

PROVENTION CONSORTIUM

Community Risk Assessment and Action Planning project

PAKISTAN – Athara Hazarri Union Council, Jhang District, Punjab



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Becoming a Model: Community Managed Flood Preparedness Project

CRA Toolkit
CASE STUDY

This case study is part of a broader ProVention Consortium initiative aimed at collecting and analyzing community risk assessment cases. For more information on this project, see www.proventionconsortium.org.

Bibliographical reference: “Becoming a Model: Community Managed Flood Preparedness Project,” in: Madhavi Malagoda Ariyabandu and Amjad Bhatti, eds., “Livelihood Centred Approach to Disaster Management: A Policy Framework for South Asia”. Islamabad, Pakistan: Rural Development Policy Institute (RDPI), ITDG South Asia, and Duryog Nivaran Secretariat, 2005 [ISBN 955-9417-20-7].

Click-on reference to the **ReliefWeb country file for Pakistan:**
<http://www.reliefweb.int/rw/dbc.nsf/doc104?OpenForm&rc=3&cc=pak> .

Note:

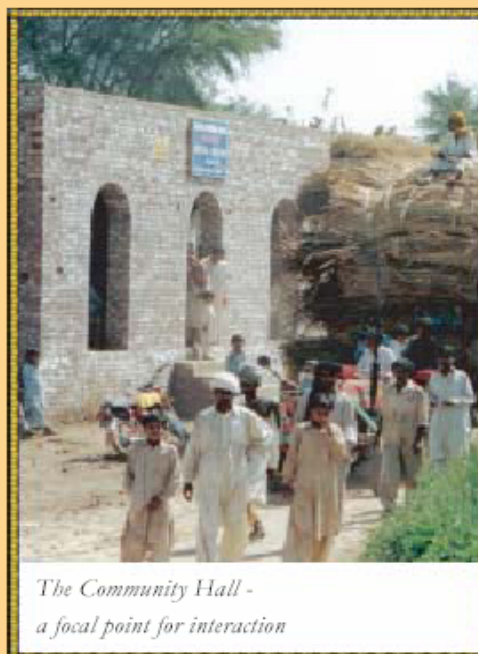
A Guidance Note has been developed for this case study. It contains an abstract, analyzes the main findings of the study, provides contextual and strategic notes and highlights the main lessons learned from the case. The guidance note has been developed by Dr. Ben Wisner in close collaboration with the author(s) of the case study and the organization(s) involved.

Box 4.2 Becoming a Model: Community Managed Flood Preparedness Project.

The 'Kamra model' of community-based flood preparedness is being replicated in 10 villages in Athara Hazarri Union Council by OXFAM Pakistan under its new flood management programme. By demonstrating its effectiveness in a cluster of village communities, it is hoped to exert pressure on the District Administration to adopt community-based and livelihoods-centred disaster mitigation programmes

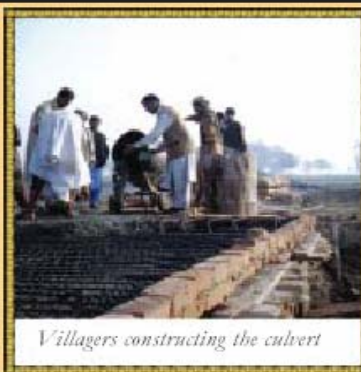
The term 'Kamra model' was born when a team from OXFAM Pakistan visited Kamra and a number of other flood-prone villages in the Jhang river belt to extend support. When they explained their purpose to the villagers of Kamra, the villagers responded by saying that the village and its community were 'flood prepared' and had no need of any relief or support. This is the story behind Kamra's empowerment.

Kamra lies in an upstream area in Jhang District in Punjab. The village is bordered by the river Jhelum and a flood protection bund. Due to the river changing its course during floods, the village has shifted twice. The villagers are smallholder farmers. Agriculture and livestock are the two main sources of income. Kamra can be described as a physically and socially marginalized low-income community, with high population growth and infant mortality, low literacy levels, gender-based differences in terms



of literacy, mobility and cultural seclusion, and almost no health facilities.

Floods occur seasonally, displacing thousands of people in the area and depriving them of their livelihoods for a considerable period of time. Villagers can generally cope with seasonal floods but in extreme situations crops and livestock are washed away, and dwellings are destroyed. Existing flood management strategies focus only on emergency relief and superficial rehabilitation of structural damage.



Villagers constructing the culvert

The river's flood control mechanisms at the Trimmu Head Works are geared to protect the city of Jhang from floods. Opening the flood gates in order to protect the city often results in the inundation of smaller villages, and Kamra has suffered in this manner for years. Official information, even when it reached the village, did not permeate down to every resident, and the often technical nature of

warning messages could not be easily understood by illiterate or semi-literate villagers. Last-minute panic sometimes ensued when villagers noticed the rising flood waters and had to hurriedly evacuate to higher ground.

