imperative. The 2011 floods affected an estimated 4 million people in Sindh alone, prompting analysts to suggest that the emergency was more intense in scale and magnitude than the 2010 floods for the province.

The Sindh provincial government warned district governments to expect heavy rainfalls, but the disaster preparedness measures that followed fell short. Rapid needs assessment, carried out by United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) in 17 villages in Sindh following the floods, found that community members in 16 of the villages did not know how to effectively respond to a disaster and they had limited understanding about disaster risk reduction (DRR) techniques. Communities noted that they could have greatly reduced their losses if they had taken DRR measures. They also underscored a lack

of knowledge about existing governmental institutions that provide disaster management services and the absence of people and/or organizations in their communities to whom they could consult for guidance in the event of disaster.

Following the floods, UNDP Islamabad identified the areas of database and flood information management; flood response coordination; communications and the promotion and advocacy of volunteerism as important resources in humanitarian and early recovery activities. The UN Volunteers (UNV) Support to the UNDP's Flood Response project in Pakistan was designed to respond to those needs through the deployment of three international volunteers based in Islamabad, three national volunteers posted at Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Sindh headquarters in Karachi and nine national volunteers initially deployed to three districts in Sindh province — Hyderabad, Larkana and Sukkur.

The aim of deploying UN Volunteers was two-fold: to rebuild lives and communities in flood-affected districts; and, to create or strengthen sustainable mechanisms for systematic coordination, reporting and data collection for early recovery and DRR among PDMA Sindh, its regional offices, the District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) and UNDP Pakistan.

The National Disaster Management Act, passed in 2010, provided the legal framework for disaster management to be mainstreamed



Volunteers in Pakistan supported people affected by consecutive monsoon flooding in Sindh province, including residents of Jacobabad district, who were still wading through flood water in November 2012, two months after record-breaking rainfall.

in Pakistan at the federal, provincial and district level. The National Disaster Management Authority is responsible for disaster management and preparedness for the country as a whole. In Sindh, the PDMA is the designated focal organization for coordinating activities related to preparing for and responding to disaster while the district administration is the designated first responder in the event of disaster. UN Volunteers collaborated with personnel from all three tiers of Pakistan's disaster management structure.

Even though the Pakistan Meteorological Department initially forecast below normal rainfall for the monsoon season prompting some regions of the country to brace for drought, northern Sindh was hit again by severe flooding in 2012. By 1 September, the Pakistan Meteorological Department had begun rolling out emergency weather advisories warning of an extremely low pressure monsoon system that resulted in widespread, heavy and sustained rainfall triggering flash floods and widespread destruction across vast swathes of the country, including northern Sindh.

The Sindh provincial government declared an emergency in the affected areas, which had an immediate impact on the UNV project. PDMA Sindh headquarters in Karachi recommended that members of the project team be reassigned from their bases in Larkana and Sukkur districts to two of the hardest hit areas of northern Sindh

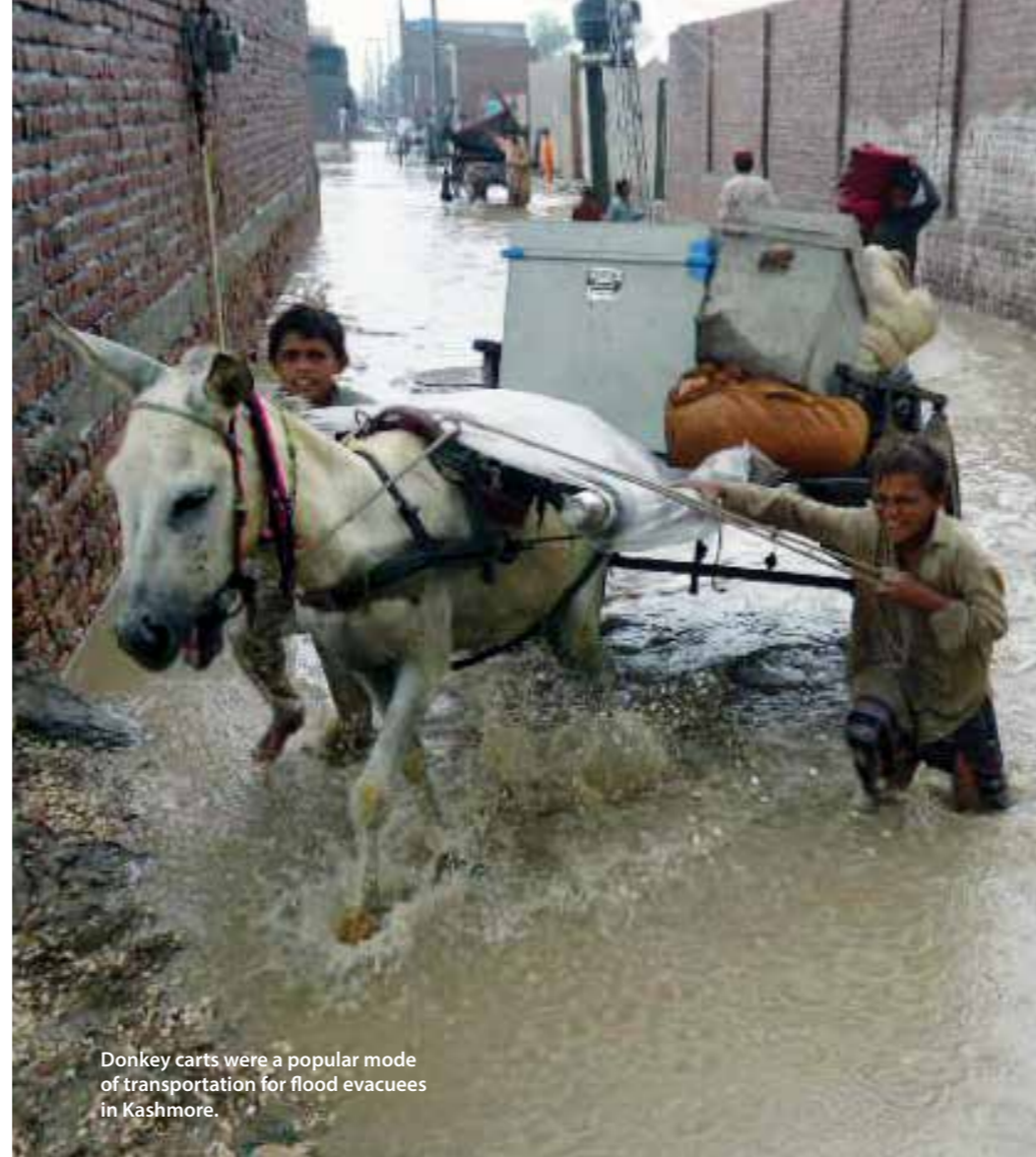
— Kashmore and Jacobabad. The volunteers assisted in coordination, data collection, needs assessment and other tasks assigned by the PDMA Sindh and DDMA during the emergency response.

The volunteers helped fill a serious human resources gap in the aftermath of the floods. Their efforts included staffing emergency control rooms that were established through the collaborative efforts of the PDMA, district administration, and the UNDP. The volunteers also were very active, prior to the monsoon, in assisting district authorities prepare contingency plans for their respective districts, which outlined the guidelines for and role of each stakeholder in the disaster response mechanism.

The project initially was meant to develop the capacity of disaster management authorities at the national, provincial and district levels and to provide flood management/preparedness support to severely flood-affected communities. However, the flexibility of the project design coupled with the abilities of the UNV team members allowed for the expansion of disaster management activities beyond strictly flood response. Team members provided hands-on support to district, provincial and national authorities following a plane crash on 20 April near Islamabad, a canal breach on 12 May, drought in Tharpakar in August, and a garment factory fire in Karachi on 11 September.



Flood-affectedees got on with their day-to-day lives, including fishing for food after they evacuated the floods



Donkey carts were a popular mode of transportation for flood evacuees in Kashmore.



