



DEMAC

DIASPORA
EMERGENCY ACTION
& COORDINATION

DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS AND THEIR HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE IN PAKISTAN



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ABOUT DEMAC

The mission of DEMAC is two-fold:

- 1) to enable inclusive coordination and collaboration among diaspora organizations providing humanitarian assistance, and across diaspora organizations and institutional humanitarian actors, and
- 2) to facilitate higher levels of engagement and visibility for diaspora organizations in the humanitarian system.

The objective is to contribute to transforming the humanitarian ecosystem by laying the groundwork for a deeper understanding of diasporas as humanitarian actor groups with different modus operandi for the implementation of aid in practice, identifying and opening potential spaces for engagement and cross-fertilization, and improving coordination between diaspora and institutional relief providers.

DEMAC AIMS AT

01

Enhancing knowledge
between diasporas
and humanitarian
institutions

02

Increasing awareness
on diasporas'
humanitarian
interventions

03

Improving coordination
communication and
coherence of
humanitarian response

WHY DIASPORA?

Work with diasporas has shown that diaspora organizations are multi-sectoral, fast responding actors who work transnationally, including in countries facing humanitarian crises. Having a connection with and understanding of their country of origin or heritage plays a vital role in humanitarian assistance where diaspora organizations often are part of the first response in the aftermath of a disaster.

They are also key actors when it comes to raising the alarm in times of crisis. The ease and frequency of communication between local communities and diaspora organizations means that they can be alerted in real-time, and their capacity to collect and disperse funds rapidly ensures that they are a key factor in unlocking the first responses in crisis settings. In hard-to-reach places where access may be an issue, diaspora organizations have a unique advantage due to their local connections and ties. They use their transnational position to respond to the growing demands for remote management and cross-border response in countries where international actors have a limited presence, and to advocate on behalf of crisis affected populations in the policy arenas of their countries and regions of residence.

Supporting diaspora as part of a broader humanitarian ecosystem to play a key role in humanitarian responses and provide vital support to communities in countries of origin contributes to the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of humanitarian responses. In light of their transnational identity and close local ties, it is also strongly linked to the localization agenda, one of the main commitments under the Grand Bargain. Localization aims to strengthen the resilience of local communities and to support local and national responders on the front line. UNOCHA has called furthermore for an indispensable opening of the resource base of humanitarian action by integrating 'non-traditional actors' - such as diasporas - to enhance the effectiveness of the humanitarian response and render it interoperable.

Diaspora organizations are part of and play a central role in localization. Many can be considered frontline responders themselves, making direct and concrete contributions to emergency responses in their home countries. Others work closely with local authorities, local organizations and community groups, providing technical and financial support, playing a role in advocacy and linking local actors with additional sources of support.

Diaspora organizations are heterogeneous - they have different capacities, values and approaches and as part of a broader humanitarian community can play a valuable and agile role in humanitarian responses. However, assistance provided by diaspora organizations and the formal humanitarian actors often follow parallel tracks, resulting in a lack of mutual understanding and recognition, and thus a lack of coordination and collaboration that would be of benefit to the overall response.

WHAT NOW?

Building on expertise gained since its inception in 2015, DEMAC is further consolidating itself as a permanent platform – a one-stop-shop – for enhancing mutual knowledge and coordination between diaspora humanitarian actors and the international humanitarian system.

DEMAC's work has been a key factor behind stronger representation and visibility of diaspora organizations in the humanitarian eco-system – a first and core example hereof being the coordination of joint messaging and participation of diasporas as a stakeholder group to the World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul in 2016, which was a key factor to putting diaspora humanitarianism on the map.