To prepare themselves, at the onset of each rainy season, villagers stocked the necessary food and fodder. In high/medium floods, people shifted their families to relatives' houses or to open space at higher elevations. Household utility items were placed on the roofs of the houses. When the villagers arrived back at their flood-devastated homes the process of rehabilitation began. Most families were forced to sell personal belongings like jewellery, household items or domestic animals to find money for rehabilitation and medical treatment. Poor families would sometimes borrow from landlords to reconstruct houses. The rehabilitation process sometimes took several months; until then people were compelled to live outdoors. There was also the loss of mobility due to the flooding, with villagers unable to access hospitals, schools and markets. Economic losses were severe.

To arrive at a better state of flood preparedness, the community of Kamra proposed the following key measures: a culvert to drain stagnant water and

improve mobility; more livelihood options to strengthen families' economic capacity to cope with floods and their after effects; and building capacity to manage floods, including a community managed early warning system. Doaba Foundation, a local NGO, coordinated activities through community mobilisation, awareness building, and training.

Flood-resistant physical infrastructure

The culvert/bridge (constructed with nearly 40% of the cost contributed in kind by the villagers) benefits 485 people living in the village, giving them mobility throughout the year. Now vehicles are able to reach the village, villagers can access markets and visit relations, and village children are able to attend the primary school in Jhang city. Mobility has raised land prices in the village, and increased households' cash income from the sale of sugar cane, handicrafts and vegetables. The biggest triumph for Kamra was when a candidate from the Kamra Village Organisation was elected to the local government. He was able to convince the local government to commit Rs 10,000 for the construction of the culvert on the basis that the village had organized to help itself.

Flood-resistant social infrastructure

A community hall built in the highest point of the village serves the dual purpose of livelihood support (training in agriculture and animal husbandry, crafts and health clinic) and flood shelter. A state of cohesion within the community

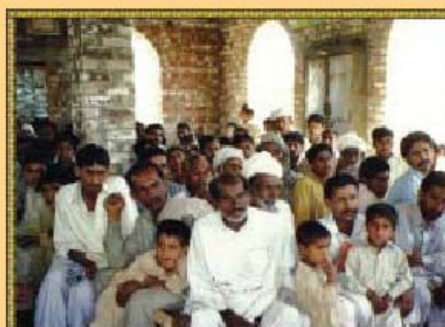
has been achieved. People are now collectively organised to prepare for floods as opposed to earlier individual/family level organization.

A community-managed early warning system

accesses flood information from the Trimmu Head Works authorities and shares it through the mosque in non-technical language. This has contributed hugely to more organized evacuation and controlled panic.

Expanded livelihood options

Livelihood options have been broadened. Sugarcane, a flood-resistant cash crop, could not be cultivated earlier due to restricted mobility and market access. Today cane cultivation and threshing is more organized. Selected community members have been trained to administer livestock vaccinations: they now offer the service on a commercial basis to outside villages as well, handling 250-300 cases during the first two years.



CBO meeting in the community Hall

Production of 'feed blocks' using a local technology developed by the community was ideal for supporting cows and buffalos during floods. (a single block feeds one buffalo for a week) This has also reduced the number of men migrating with livestock during the floods. The feed blocks are now in demand from other flood-prone areas in Punjab. More training has been given on livestock management: milching, fattening, vaccination, breeding and de-worming, and on improved feed blocks.

Wider options and empowerment for women

Improved mobility has expanded livelihood options for women. They now weave mats with local reeds to sell in the market. Introduction of fuel-efficient stoves has helped to resolve the issue of accessing fuel wood during floods. The stove design requires much less fuel wood than open earth cooking. A health centre has been established in the community hall, where a health worker visits regularly. Toilets built for women are an added benefit, as they face much hardship during floods due to lack of proper sanitation facilities and privacy. Most importantly, a women's CBO formed for the purpose of the project has enabled them to participate in all stages of project planning and implementation. The CBO is now aiming to get a doctor to visit the health clinic.

Source: LODRR project reports.

Becoming a model for the flood belt

Kamra village has become a model for 'scaling-up' by the local government and other NGOs. Local government officials from nearby flood-prone areas have made 'exposure visits'. Two out of the seven Union Councillors who visited Kamra are setting up disaster management committees in their own areas. Kamra's village organisation has developed a good rapport with the local authority which enables the village to have a voice in other developmental activity. Two villagers have been elected to the local council since the project began.

The Kamra initiative stands out in demonstrating that a combination of appropriate social and physical infrastructure and diversified livelihoods can succeed in improving flood preparedness and creating an empowered community who move forward to achieve broader community development.



Culvert providing protection from floods and mobility to villagers during the monsoons