Rab Nawaz Channa, far right, chats with villagers in Kashmore district's Tangwani takula following the floods

EMERGENCY RESPONSE • RELIEF • COLLABORATION

## Bridging gaps during disaster

United Nations (UN) Volunteer Rab Nawaz Channa was absent for the birth of his second child — a daughter born 2 December 2012 named “Maheen,” an Urdu word that describes the beauty and strength of the moon.

Channa missed his baby’s delivery because he was working around the clock supporting disaster management authorities in one of the hardest flood hit areas of Pakistan. It was difficult being away from his family on such an important occasion, but the 2012 floods affected an estimated 95 percent of the district’s nearly 1 million people and too many were pinning their hopes on Channa for him to become disheartened.

Channa was dispatched to Kashmore district with UN Volunteer Hifzullah Kaka on request from the one of the UNV project’s implementing partners, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Sindh, shortly after the province declared an emergency. As a Survey/Data Collection Officer for the project, one of Channa’s first priorities was to provide the district and PDMA Sindh with a statistical profile of those affected by the floods and a snapshot of the impact of the disaster through the collection and authentication of data.

He and Kaka took a prominent role in coordinating the district’s overall flood response effort, organizing a

meeting that brought together nearly 100 representatives from national and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and UN agencies and disseminating information to humanitarian partners about the flood damage. “When we arrived in Kashmore, we could see that NGOs were desperate to help people but they were not getting the critical information they needed to respond,” recalls Channa.

### ESTABLISHING A COHESIVE RESPONSE MECHANISM

He and Kaka, a project Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Advocacy Officer, were tasked with establishing and managing a centralized emergency response mechanism to distribute relief items provided by the PDMA Sindh. They drafted a memorandum of understanding between the district administration and five national NGOs, which dispensed food and other relief items as needs required. According to figures released by the National Disaster Management Authority, 10,000 tents and 60,400 ration packs were distributed in Kashmore following the floods.

“People were really suffering because the scale and magnitude of the floods were overwhelming. Homes were destroyed, food was running short and a great many people had health problems. We

were working late into the night with the deputy commissioner of the district”, says Kaka.

After establishing a network for the distribution of relief items, Channa and Kaka helped set up an emergency complaint cell with that they and district staff manned to field inquiries from Kashmore residents who felt entitled to flood-related assistance but had not yet received it. The complaint cell helped district authorities pinpoint where aid was most needed and areas that had been overlooked by humanitarian partners.

Sindh Rural Support Organization, one of the Sindh’s largest NGOs, distributed the relief items on behalf of the district. “We used our grassroots structure to assist in the distribution, including community mobilizers who worked on a volunteer basis to deliver material relief items”, explains programme officer Abdul Rehman Memon. The NGO also provided vehicles that were used for rescue and evacuation during the emergency.

### STRENGTHENING COORDINATION

The efforts of NGOs in Kashmore during the 2012 flood response marked a stark contrast from the disaster in 2010, when a dearth

*“Our UN Volunteer friends brought us all together in one platform, organizing fortnightly meetings in our district, which helped us avoid duplication so resources were used more prudently. By meeting regularly with district authorities and UN agencies, we managed to assess the damage and to more effectively prioritize needs”.*

—Ahmed Bux, president of Kainatt Development Association



Severe monsoon rainfall displaced tens of thousands of residents of Kashmore district in September 2012, including the family in this photo.



On behalf of the district, Rab Nawaz Channa, far left, briefed UNICEF Pakistan's Deputy Representative Karen Allen and UNICEF's Regional Emergency Adviser for Asia, Luc Chauvin about the post-monsoon situation in Kashmore district during their visits to Sindh province in October 2012.

*“It was the first time in history for the provincial government to distribute relief items through NGOs during the emergency phase of a disaster. Local NGOs are now very much engaged with the government. It was an important step in building the capacity of the government especially during an emergency”.*

—Syed Hammad Raza, UNOCHA Humanitarian Affairs Officer based at the Deputy Commissioner Office in Kashmore at Kandhkot

of NGOs capable of responding to an emergency, says Ahmed Bux, president of Kainatt Development Association. “At that time, we had no collaboration or linkages with government or the humanitarian community. There was no coordination and consequently a great deal of duplication and inefficiency”, recalls Bux.

He was reassured quickly after meeting Channa and Kaka that the 2010 emergency response experience would not be replicated. “Our UN Volunteer friends brought us all together in one platform, organizing fortnightly meetings in our district, which helped us avoid duplication so resources were used more prudently. By meeting regularly with district authorities and UN agencies, we managed to assess the damage and to more effectively prioritize needs”.

The work of NGOs also was noteworthy because it was the PDMA Sindh’s first-ever collaboration with locally based humanitarian partners, says Syed Hammad Raza, who is a UNOCHA Humanitarian Affairs Officer based at the Deputy Commissioner Office in Kashmore at Kandhkot.

During the 2010 floods, the district of Kashmore relied on help and funds from the international community to manage the disaster. But even though the response was well-funded, overall coordination was poor, continues Raza.

Kashmore-based humanitarian partners had difficulty attending cluster meetings in 2010 because they took place over 100 km away in Sukkur. Channa and Kaka worked hard to activate the UN-mandated

cluster system in Kashmore by organizing meetings in closer proximity to flood-affected communities and the NGOs that were assisting them.

By partnering with local NGOs in 2012, the district was much more self-reliant. “It was the first time in history for the provincial government to distribute relief items through NGOs during the emergency phase of a disaster. Local NGOs are now very much engaged with the government”, notes Raza. “The UN Volunteers did a very good job of advising the district about how to respond to a disaster. It was an important step in building the capacity of the government especially during an emergency”.

#### ADDRESSING NEEDS

The regular cluster meetings helped UN agencies, NGOs and district authorities identify flood response needs that were not being met and to advocate for assistance to bridge gaps. For instance, at least 50,000 food items were distributed in the district after UN Volunteers and district authorities successfully lobbied the UN World Food Programme.

Channa, Kaka and other UN Volunteers who supported the flood response have a unique understanding of disaster-affected communities, the issues they face and their needs, agrees Javed Sibghatullah Mahar, Additional Deputy Commissioner for Kashmore at Kandhkot. “They are astute people. They helped me very much”, says Mahar, who adds that not only did they fill a human resources gap, their efforts helped to strengthen mechanisms for the systematic coordination, reporting and data collection and DRR.

For his part, Channa says it was gratifying that “the district authorities entrusted us with such important tasks that affected hundreds of thousands of people and we proved they were right to put their trust in us”.



**851,830**

The number of people in Kashmore district affected by monsoon floods in 2012.

**53** lives were claimed as a result of the floods.

**1,862** people were injured.

**60,400**

The number of ration packs distributed to flood-affectedees in 2012 by district, provincial and national government disaster management authorities.

**10,000** tents were distributed to flood-affectedees.

**37kg**

Weight of each ration pack.

**22** The number of relief camps established in Kashmore district following the 2012 floods.

Source: National Disaster Management Authority



Members of a volunteer committee launched by UN Volunteers in Hamid Malik village in Kashmore district of Sindh province in Pakistan share their concerns with UN Volunteers (centre of photo) Communications Officer Alanna Jorde, who is flanked by Survey/Data Collection Officer Rab Nawaz Channa and DRR Advocacy Officer Shujaat Raza Soomro.

# Strengthening grassroots preparedness and resilience

**G**hulam Qadir fought for 48 hours to keep his head above water after the 2010 monsoon floods washed away his entire village in Kashmore district of Pakistan's Sindh province. The octogenarian survived to tell about his harrowing ordeal.

Ghulam Qadir describes his struggle to survive the 2010 floods to UN Volunteers.

But if Qadir and others in the village of Hamid Malik had known then what they do today as a result of a volunteer committee launched by some industrious United Nations (UN) Volunteers, Muhammad Ibrahim Malik is convinced they could have avoided so much suffering.

Malik is the president of one of several committees UN Volunteers established to improve community-based disaster risk management.