DEMAC has also piloted concrete liaison structures between diaspora and institutional humanitarian actors towards improving operational coordination in specific crisis settings. Another core contribution to the role of diaspora humanitarianism has been continuous knowledge development: DEMAC has conducted a number of studies aiming to increase understanding of motivations and modus operandi of diaspora humanitarian engagement, replacing assumptions with evidence on diaspora contributions.¹

¹ DEMAC conducted research to increase knowledge on diaspora humanitarian engagement. These studies can be found on the DEMAC homepage under resources.
[Creating Opportunities to work with diasporas in humanitarian settings, May 2018](#)
[Diaspora Drought Response - Somaliland and Puntland, March 2017](#)
[Diaspora Humanitarianism: Transnational Ways of Working, March 2016](#)

Building on these experiences and the past and present research, DEMAC will develop an operational framework for diaspora and humanitarian actors to improve future responses to humanitarian emergencies. Through the development of a standardized approach for the international humanitarian system to assess and document the role and impact of diaspora in selected emergency responses, DEMAC will enhance the knowledge and awareness of the nature and significance of the diaspora, followed by the facilitation of internal discussions on how the system could and should relate to and coordinate with diaspora emergency actors.

Furthermore, DEMAC will use the documentation from selected diaspora emergency responses to engage with diaspora humanitarian actors to enhance the generation of lessons learned and self-reflections from diaspora-led emergency responses with a view to adjust their approach and discuss how to engage with the international humanitarian system.

DEMAC will develop guidelines, tools and resources in support of diaspora emergency engagement, with a view to remain prepared to support diaspora organizations' engagement in new emergency responses and facilitate coordination among responding diaspora organizations, and between diaspora organizations and the humanitarian system.

Finally, DEMAC will enhance the knowledge among diaspora organizations about the humanitarian system to enhance probabilities of coordination between the two.

DEMAC is currently working with five selected emergency-prone focus countries, while at the same time remaining prepared to engage with and support diaspora from additional countries should a humanitarian crisis unfold in their country of origin.

Acronyms and abbreviations

CBO	Community based organization
DEMAC	Diaspora Emergency Action and Coordination
DERF	Danish Emergency Relief Fund
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
FATA	Federal Administered Tribal Areas
FTS	Financial Tracking System
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HDF	Human Development Foundation
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
IDP	Internally displaced person
ICCM	Inter-Cluster Coordination Mechanism
INGO	International non-governmental organization
KP	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province
L/NGO	Local/National non-governmental organization
NDMA	National Disaster Management Authority
NHN	National Humanitarian Network
NoC	No Objection Certificate
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UN	United Nations
UN OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This case study is part of the Diaspora Emergency Action and Coordination Platform's (DEMAC) "Research study on diaspora humanitarian response and engagement".

Recurring floods, droughts, earthquakes and epidemics all make the humanitarian operating environment challenging in Pakistan. Ongoing unrest and conflict have an exacerbating effect. With over 10 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in 2021, the humanitarian response in Pakistan is led by the government in collaboration with the key humanitarian actors.

With over nine million individuals, the Pakistani diaspora is the seventh largest immigrant population in the world. Remittances form the first and immediate diaspora response in times of crisis, moving beyond families to vulnerable community members. The most common type of diaspora organizations are formal charities, well established in their countries of residence, active mainly in development in addition to scaling up for humanitarian response as needed. Another type of diaspora organization often active in humanitarian response are those organized by the same profession, such as those from the health or education fields.

This case study identified 24 Pakistani diaspora organizations that were active regularly in humanitarian response, with one half based

in North America and the other half in Europe, the Middle East and Australia. At least half had offices or representatives in Pakistan and formal structures and set-ups.

A sense of belonging, socio-cultural and religious obligations, a desire to alleviate suffering and provide longer-term support for Pakistan were drivers for diaspora humanitarian response. Diaspora are alerted to crises both through friends and extended families and via the formal requests the Pakistani government extends to the international community – including the diaspora – during times of major emergencies. Diaspora organizations are mainly active in education, health and livelihoods, primarily building on their existing development programmes and projects to scale up in times of humanitarian crisis. This has been well illustrated by their response to the COVID-19 pandemic, where many diaspora organizations were active. Apart from the COVID-19 response, the large majority of their humanitarian interventions were for sudden onset crises such as floods and earthquakes. Diaspora humanitarian response was perceived as rapid and flexible and diaspora organizations were seen to have the ability to quickly mobilize resources. While often short-term in nature, diaspora organizations were nevertheless concerned with the long-term sustainability of their actions.