The UN Volunteers, who had assisted grassroots communities following the catastrophic 2010 floods, drew upon the expertise and network of contacts they gained from previous disasters to set up committees where they would do the most good — in low-lying locations known to be especially vulnerable to floods.

The committees were launched mere weeks before the provincial government declared an emergency in northern Sindh, where record-breaking rainfall early in September inundated entire districts, making the floods more severe in scale and magnitude than previous years, local authorities told the UNV project team.

Unlike what he describes as the 2010 “Super Floods” that primarily originated from the Indus River, the 2012 deluge was the result of heavy and sustained precipitation, explains Javed Jagirani, Additional Commissioner for Larkana Division, which includes the districts of Larkana, Shahdadkot, Shikarpur, Jacobabad and Kashmore.

The accumulating floodwater pooled in the low-lying and landlocked topography of many of the division's districts and remained stagnant for weeks and, in some areas, months. Access to many flood-affected areas in the division was difficult due to the destruction of access routes, roads and other infrastructure, Jagirani added.

The 2012 floods affected more than 3 million people in Sindh. The floods claimed 283 lives and forced nearly 150,000 people in the province into relief camps, according to National Disaster Management Authority estimates.

## INTEGRATING COMMUNITIES WITH DISASTER MANAGEMENT AUTHORITIES

But flood-affected residents benefited from the knowledge and skills imparted through the volunteer committees, allowing villagers to respond to the emergency considerably better than they had in previous years, said Malik.

UN Volunteers made sure to share the telephone numbers of the district focal people responsible for liaising with communities about flood-related matters, which is usually the responsibility of the *tapedar*, the district employee who maintains land and revenue records and collects taxes. They also explained the procedures for recording and reporting flood-related damage such as losses of lives, livestock and property, passed on vital information about how flood-affected residents could access assistance and directed people displaced by the floods to government designated emergency shelters.

*“We learned to seek assistance to address urgent basic needs such as food, shelter, health care, water and sanitation, which has helped us solve our own problems and to advocate for ourselves.”*

—Hamid Malik, president of a volunteer committee established by UN Volunteers to improve community-based disaster risk management



A volunteer committee member completes a social mapping exercise in Kashmore district. One of the committee's first priorities was assessing community-level hazard risk, vulnerability and capacity with the aim of tailoring disaster risk management plans that feed into district, provincial and national disaster plans.

**12,330**

The number of people served by the volunteer committees.

**9** UN Volunteers established volunteer committees in the Sindh province districts of Sukkur, Larkana, Kashmore and Badin.

**458** grassroots volunteers were recruited.

Consequently, the community became more closely integrated not only with disaster management authorities at the district, provincial and national level but also humanitarian partners responding to the disaster on the ground.

“We learned how to seek assistance to address urgent basic needs such as food, shelter, health care, water and sanitation, which has helped us solve our own problems and to advocate for ourselves”, says Malik.

For instance, after rising floodwaters blocked all terrestrial transport arteries, the community managed to secure boats from the UN World Food Programme that were used to transport stranded villagers to higher ground and sick and injured villagers to health care facilities. They requested and received rations from district and provincial disaster management authorities when food supplies dwindled in addition to nonfood items.

Besides strengthening the capacity of communities to manage floods, the volunteer committees helped villagers in Sindh prepare for disaster, which ought to put them in good stead considering that Pakistan is becoming increasingly vulnerable to floods due to climate change and changing monsoon patterns.

Prior to establishing the volunteer committee in Sindh province’s Larkana district, Taieb Sheikh villagers “had neither any concept of early preparedness nor any communication with disaster management authorities”, says Bishar Ahmed, the committee president. To the con-

trary, villagers were caught completely by surprise when the nearby Indus River spilled over during the 2010 monsoon creating a 3-metre torrent that completely engulfed the community.

#### ASSESSING RISKS

Fortunately, Larkana district was spared the sort of devastation it has suffered in previous monsoon rains and emergency was not declared in the district in 2012. However, with training in disaster risk reduction (DRR) provided by UN Volunteers, villagers now have at their disposal an arsenal of techniques to minimize their risks the next time floods strike.

They have identified vulnerable points in their community, designated safe evacuation routes, raised awareness about early flood warning measures and constructed culverts and removed silt from canals to improve rain-water drainage. As importantly, they have established an essential communication link with local disaster management authorities.

The efforts to improve community-based disaster management have had an observable impact.

“The level of awareness has definitely improved since the 2010 mega disaster”, says Jagirani. “If I had to summarize the impact of the UNV project, I would have to say it has been a most positive one”.

One of the first volunteer committees to be established

was in the village of Pahwari in Sukkur district, where seven people died tragically during the 2010 floods attempting to flee their homes. The boat they were traveling in hit an electrical pole that was concealed by rising water.

Villagers were eager to volunteer for the committee because they realized the disaster likely could have been averted if the community had been more methodical about disaster risk management (DRM) prior to the floods, says Mansoor Ahmed Chachar, a UN Volunteer Livelihood/Entrepreneurship Officer.

Given the potential of energized grassroots communities to reduce risk and prevent loss of lives and property in the event of disaster, the UN Volunteers took their role of promoting a spirit of volunteerism very seriously.

#### FOCUSING ON COMMUNITY

They set up the committees following a DRM training workshop in Karachi in July 2012 that was facilitated by Sajjad Sikandar, the Project Support Officer for the One UN DRM programme and a former UN Volunteer who served as a District Disaster Risk Management Coordinator and Project Support Officer during the 2010 floods.

“It is the community that is first to respond in the event of an emergency and therefore they should be well prepared. During an emergency, quick and effective action is required and this action often depends on having made and implemented preparedness plans”, Sikandar

*“If I had to summarize the impact of the UNV project, I would have to say it has been a most positive one”.*

—Javed Jagirani, Additional Commissioner for Larkana Division

told the UN Volunteers who completed the training.

The UN Volunteers succeeded in improving community-based disaster management precisely because they made a concerted effort to mobilize influential community leaders such as tribal chiefs and landlords known in the Sindhi language as *wadera* or *sardar*, says UN Volunteer DRR Advocacy Officer Shujaat Raza Soomro.

“They respected us even though we had no tangible goods or services to offer them — only our ideas”, says Chachar. “When the emergency unfolded during the 2012 floods, we could see that the villages where we had set up volunteer committees knew the safest evacuation route, the belongings they should take with them when they fled and the district department they needed to contact. It was gratifying to see that the volunteer committees had resulted in increased awareness of floods, the implementation of DRR techniques and the effective coordination of emergency activities to avoid casualties and loss of property”.

UN Volunteer Survey and Data Collection Officer Altaf Hussain cites motivating community volunteers to take collective action in the event of floods and other disasters as his greatest achievement. “It was an honour for me to work for my community to teach them how to prepare for and survive a disaster”, he concludes.

## VOLUNTEERS INSPIRE VILLAGERS TO PREPARE FOR EMERGENCIES

Residents of northern Sindh are accustomed to overcoming the adversity that persistent monsoon flooding brings. But the annual inundation is even more challenging for villagers of Mehmood Kalhoro, Ali Murad Kalhoro and Taieb Shaikh in Larkana district due to their close proximity to Indus River embankments. The seasonal rains often completely cut off access to roads, resulting in the loss of lives, livestock and belongings as stranded villagers have no way to flee rising floodwaters.

UN Volunteers made frequent visits to the villages to launch volunteer committees and improve overall flood preparedness by providing training in disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management (DRM) techniques, which boosted collective confidence to manage emergencies.

The training inspired the villagers to pool their resources in constructing a boat to be used by

community members for evacuation purposes during floods. Approximately 100,000 rupees were collected by villagers who were eager to chip in money and labour in exchange for the peace of mind of having a reliable and handy escape route. It took about a month for the community to build the boat, which can carry up to 35 people at a time. When it is not being used to transport villagers to safety during floods, the vessel doubles as a fishing boat.

Meanwhile, the establishment of the volunteer committee in the village of Hamid Malik motivated community members to reopen the village’s school.