Diaspora organizations implement humanitarian interventions both directly as well as with partners. Almost all diaspora organizations identified were providing longer-term support to communities, working along the humanitarian-development nexus even if they did not necessarily identify it as such. Their humanitarian response is not static or limited by geographic region; rather it is dynamic and evolving, such as scaling-up in times of crises and scaling-down to revert to ongoing development-focused projects.

Although most diaspora organizations participated in humanitarian coordination mechanisms, the level of coordination varied depending on their activities and nature of the organization. Those organizations involved in a specific area of intervention limited coordination efforts to within this area. Less formal groups did not participate in coordination mechanisms.

A commonality of all 24 diaspora organizations assessed was that they were primarily supported through direct fundraising by the diaspora in their countries of residence. Other funding sources were from private companies, foundations and institutional donors to a lesser extent.

Although diaspora organizations did coordinate with the humanitarian sector and authorities, their planning and selection of beneficiaries were largely carried out independently. Most diaspora organizations relied on their staff, volunteers or partners on the ground to identify needs and beneficiaries. Diaspora organizations have adopted different transparency and accountability approaches, often depending upon demands of their supporters, such as conducting field visits at different intervals and providing regular progress reports.

Gaps and challenges identified in the humanitarian response of diaspora organizations included adhering to humanitarian principles and standards, capacity limitations, administrative issues and recognition as diaspora organizations.



Future diaspora response and engagement

In Pakistan, the diaspora are an important pillar in the country's development and response to crises, as seen with the COVID-19 pandemic. The diaspora organizations have been supporting Pakistan in development projects for decades alongside national and local authorities, L/NGOs, INGOs and UN agencies. With many diaspora organizations having a physical presence in Pakistan, they will most likely become more visible and active as humanitarian actors. The more established diaspora organizations are already part of the humanitarian system and more could be done to recognize and utilize their specialized capabilities as diaspora organizations. Further, there are synergies to be found with those diaspora organizations with a specialization that are sporadically involved in humanitarian response.

Recommendations

It is proposed that DEMAC strengthen its role in leading and supporting greater engagement between the institutional humanitarian system in Pakistan and the Pakistani diaspora globally. These recommendations require further inputs and validation from the diaspora organizations, their partners and other humanitarian actors. Recommendations are organized around the humanitarian program cycle and contain specific action points listed at the end of the case study.

Alerting and needs assessment:

Interviewees of both the diaspora and humanitarian sector agreed that the exchange between diaspora organizations and other humanitarian actors on identifying and sharing information on needs should be increased. Diaspora expertise and know-how could be further integrated in early warning systems and needs assessments coordinated by authorities and humanitarian actors.

Strategic planning:

Diaspora organizations integrated within the institutional humanitarian system had the opportunity to be involved in joint planning, although it seemed that most diaspora response planning was carried out independently of the wider system. Opportunities to support the involvement of diaspora organizations within institutional humanitarian planning processes could include greater input from them, and recognize their distinct advantages in terms of rapidity, securing funding and providing potential long-term support for recovery.

Resource mobilization:

Although diaspora organizations have a strong supporter base, it does not currently provide all organizations with a secure and continuous financial base. There are several areas where institutional humanitarian actors could further engage with diaspora organizations in order to strengthen their access to more predictable forms of financing.

Implementation:

The operating models of diaspora organizations in Pakistan differ depending upon the type of organization, their ongoing activities and experience. A number of areas were identified where synergies could be increased during implementation, such as further partnerships with the institutional humanitarian actors and integrating diaspora response within their activities.

Peer review and evaluation:

Diaspora organizations and their partners are involved in reviews and evaluations of their own responses but no links were seen with the institutional humanitarian system. Increased involvement and exchanges between the diaspora, authorities and humanitarian actors on good practices on monitoring, evaluation and learning would be beneficial.

Coordination:

The majority of diaspora organizations were participating in coordination fora either directly or through their partners. Nevertheless, there was a suggestion from interviewees for greater coordination from the side of the diaspora organizations and more recognition and visibility for their role in the humanitarian response.

Information management:

The sharing of information within diaspora organizations and their partners was taking place but was limited both between them and with the humanitarian sector. This could be further strengthened by reinforcing mechanisms to share information both between diaspora organizations and with the humanitarian actors, national and provincial authorities, donor governments and institutional donors.



1. INTRODUCTION

The Diaspora Emergency Action and Coordination platform (DEMAC) was launched by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) in 2015 and is currently supported with funding from USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance.

In line with the objective to facilitate increased common ground between diaspora and formal humanitarian action and enhance mutual knowledge and coordination between diaspora and humanitarian actors and the international humanitarian system, DEMAC has conducted three case studies.² These aim at contributing to strengthening the DEMAC platform by providing insights into the current modalities of diaspora humanitarian interventions and developing recommendations, resources and tools to support enhanced operational and strategic communication, and cooperation between diaspora and institutional humanitarian actors.

The findings of this study will be shared with Pakistani humanitarian actors including diaspora organizations, as well as more broadly within the humanitarian sector.

The case study focuses on the period 2015-2020, providing an analysis of the emergency humanitarian response of Pakistani diaspora organizations during that time. The research looked at the methods used to mobilize diaspora resources and the means used to provide humanitarian response as well as implementation arrangements and forms of interaction with the international humanitarian system.

² This case study focuses on Pakistan with research carried out by Neelofar Shahzad with the support of Glenn O'Neil and Lois Austin of Owl RE, research and evaluation consultancy. The other two case studies focus on Ukraine and Somalia.

2. METHODOLOGY

The research approach was based on an initial desk review, which mapped the structure and activities of 24 Pakistani diaspora organizations that could be identified as active in humanitarian response.³

The mapping was followed by collection of primarily qualitative data through further desk review and semi-structured interviews with diaspora organizations and groups, United Nations (UN) agencies, international non-governmental organizations (INGOs), local and national Pakistani NGOs (L/NNGOs), Pakistani community-based organizations (CBOs) and government officials. In total 31 people were interviewed.⁴ Due to COVID-19 movement restrictions, data collection was primarily remote although a visit was carried out to speak with affected communities. Some data on the activities of diaspora organizations was also gathered such as their type of structure, activities and partners.

Both the qualitative and quantitative data and information were collated and analyzed to identify major trends and findings that form the basis of this case study.

Limitations:

A small number of limitations to the research should be highlighted as follows:

- Within the research timeframe, it has not been possible to identify, describe and analyze all diaspora organizations' humanitarian response from 2015-2020. In recognition of this, the research focused on information available on the 24 diaspora organizations identified, with a focus on the eight diaspora organizations and five of their partners spoken to, with the aim of highlighting the different approaches adopted.
- The case study is not fully representative of diaspora humanitarian response and has focused on the most visible diaspora interventions. This has still allowed for the drawing of conclusions and recommendations to support future engagement.
- Although many of the diaspora organizations are well established, the diaspora community is fluid and changing, with new diaspora groups emerging and others ceasing activities constantly. This made it more challenging to have a complete picture of diaspora humanitarian response in Pakistan.

³ Please see Annex B for those diaspora organizations covered in the initial mapping.

⁴ Please see Annex A for the list of stakeholders spoken to.



3. CONTEXT

Pakistan has experienced large scale natural and human induced disasters including floods, earthquakes, epidemics, droughts, displacement, insurgencies and instability. These recurring events make the humanitarian operating environment challenging.

Ongoing unrest and conflict have an exacerbating effect. The relatively high level of disaster risk is attributable to Pakistan's particular geography, climate variability, topography, the nature of its economy and associated trends of population concentration and environmental degradation. On top of this, the ever-shrinking humanitarian space has made the situation more complex.