The volunteer committees were set up in close collaboration with district governments, the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Sindh and District Disaster Management Authorities. The names volunteer committee members were

verified, endorsed and registered by local PDMA Sindh officials and the PDMA headquarters in Karachi. Besides general DRM planning, committee activities included compiling a database of emergency contacts, resources and agencies that can help in the event of an emergency; preparing evacuation routes; establishing early warning systems; and, identifying livelihoods needs.

The Hyogo Framework for Action (HFA) acknowledges that, “civil society, including volunteers and community-based organizations, are vital stakeholders in supporting the implementation of disaster risk reduction at all levels.” The HFA is a 10-year plan to make the world safer from natural hazards that was adopted by 168 UN Member States in 2005.

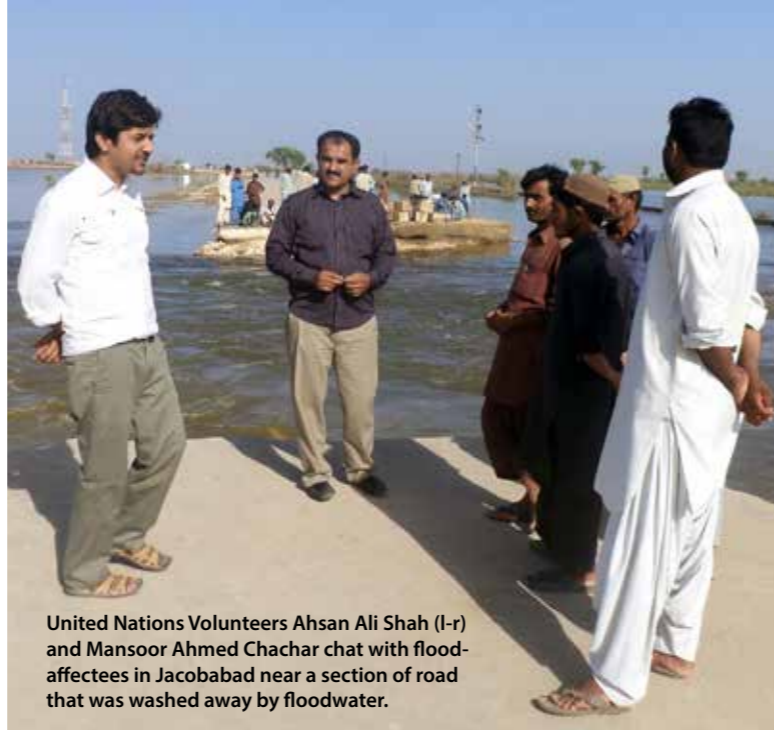
The role of volunteerism in general and mobilizing and managing volunteers in particular are important components of any DRM strategy that aims at fostering community recovery, strength and resilience in vulnerable areas, according to the UN Volunteers programme Practice Notes entitled, “Contribution of Volunteerism to Disaster Risk Reduction”.







Children in Hamid Malik village receive lessons from a teacher at a school that was reopened at the prompting of a volunteer committee that was established by UN Volunteers.



United Nations Volunteers Ahsan Ali Shah (l-r) and Mansoor Ahmed Chachar chat with flood-affecteds in Jacobabad near a section of road that was washed away by floodwater.



United Nations Volunteers Ahsan Ali Shah (holding UNICEF bucket) and Mansoor Ahmed Chachar (testing the water in top left photo) carry out water, sanitation and hygiene training at a makeshift relief camp for residents of Jacobabad district who were displaced by monsoon floods in 2012.

ENLIGHTEN • ADVOCATE • BUILD CAPACITY

## Addressing basic needs, bolstering coordination

Jacobabad was one of Pakistan's worst-hit districts during the 2012 monsoon season. During a five-day span early in September, approximately 550mm of rain fell in Jacobabad, breaking a 100-year record, says Javed Jagirani, Additional Commissioner for Larkana Division, which includes the district of Jacobabad.

Severe flooding affected nearly 1 million people, forced over 120,000 into relief camps, damaged nearly 150,000 homes and inundated over 64,000 acres of agricultural land. United Nations (UN) Volunteers Ahsan Ali Shah and Mansoor Ahmed Chachar were quickly dispatched to the district on special request from the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Sindh headquarters in Karachi.

"Among other pressing concerns, there was a dire need to convey daily updates of the ongoing emergency from the district to the PDMA Sindh and we were assigned this important task of bridging communication between the two", explains Shah.

The volunteers collaborated with a variety of stakeholders and humanitarian partners who were providing relief to flood-affecteds via air and ground drops. "To avoid duplication in reporting the facts related to the ongoing flood response, our UNV team made a point of working in close coordination with all those involved in the relief effort. We were in regular contact with PDMA officials and sharing data as we received it", he adds.

### PROVIDING A HUMANITARIAN PERSPECTIVE TO EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Shah and Chachar had worked with grassroots communities on flood response and early recovery activities prior to volunteering with the UN. Their expertise and experience were precisely what was required in Jacobabad following the 2012 floods, notes Shahid Qureshi, One UN District Disaster Risk Management Coordinator in Jacobabad.

"They have been trained from a humanitarian perspective, which was helpful in the sense of coordination, managing the response, assessing needs and identifying gaps because there are a shortage of people in the district who have these skills", says Qureshi.

For instance, he adds, the UN volunteers alerted district authorities about the location of ad hoc relief camps where residents displaced by the floods had evacuated. They also reported back on other basic needs required by flood affectees such as food, safe drinking water and latrines.

As needs warranted and when they were able to do so, Shah and Chachar raised awareness about the risks associated with water-borne diseases at health and hygiene training sessions they conducted with local communities.

Since the number of internally displaced people exceeded food stocks available in the district, they success-

*UN Volunteers who assisted with the flood response "have been trained from a humanitarian perspective, which was helpful in the sense of coordination, managing the response, assessing needs and identifying gaps because there are a shortage of people in the district who have these skills".*

**—Shahid Qureshi,  
One UN District Disaster  
Risk Management  
Coordinator, Jacobabad**



**939,500**

The number of people in Jacobabad district affected by monsoon floods in 2012.

**57** lives were claimed as a result of the floods.

**45** people were injured.

**51,045** The number of ration packs distributed to flood-affecteds.

**120,985** residents fled to relief camps.

**14,020** tents were distributed.

**48** relief camps were established in the district following the 2012 floods.

**62,280** acres of agricultural crops were damaged by floodwater.

UN Volunteers co-chaired cluster meetings at the Humanitarian Coordination Centre in Sukkur. Clusters are groups of humanitarian organizations, including UN agencies and non-UN agencies, which work in the main sectors of humanitarian action such as shelter and health. Clusters are created when a clear humanitarian need exists, there are numerous humanitarian partners working within a sector and national authorities require coordination support.



Sindh province is considered the "bread basket" of Pakistan because it produces so much of the country's food, including rice, which these women in Jacobabad are thrashing.



Shujaat Raza Soomro, UN Volunteer DRR Advocacy Officer.

*"Shujaat and other UN Volunteers who worked on the flood response were very active in changing the perspective of how PDMA Sindh and district authorities responded to an emergency, which was a vital contribution".*

—Imran Khan Laghari, Humanitarian Affairs Officer for UNOCHA based at the Humanitarian Coordination Centre Sukkur

fully lobbied the UN World Food Programme to provide 50kg bags of food to 10,000 families and five boats for rescue efforts in vulnerable spots in the district.

"We noticed a lot of people who were living without shelter, food, access to health care, water or adequate hygiene. We filled needs whenever we could and passed on concerns to relevant authorities when we could not. We knew our message was received because on subsequent visits, we could see that the needs had been met", says Chachar, who adds that as a volunteer he considered it his job to assist flood-affected communities. "I was their helper, their supporter, their facilitator".

Prior to being dispatched to Jacobabad, Shah was designated by the district the person-in-charge of monsoon operations in Larkana district where he reduced the risk of injury and the spread of water-borne illness by arranging to have stagnant water drained from populated areas.