The country's timeline of crises indicates that Pakistan has witnessed large scale natural and human induced disasters in the past 30 years. There is ongoing political tension with India, and the relationship with Afghanistan, despite hosting some 1.4 million Afghan refugees, remains difficult and complex. The unrest in the northern parts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province and the resulting military operation in 2009 forced approximately more than three million people to flee their homes. As of today, military operations continue in the Merged Districts (formerly known as the

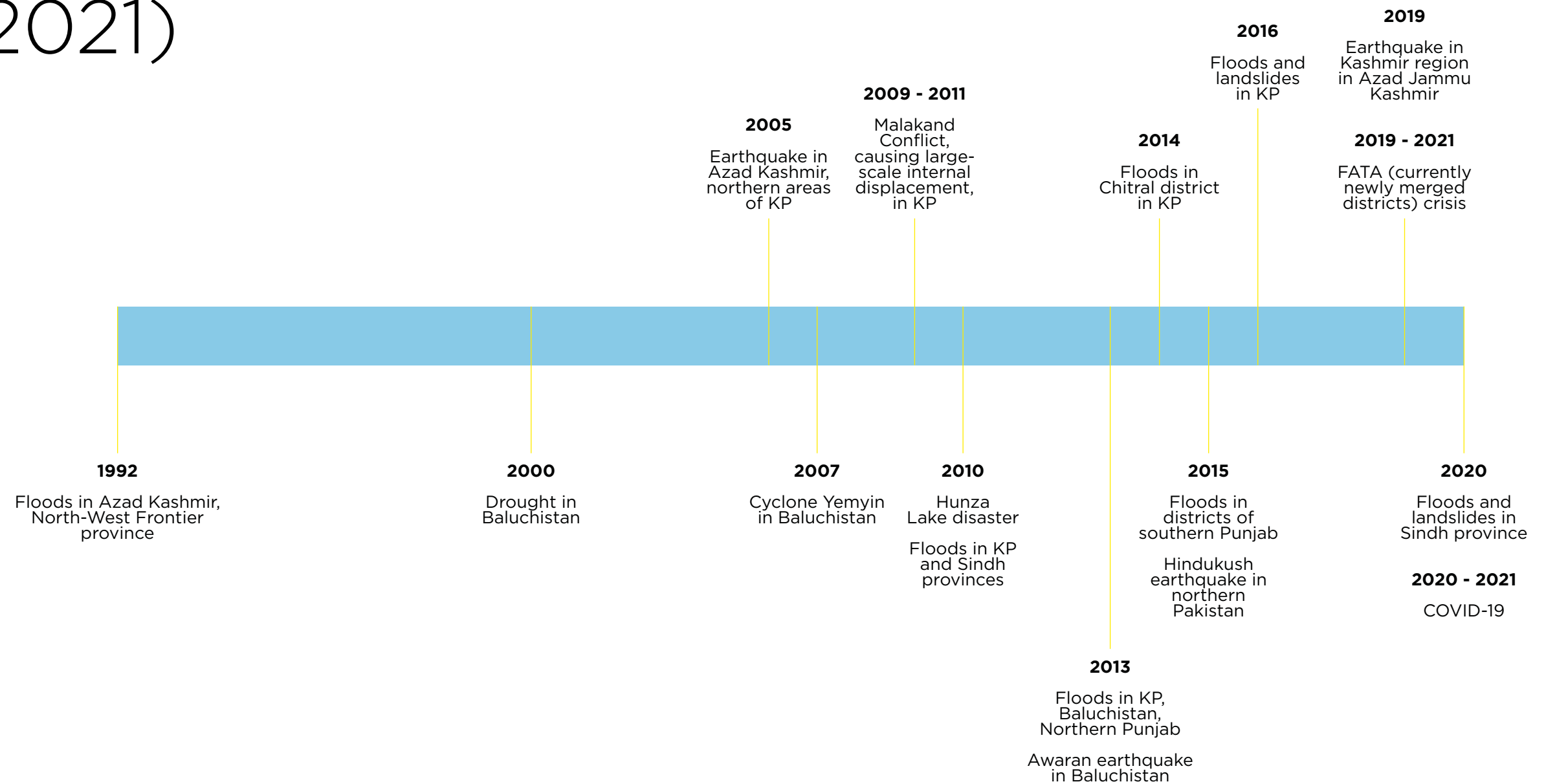
Federal Administered Tribal Areas – FATA)⁵ causing the displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians. The country has also witnessed large scale natural disasters. Of these disasters, the earthquake of 2005 and the floods in 2010, 2011 and 2014 were the most disastrous, causing thousands of casualties and inflicting heavy damage to infrastructure, livestock and crops. In addition, the earthquake in 2015 and floods in 2020 in the Sindh province were devastating and left many in need of critical humanitarian assistance. Alarming, drought is looming in parts of Sindh and Baluchistan provinces. The COVID-19 pandemic added to these multiple crises by impacting the entire population, particularly those who were already vulnerable, and created new pockets of vulnerability for certain segments of society including day workers and small businesses.⁶

⁵ Mohsin, Z., R. (2019), The Crisis of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in the Federally Administered Tribal Areas of Pakistan and their Impact on Pashtun Women: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/331533289>

⁶ <https://covid.gov.pk/>



MAIN CRISES IN PAKISTAN (1990-2021)



3.1. Humanitarian actors and coordination

In Pakistan, the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and its provincial and district level bodies are responsible for coordinating the humanitarian response with the support of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

The key humanitarian actors include:

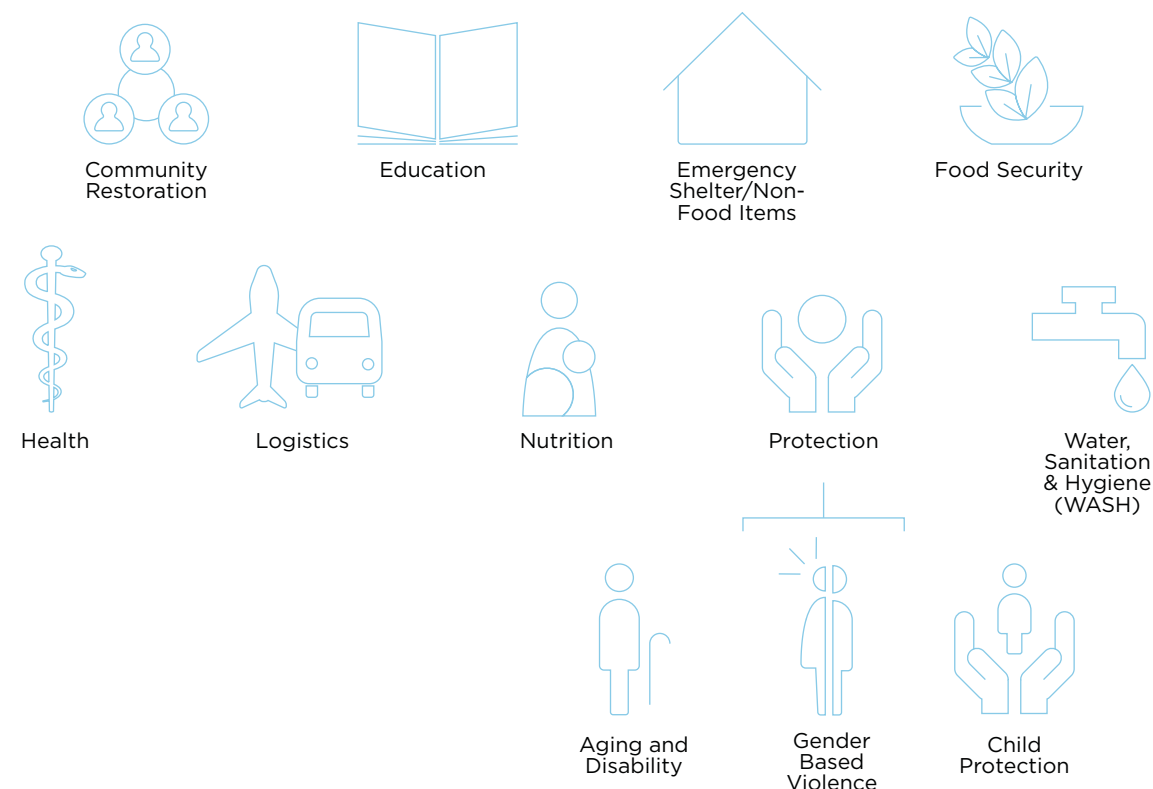
- The national and local disaster management authorities: the NDMA at central level is supported by Provincial Disaster Management Authorities, District Disaster Management Authorities and the Pakistan Army⁷,
- INGOs and UN agencies (including UNICEF, WHO, UNHCR, FAO, OCHA, UNDP, UN Women, UNFPA and IOM); UN agencies also have a funding role for other humanitarian actors,
- Individual philanthropists, private corporations and foundations: Unilever, Reckitt Benckiser, Nestlé, Telenor, Zong, Mobilink, Shell, Pakistan State Oil, Standard Chartered Bank are some private companies that have integrated emergency response within their Corporate Social Responsibility commitments. Among the foundations, Reach Out to Asia, Educate a Child, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and the IKEA Foundation have been active in responding to humanitarian crises,
- Humanitarian and development L/NNGOs and their networks including the National Humanitarian Network,
- Civil society and community groups including diaspora individuals, groups and organizations and their partners in addition to religious groups and organizations.