The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) established a Humanitarian Coordination Centre in Sukkur for monsoon-related operations in Sindh province, which made the city a hub for the planning and coordination of flood response activities.

#### CHAIRING CLUSTER MEETINGS

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Advocacy Officer Shujaat Raza Soomro, who was reassigned from Larkana district following the floods, served as a focal person in Sukkur both for the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Sindh and the UN Volunteers on special assignment in Jacobabad and Kashmore.

In addition to providing logistical support and regular updates on flood response activities to UNV project teams based in Karachi and Islamabad, Soomro co-chaired cluster meetings on behalf of PDMA Sindh.

Coordination is vital in emergencies because effective coordination eliminates gaps and duplication, thereby optimizing the collective efficacy of disaster response efforts, explains Soomro.

Imran Khan Laghari, Humanitarian Affairs Officer for UNOCHA who was based at a Humanitarian Coordination Centre in Sukkur following the 2012 floods says the work of Soomro and other UN Volunteers increased the capacity of local and national authorities to respond to an emergency.

"Shujaat and the other UN Volunteers who worked on the flood response were very active in changing the perspective of how PDMA Sindh and district authorities responded to an emergency, which was a vital contribution", says Laghari.



United Nations Volunteers Mansoor Ahmed Chachar (left) and Ahsan Ali Shah confer with an elderly man displaced by floods in the northern Sindh province district of Jacobabad while a Pakistan Air Force helicopter drops off provisions of food provided by the Provincial Disaster Management Authority Sindh and district administration. Jacobabad was one of Pakistan's hardest hit districts during the 2012 monsoon season.

# Supporting management of drought, breaches in canals

While communities in northern Sindh struggled with too much precipitation during the 2012 monsoon, residents of the desert district of Tharparkar in the southeastern corner of the province were coping with a critical shortage of water.

The government of Sindh declared Tharparkar a drought-hit district in the middle of August. A rule, first introduced by the British and still observed in Pakistan, requires the provincial government to declare an emergency if rain doesn't fall by 15 August. Any precipitation after that date is believed to be too late for the growing season to recover.

Following a request from the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Sindh headquarters in Karachi, the UNV field team in Hyderabad coordinated with PDMA Hyderabad and District Disaster Management Authority (DDMA) in response to the drought in Tharparkar.

United Nations (UN) Volunteer Livelihoods/Entrepreneurship Officer, Islamuddin Rahimoon, visited some of the drought-affected areas and forwarded data he collected to Survey/Data Collection Officer Kashif Ali Shaikh. Kashif circulated the information to all relevant authorities while assisting PDMA Sindh Deputy Director for Hyderabad. Meanwhile, Mona Shah, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Advocacy Officer, helped coordinate the activities of the field team and provided regular updates on the team's efforts to the One UN Disaster Risk Management Coordinator for Badin district and the project's Karachi team.

Tharparkar is prone to drought. Drought has been declared in the district at least 13 times since 1968, according to a Drought Analysis released by the Sindh Government's Relief Department.

Still, the district remains an overwhelmingly agrarian society. An estimated 95 percent of the inhabitants grow crops and raise livestock to survive. Historically, water and food scarcity during drought prompts mass temporary migration out of the district as farmers and their families flee in search of work and fodder for their livestock.

This year was no exception. An AlertNet story posted to the humanitarian news site on 1 October claimed that more than 600,000 people and tens of thousands

of cattle had left Tharparkar district to escape drought conditions so far this year. Migration tends to adversely affect education. School enrolment rates drop sharply as residents of Tharparkar leave their homes. The overall health of people and their animals deteriorates during drought and without access to nutritious food, night blindness and anemia reach endemic levels among the elderly, children and pregnant and lactating women, the Drought Analysis found.

Vigilant monitoring, risk analysis, needs assessment before and after a drought and early warning systems are among the measures that would help improve the capacity of districts to manage droughts, the Drought Analysis concluded. In the meantime, following a very dry August, the monsoon produced some much-needed moisture for the people in the district in September. The Pakistan Meteorological Department described the area as "slightly wet" in a Drought Monitor released on 1 October.

## SWIFT ACTION AFTER CANAL CRACK

Within a couple of hours of learning that the Rohri Canal embankment in Matiari district had ruptured, UN Volunteers from the Hyderabad field team was on the ground assisting authorities from the district and the PDMA Sindh.

A crack in the canal near Bakhar Jamali village developed at approximately 5:30 p.m. on 13 May, widening to over 61 metres in mere hours. Gushing water from the breached canal inundated as many as 30 villages, submerged and destroyed houses and swept away belongings, livestock and food stocks, affecting an estimated 20,000 to 30,000 people, according to media reports.

Some media reports suggested that only 16 of the 30 submerged villages responded to the threat by collecting whatever belongings they could before quickly evacuating. Power supply to the area was cut after the local grid station was surrounded by water.

Field Information Management Officer Muhammad

Daud Soomro worked closely with Matiari district administration officials to coordinate the Hyderabad team's response from his base at PDMA headquarters in Karachi.

The PDMA Sindh is mandated by the Pakistani Government to coordinate responses to disasters, including breaches in canals when they occur, while District Disaster Management Authorities are the designated first responders.

Following orders from the Director of Operations for PDMA Sindh, Akhlaque A. Qureshi, Soomro says he "immediately dispatched the UNV Hyderabad team to the affected area. The team responded to me on the spot within two or three hours". The Field Information Management Officer used mobile phone and e-mail to coordinate the activities of the UNV Hyderabad field team.

The Hyderabad team supported the PDMA Sindh and district authorities in their efforts to set up an emergency relief camp, advocated for disaster risk reduction, dispensed psycho-social support to residents affected by the breach and collected data that they forwarded to the PDMA Sindh.

"The Hyderabad team was efficient and timely in their

response and covered every aspect of the PDMA Sindh's expectations", notes Soomro.

The volunteers based in Hyderabad were a tremendous help to the district, says Abid Saleem Qureshi, Hyderabad Additional Deputy Commissioner and the focal person for the DDMA. "Human resources are what we need — skilled and trained workers who know how to cope with disasters". The volunteers also were very helpful in providing input into the district's disaster management contingency plan, he adds.



Following a breach in a canal, top photo, UN Volunteers provided support at a relief camp for residents of Hyderabad district who were displaced, bottom photo.



# Aiding provincial authorities after devastating tragedies

Little did Murtaza Ahmed Siddiqi know when he became a United Nations (UN) Volunteer that he would be comforting distraught family and friends of victims of Bhoja Air Flight 213, which crashed 20 April 2012 near Islamabad, killing all 127 onboard.

Siddiqi has been working at the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Sindh headquarters in Karachi since October 2011, helping to strengthen its information and communication management systems. With a background in information technology, Murtaza's tasks have included integrating information management into operations, reviewing case studies on the use of technology in disaster management and relief work, recommending opportunities for replication, managing PDMA Sindh's presence on social media and coordinating the day-to-day operations of national volunteers in Sindh.

But on that fateful day in April, Siddiqi found himself liaising with the media, compiling, disseminating to the public and uploading onto the PDMA Sindh website a list of crash victims, arranging for the transport of their remains and directing grieving family and friends to ambulances carrying the bodies of their loved ones.

Since the flight originated from Karachi, a considerable number of the passengers were residents of Karachi and smaller communities in Sindh so it was essential for the PDMA Sindh to establish a crisis facilitation desk at the Karachi Airport.

"The people I assisted were very much in shock and they had no idea what the procedures were to collect their loved ones, so they were asking for assistance for every minor detail", explains Siddiqi. The outpouring of gratitude expressed after they had collected their loved ones confirmed to him that his presence was appreciated and his efforts were having a meaningful and positive impact, he says.

Then PDMA Sindh's Director of Operations Akhlaque A. Qureshi deputed Siddiqi to assist the authority manage the disaster, which it is mandated to do in collaboration with the Civil Aviation Authority and National Disaster Management Authority.