OCHA's coordination structure in Pakistan consists of the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC), the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), the Inter-Cluster Coordination Mechanism (ICCM) at national and provincial levels, and district coordination cells in affected areas. The HCT is led by the HC, comprising of UN agencies, INGOs and L/NNGOs representatives, with the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies and the International Committee of the Red Cross being observers. The cluster system facilitates the humanitarian response from the district to the national level. The cluster approach was put in place for the first time following the 2005 earthquake. Nine clusters were established within 24 hours of the earthquake.⁸ Since then, both government and UN response mechanisms have evolved. After the floods of 2010, the country has developed annual response plans for all the major emergencies including the current COVID-19 pandemic. At the provincial level, the ICCM mechanisms are chaired by OCHA and/or the Provincial Disaster Management Authorities. OCHA also ensures coordination with INGOs and L/NNGOs through their umbrella groups. These include the Pakistan Humanitarian Forum, which is an alliance of 38 INGOs, and the National Humanitarian Network (NHN), which is a national network of more than 160 L/NNGOs members and chapters in several provinces.

⁷ National Disaster Management Authority: <http://web.ndma.gov.pk/ddma.php>

⁸ Street, A. & Parihar, G. (April 2007), The UN Cluster Approach in the Pakistan earthquake response: an NGO perspective: <https://odihpn.org/magazine/the-un-cluster-approach-in-the-pakistan-earthquake-response-an-ngo-perspective/>

The cluster system in Pakistan is set up as follows:



Some of the main institutional donors providing support include the governments of the USA, the UK, Australia, Canada, Sweden and Denmark, in addition to the European Union. The Start Network and OCHA's country-based pooled fund are other funding sources for humanitarian response.⁹

Alongside the government and the key humanitarian actors, the Pakistan Army is a major actor in humanitarian response in the country. The Pakistan Army conducted rescue operations in response to the 2005 earthquake, and the floods in 2010 and 2011.¹⁰ Likewise, during responses to internal displacement and the conflict in the merged districts, the Pakistan Army has had a significant role coordinating the humanitarian response in areas where security remained volatile.¹¹

⁹ Cochrane, H. (October 2008), The role of the affected state in humanitarian action: A case study on Pakistan. HPG Working Paper: <https://www.humanitarianlibrary.org/sites/default/files/2014/02/3417.pdf>

¹⁰ Greenwood, L. & Balachandran, G. (March 2014), The search for common ground: civil-military relations in Pakistan: <https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/53469ed24.pdf>

¹¹ IDMC, NRC (December 2009), Pakistan: Millions of IDPs and returnees face continuing crisis, a profile of the internal displacement situation: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/79DA1DDE2DA98FF785257680005EFEAC-Full_Report.pdf

3.2. Humanitarian response

10.5 million people have been identified as being in need of humanitarian assistance in 2021.