"The team remained there from midday until after midnight... It's really commendable and worth mentioning that Mr. Murtaza Ahmed Siddiqi assisted PDMA Sindh in this time of crisis by rendering his services to the utmost", Qureshi pointed out in a letter to former UNDP Pakistan Country Director Toshihiro Tanaka.

The plane crash was a tragic reminder of the need to be prepared for all emergencies, including those that are not related to natural disasters, Tanaka pointed out in an e-mail response to Qureshi. He added that it was "heartening to hear that our institutional capacity support to PDMA through national UN Volunteers is making a difference".

## LEARNING LESSONS IN DISASTER MANAGEMENT

After flames consumed a garment factory in Karachi's Baldia town on 11 September 2012, Siddiqi accompanied then Director of Operations for PDMA Sindh Akhlaque A. Qureshi on a tour of the fire-ravaged three-storey building.

More than 500 people were believed inside when the factory erupted into flames, possibly due to an electri-

cal short circuit, and as many as 258 people perished in the blaze, which was one of the worst industrial disasters in Pakistan's history, according to media reports.

Once debriefed about the emergency by the head of administration of the West Karachi district, then PDMA Director of Operations coordinated the rescue efforts with police, the Urban Search and Rescue Team and district authorities and he made certain officials had taken all measures to avoid further loss of life and/or property.

Later, Siddiqi accompanied the PDMA Sindh Director of Operations on a visit to the Jinnah Post Graduate Medical Centre emergency ward to observe how the fire casualties were being treated. The factory fire was not the UN Volunteer's first experience of responding to disaster. He helped the PDMA Sindh coordinate its response to a tragic plane crash in April. Still, Siddiqi says he had difficulty, at first, processing what he witnessed at the factory's charred remains.

"When Akhlaque saheb and I reached the site, people were reluctant to talk and restless", he recalls. "I was advised to be careful not to intrude on the privacy of the survivors and to be sensitive to the fragile emotions of grieving loved ones".

He also took note of how the eagerness of bystanders to help during disaster can sometimes be more of a hindrance for the authorities. "A number of people, who did not understand how badly the fire had damaged the factory, climbed onto a rooftop without realizing that it could collapse", he points out. To prevent the threat of further casualties, police quickly escorted the bystanders from the building.

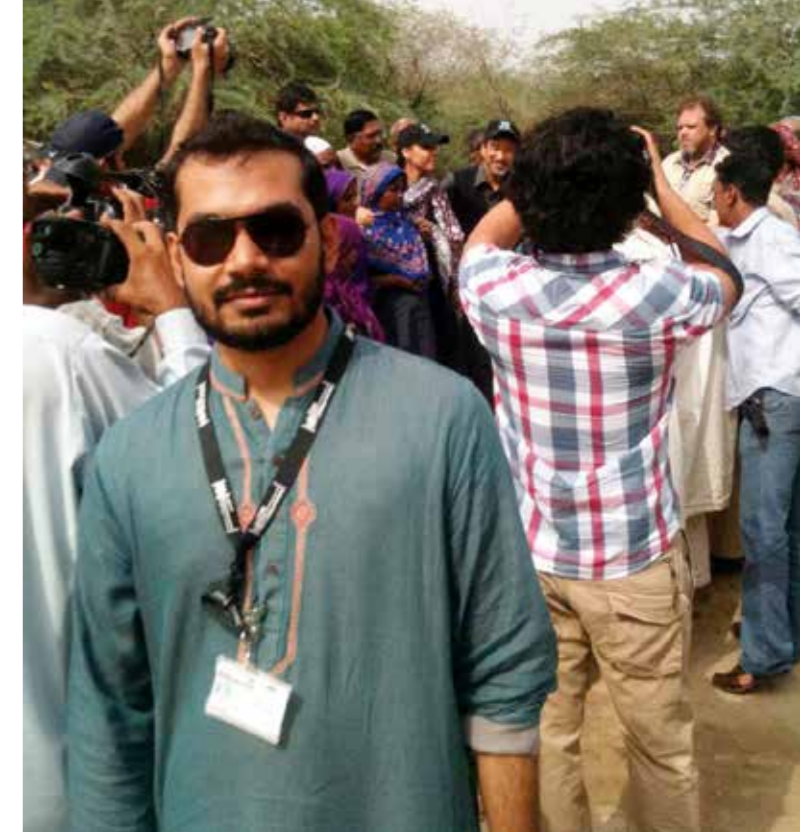
Siddiqi says he learned some valuable lessons from the experience he shared with the PDMA Sindh Director of Operations such as how disasters are managed, the respective authorities that are responsible for disaster response and how tasks are assigned.

The Director of Operations assigned the UN Volunteer a task of his own following their tour of the disaster scene. He was asked to help draft a short summary of the PDMA Sindh's response that was posted to the official website.

## ACCOMPANYING UNDP TOUR

Reading about disaster risk management (DRM) and learning about it in workshops is instructive. But interacting face-to-face with people who have lived through disasters and hearing about their experiences firsthand is something altogether different, says Siddiqi.

The Karachi-based volunteer had the opportunity to do just that when he accompanied National UNDP Goodwill Ambassador, Pakistani pop music sensation Hadiqa Kiani, and UNDP Country Director Toshihiro Tanaka on a tour of flood-affected communities that have been supported by UNDP's Early Recovery Programme in Thatta district of Sindh in July 2012.



Murtaza Ahmed Siddiqi joined UNDP Goodwill Ambassador Hadiqa Kiani and then UNDP Country Director Toshihiro Tanaka (in background) on a tour of flood-affected communities supported by UNDP's Early Recovery Programme in Sindh province's Thatta district.

"I was excited because not only was it my first field visit, I was travelling with an entire UNDP contingent, including the Country Director", enthuses Siddiqi.

Thatta is one of 29 districts where UNDP carried out early recovery activities following the devastating floods of 2010. The tour of Makli, Allahdino Khaskheli, Ramzan Hijib and Suleman Jutt villages also included representatives of the Health and Nutrition Development Society (HANDS), Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) and Sindh Rural Support Programme.

One of the primary objectives of the visit was to highlight the importance of linking early recovery interventions with climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies and disaster management at the community level.

To that end, the tour include a visit to biogas plants, established through WWF, which provide rural poor families with sustainable access to alternate renewable energy that is clean and requires no operating costs. "I believe the biogas project could be very useful for disaster-affected areas", Siddiqi said after the visit.

The group also visited a Disaster Management Centre, set up by HANDS, which has provided capacity building support to communities, strengthened disaster preparedness and bolstered the ability of communities to respond to emergencies.

Meeting villagers in Thatta was one of the highlights for Siddiqi. "While interacting with villagers, I learned about the issues they face during disaster and after disaster. Of course, I had knowledge of such issues, but learning about them firsthand from the field was something else".

UN Volunteer Murtaza Ahmed Siddiqi assisted PDMA Sindh following a factory fire in Karachi.

*"It's really commendable and worth mentioning that Mr. Murtaza Ahmed Siddiqi assisted PDMA Sindh in this time of crisis by rendering his services to the utmost".*

—Then PDMA Sindh Director of Operations Akhlaque A. Qureshi

# Web Map Hub goes live, aims to eliminate duplication

The United Nations Volunteers (UNV) project's Web Map Hub went live late in 2012, providing UN staff with immediate access to a wide assortment of Web maps that are easy-to-understand and aimed at helping UN staff make informed decisions.

*"This tool is a powerful source of very valuable information, and its best advantage is that it can concentrate and consolidate a lot of knowledge in one single hub and make it accessible to all staff"*

—Gianluca Guidotti, World Bank Islamabad Water Specialist

The Hub provides a platform that empowers staff by enabling them to find information for themselves without having to go through an information management or GIS expert. All UN staff now have access to GIS datasets such as political boundaries, population statistics, satellite imagery, previous flood extents, earthquake risk zones, cyclone/storm surge/tsunami risk zones, detailed terrain models, road networks and evacuation routes, medical centres and many more.

Though only recently activated, the Hub is already having a positive impact. "As I have been searching for data, maps and geographical information for a long time and often met great barriers, finding the Web Map Hub was a marvelous surprise. This tool is a powerful source of very valuable information, and its best advantage is that it can concentrate and consolidate a lot of knowledge in one single hub and make it accessible to all staff", enthuses Gianluca Guidotti, Water Specialist for the World Bank Islamabad's Water and Sanitation Program.

"One of my goals in developing the Web Map Hub is to improve harmonization of the UN's Geographic Information System (GIS) activities", explains GIS Officer James Gasson. "I established the Web Map Hub in order to address the problem of silos (the isolated islands of information, services and expertise which characterise organisations and countries everywhere). There are many silos with spatial information in the 20 UN agencies in Pakistan. Each agency is responsible for its own GIS capacity, with various 'stand-alone' GIS users and licenses. Because of this separation a lot of datasets are effectively kept hidden and the agencies and projects work independently of each other. They are often unaware of exactly which spatial datasets exist and what related work has already been done. This scenario leads to much duplication of work. My hope is the Hub will break down some of the silos and encourage more cross-agency collaboration".

The Web Map Hub also is a communication and coordination platform that can be used to increase donor visibility for UN projects. The Web maps are all available via mobile phone, and can be posted to Facebook and Twitter and the Hub allows users to embed Web maps within their own Websites and share the most up-to-date information across the Internet to UN staff and beyond. During the immediacy of a natural disaster, this will provide a superb 'vehicle' for information dissemination at a time when everyone needs access to accurate information quickly.

## HUB INCLUDES THE UN'S FIRST-EVER GIS ROAD NETWORK FOR PAKISTAN

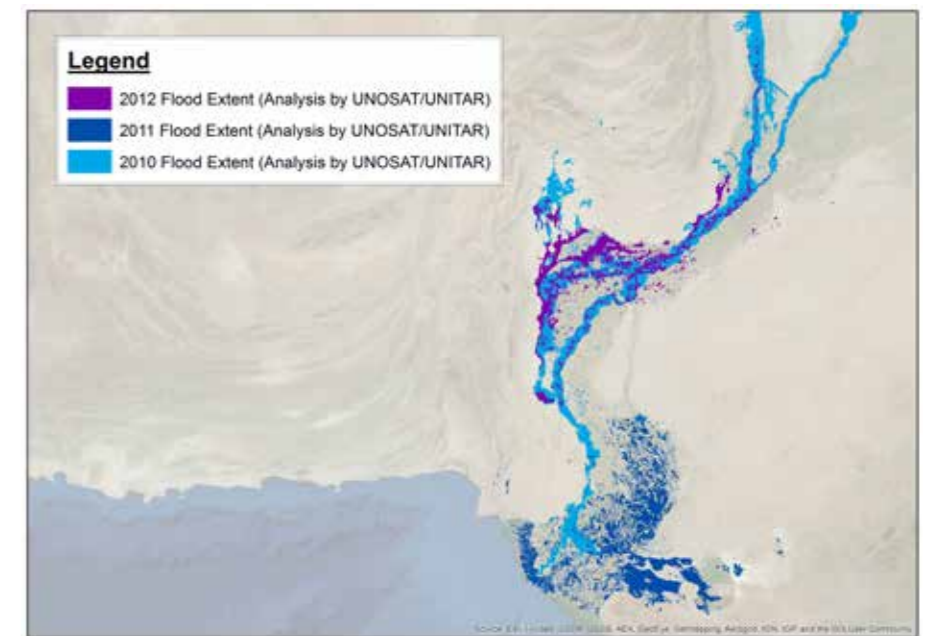
Gasson collaborated with staff from the UN World Food Programme (WFP) on producing the first-ever UN-owned GIS Road Network for Pakistan.

The WFP provided the raw data and Gasson the GIS expertise to complete the project, which represented a significant achievement since it was the first UN dataset of its kind. Gasson arranged and constructed the raw data into a GIS model of Pakistan's road network, which will allow UN staff to perform GIS tasks such as route/logistical planning, closest facility analysis and location-allocation analysis. Gasson also produced and posted to the Web Map Hub a GIS-based video that shows the recession of standing water in northern Sindh between 1 January and 10 March 2013.

To coincide with the initial rollout of the Web Map Hub, Gasson offered training sessions to all interested



UN Volunteer GIS Officer James Gasson, centre in top photo, provides training on the Web Map Hub to the UNDP's Early Recovery Programme team. The map at right depicts flood extent data for 2010, 2011 and 2012, which is now available with a few strokes of the computer keyboard. Gasson also demonstrated the Web Map Hub at the Social Good Summit hosted by UNDP Pakistan on the theme, "Climate Change, Role of New Media and Technology". The event took place 24 September 2012 in Islamabad and was part of the largest and most global conversations in history. Innovative technology experts, citizens, celebrities and activists converged in nearly 100 countries at similar events that shared one goal — to unlock the potential of new media and technology to make the world a better place. The Hub may be viewed online at <http://one-un-pakistan.maps.arcgis.com>.



staff, including GIS staff from other UN agencies such as UNICEF, the World Health Organization, OCHA, WFP, the World Bank, and Food and Agriculture Organization. Over 50 UN staff members completed the training, which was provided over a three-week period.

He also conducted a three-day workshop in March at Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Sindh headquarters in

Karachi to equip provincial disaster management authority staff with the knowhow to use the new Web Map Hub.

Prior to launching the project, then PDMA Sindh Director of Operations Akhlaque A. Qureshi endorsed the Web Map Hub on behalf of the PDMA Sindh. "During disasters, correct and real-time information is of crucial importance for effective and timely response", he pointed out.



PREVENTION • EDUCATION • PREPAREDNESS

# Docudrama dolphin delivers DRR message

*“Children have instant reactions and they tell it like it is. Our (focus group) participants were engaged in the docudrama throughout and they were fascinated by Abi, the animated dolphin”.*

—Shehryar Niaz Ahmed, Black Box Sounds

To address gaps in understanding about floods at the community level in Sindh province, the United Nations Volunteers (UNV) project developed and aired on television in Sindh province “Aabi Ki Kahani”, a 10-minute docudrama on floods awareness.

The child-friendly film, featuring an animated river dolphin character named “Abi” juxtaposed with real live actors, was designed to improve understanding of the causes of floods, disaster risks, vulnerabilities, and potential disaster risk reduction (DRR) mitigation and prevention strategies.

Besides expanding knowledge, the film aimed to enhance the voice of children in community-based disaster preparedness and response and inspire children to take action to mitigate risk by sharing what they learn to others and advocating for the need to take DRR measures in their community. Two versions of the docudrama were produced; one in Urdu and Sindhi and both with English subtitles.

The UNV project was designed to complement the efforts of the Japanese-funded early recovery and restoration of the flood-affected communities in Sindh and dovetail into the One UN Disaster Risk Management (DRM) Programme. One UN DRM was designed to develop the capacity of Pakistani government authorities to meet its disaster risk reduction challenges.

Special care was taken, therefore, to ensure that the film blended seamlessly with One UN DRM objectives. The film promotes six key messages that have been highlighted in One UN DRM information, education and communication materials developed, including:

- Keep a small, portable First Aid box ready with medication and supplies such as antibiotics, ointment, bandages, etc.
- Secure in a waterproof plastic bag or envelope essential documents and expensive possessions and store the envelope above flood levels.
- Avoid wading in floodwater but if is absolutely necessary to do so, be sure to use a walking stick to help maintain balance and to check for hazards such as broken glasses, snakes and deep ditches.
- During floods, do not use or touch electrical appliances if wet or while standing in water or on wet surfaces. Do not tie livestock to electrical poles.
- Never sit near muddy or unstable walls during floods because they may collapse without warning.
- Do not eat food that has come into contact with floodwater as it may be toxic and cause illness.

Filming of the docudrama began early in September 2012 with shoots on location in neighbourhoods on the outskirts of Islamabad. Production of the film was completed by the end of October. The film tested well among children who screened it at a focus group held early in October.

“Children have instant reactions and they tell it like it is. Our participants were engaged in the docudrama throughout and were fascinated by Abi, the animated dolphin. They listened and watched intently ... (and they) related very well to Abi, saying they wished they had an Abi in real life to befriend”, says Shehryar Niaz Ahmed, Senior Manager Business Development and Operations for Black Box Sounds.



The film was broadcast on television in Sindh twice per day — once in the Sindhi language and once in Urdu — from Monday to Saturday, from 11 February to 1 March 2013. The team strategically selected airing times for the docudrama between the hours of 4:30 pm and 6:30 pm from Monday to Friday and from 8 am to 11 am on Saturdays to attract as many young viewers as possible. The docudrama also may be viewed online at <http://unv.org.pk/media>.

## 2.6 million

Approximate number of viewers who watched the docudrama on Sindh Television.

## 5.4 million

Approximate number of viewers who watched the docudrama on Kawish Television Network.

## 12.5 million

Approximate number of viewers who watched docudrama on Pakistan Television Corporation.





INSPIRATION IN ACTION

## Showcasing flood-affectedees, celebrating volunteerism

United Nations (UN) Volunteers in Karachi commemorated International Volunteer Day (IVD) with a two-day photo exhibition at Sadequain Art Gallery at Frere Hall, a heritage site that was built during the British colonial era.

Inspired by the quote, “Volunteers are not paid — not because they are worthless, but they are priceless,” the Karachi volunteers including Meena Ahmed, Sameea Zafar and Murtaza Ahmed Siddiqi chose ‘Inspiration in action’ as the theme of the show.

The exhibit showcased 74 photographs, snapped by UN volunteers during a field trip to the flood-affected areas of Sukkur, Larkana and Jacobabad. The images provided a firsthand glimpse of the impact of the 2012 monsoon and the flood response activities of UN volunteers. The exhibition was open to the general public and people from all walks of life experienced the show.

Acting Director General of the Provincial Disaster Management Authority (PDMA) Sindh Kashif Gulzar

and the former Director Operations PDMA Sindh Tahir Hussain Sangi toured the exhibition and expressed their appreciation for the work of the UN Volunteers.

On the second day of the exhibition, the Karachi-based UN volunteers arranged tours of the exhibit for local schools and volunteer groups, including HOPE Formal School, Indus Resource Center, Youth Empowering Spaces and SOS Children’s Village School. Students were briefed about the UN Volunteers (UNV) Support to the UNDP’s Flood Response in Pakistan project activities in Sindh and had a lively interactive session with UNV Project Coordinator Tomohiro Yamanaka and Field Communications Officer Meena Ahmed.

Yamanaka shared his volunteer experiences with the

To mark International Volunteer Day, UN Volunteers Shujaat Raza Soomro, far right in top right, promotes safe hygiene practices with children in Sindh province’s Sukkur district. The training is particularly important for vulnerable communities since inadequate access to safe water and sanitation services, coupled with poor hygiene practices, kills and sickens thousands of children every day, and leads to impoverishment and diminished opportunities for thousands more. Meanwhile in the province’s capital city of Karachi, Tomo Yamanaka, right, encourages young people to take action to make their community and their world a better place.



students and then encouraged them to embrace a spirit of volunteerism and “to be the change you wish to see in the world.” The volunteers reciprocated with account of their own volunteer experiences in the field of education and health. A screening followed of the docudrama “Aabi ki Kahani”, which was produced by the Islamabad-based team to increase floods awareness.

The Ambassador of European Union to Pakistan, Lars Gunnar Wigemark, along with his delegation, also paid a visit to the exhibition, demonstrating a keen interest in and warm appreciation for the work carried out by UN Volunteers in the interior of Sindh.

IVD is celebrated on 5 December to honour the service of volunteers and to celebrate the spirit of volunteerism around the globe.

In addition to the photo exhibit, Communications Officer Alanna Jorde marked the occasion by posting photographs featured in the exhibit as well as video messages from team members on the project’s Facebook and Twitter sites.

The team’s Sukkur-based volunteers, Mansoor Ahmed Chachar and Shujaat Raza Soomro, celebrated IVD by holding training sessions in disaster risk reduction, livelihoods and water, sanitation and hygiene for grassroots communities vulnerable to flooding.

## CHAMPIONING FOR EARLY FLOOD PREPAREDNESS

ANXIETY is mounting about the upcoming monsoon season as people are once again expecting floods. Even those who are quick to dismiss speculation as idle gossip, have some fears about the risk of floods this rainy season.

Heavy rains are predicted again this year. The National Disaster Management Authority has already issued a flood warning and urged the public to mitigate risk through early preparedness.

I remember the scepticism and apathy of people who ignored calls to evacuate during the devastating floods of 2010 and the severe flooding in 2011. Instead of evacuating as the authorities had urged them to do, they did nothing because they were convinced that nothing would happen to them. We must learn from the experiences of these previous emergencies, which resulted in loss of countless lives, leaving many homeless.

Residents of rural areas, in particular, must be prepared to respond to any emergency and make others well aware about what they can do to reduce their risks. I am convinced the losses of life and property could have been minimised in previous floods if the level of awareness about the dangers associated with floods was as high as it is today. This is one of the most encouraging developments since previous monsoon seasons.

This was confirmed during my recent visit to a village situated on the right bank of the River Indus in Larkana. Members of the community are now well aware of the possibility of upcoming floods. Some of the people said the 2010 floods continue to haunt them and they will do whatever they can to avoid experiencing similar trauma.

Hence they are taking steps to prepare well in advance of the rains. To keep abreast of the risks and knowledgeable about the situation, they tune into their radios for news since there is no television in their village. People say mobile phones also are a good medium to transmit information in the village. They have taken care to construct their houses sensibly.

Still, many others are not prepared, and God forbid, if the prediction of floods for 2012 comes true, they are likely to be the most vulnerable to the dangers posed by the annual inundation.

AHSAN ALI SHAH, Livelihoods/Entrepreneurship Officer, United Nations Volunteers, Larkana.

*The preceding opinion piece was printed as a Letter to the Editor entitled "Monsoon and disaster management" on 15 July 2012 in Dawn newspaper, Pakistan's oldest English language newspaper.*



Many people who are displaced by disaster are so preoccupied taking care of basic needs such as food and shelter that generating an income is furthest from their minds. But during their special assignment in Jacobabad UN Volunteer Livelihoods/Entrepreneurship Officers Ahsan Ali Shah, far left, and Mansoor Chachar Ahmed met a woman who was able to do just that by sewing quilts at a make-shift relief camp that had been set up on the side of a road. "She was a source of inspiration so we encouraged her and provided suggestions on how she might earn money using her quilting skills. We urged others who had been displaced by floods and were living in the same tent community to follow her lead and consider ways they could earn money", says Shah.

### Photo credits:

Page 1: Meena Ahmed

Page 3: Alanna Jorde

Pages 4-7: Altaf Hussain

Pages 8-9: Hifzullah Kaka

Pages 10-11: Rab Nawaz Channa

Page 13: Altaf Hussain

Pages 14-15: Alanna Jorde

Page 16: Akhtar Hussain

Page 18, left: Mansoor Ahmed Chachar

Page 18, right: Courtesy of UNOCHA Humanitarian Coordination Centre, Sukkur

Page 19: Alanna Jorde

Pages 20-21: Akhtar Hussain

Page 23: Kashif Ali Shaikh

Page 24: Murtaza Ahmed Siddiqi

Page 25: Courtesy of UNDP Islamabad

Page 27: Alanna Jorde, map by James Gasson

Pages 28-29: Courtesy of Black Box Sounds

Page 30: Meena Ahmed

Page 31, top: Mansoor Ahmed Chachar

Page 31, bottom: Meena Ahmed

Page 32: Akhtar Hussain

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