The humanitarian response in Pakistan is led by the government in collaboration with the key humanitarian actors mentioned earlier. The HCT complements national efforts and addresses priority gaps, strengthening the coordinated response between humanitarian actors and government counterparts at the federal and provincial levels.

For 2021, the UN Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) has identified 10.5 million people in need of humanitarian assistance and sets out two strategic objectives: saving lives by providing integrated services to those affected by shocks; and providing support to vulnerable people to sustain their livelihoods and improve their living conditions and resilience.¹²

Multi-sectoral responses are required for the most at-risk communities due to repetitive natural disasters, the recurrence of food insecurity and high prevalence of acute malnutrition. Those pre-existing vulnerabilities have been aggravated by the continuing impact of COVID-19.

The HRP complements the existing Pakistani disaster response policies. The Calamity Act of 1958 was replaced by the National Disaster Management Ordinance in 2006.¹³ The NDMA, through a multi-stakeholder consultative process, has developed a National Disaster Risk Management Framework which serves as national policy on disaster risk reduction and has supported the development of detailed disaster response contingency plans.¹⁴

In the wake of COVID-19, a National Coordination Committee was constituted comprising the Prime Minister and Chief Ministers of the provinces.¹⁵ A COVID-19 Relief Fund was launched and the diaspora were among the highest contributors to the fund.¹⁶ In April 2020, the Pakistani government launched the Yaran e Watan initiative ("Friends of the country" in Urdu) to mobilize diaspora health professionals to provide tele-health services for Pakistan, such as telemedicine consultations to COVID-19 patients, tele-training of health workforce members and research collaboration specific to COVID-19.¹⁷ To engage humanitarian actors including diaspora organizations and their partners in the response against COVID-19, the government granted special permission to all humanitarian actors which allowed them to start their response activities quickly while formal approval was still being processed.

¹² UN OCHA (2020), Pakistan Humanitarian Response Plan 2021 <https://hum-insight.info/plan/1034>

¹³ Historical Calamity Act of 1958 with the National Disaster Management Ordinance (NDMO) 2006.

¹⁴ National Disaster Management Authority (August 2012), National Disaster Management Plan, Executive Summary: <https://www.ndrnf.pk/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/NDMP-EXECUTIVE%20SUMMARY.pdf>

¹⁵ The News (16 March 2020), National Coordination Committee reviews measures taken to curb coronavirus: <https://www.thenews.com.pk/latest/630081-national-coordination-committee-reviews-measures-taken-to-curb-coronavirus>

¹⁶ EU DiF (2020), Diaspora engagement mapping - Pakistan: https://diasporafordevelopment.eu/wp-content/uploads/2020/11/CF_Pakistan-v.2.pdf

¹⁷ <https://www.facebook.com/yaranwatan>



3.3. Pakistani diaspora

As of 2019, with over nine million individuals, the Pakistani diaspora is the seventh largest immigrant population in the world.¹⁸

Of this group, the large majority are based in the Middle East. Saudi Arabia is home to the largest population, with 2.6 million, followed by the United Kingdom with 1.5 million. Other major countries include the United Arab Emirates (UAE) (1.4 million), the USA (500,000), Oman (239,000), Canada (216,000), Qatar (125,000), Malaysia, (120,000), Italy (114,000), Kuwait (114,000), Bahrain (110,000) and France (104,000).¹⁹



¹⁸ IOM (August 2019), Pakistan, Migration Snapshot: <https://migration.iom.int/sites/default/files/public/reports/Pakistan%20Migration%20Snapshot%20Final.pdf>

¹⁹ Pilot Guides (undated), The Pakistani Diaspora: <https://www.pilotguides.com/study-guides/the-pakistani-diaspora/>

The Pakistani diaspora is a major source of remittances to the country. According to the State Bank of Pakistan, the Pakistani diaspora sent back some USD \$21.8 billion in the fiscal year 2018/2019.²⁰ Owing largely to different initiatives of the current government to encourage and facilitate remittances, it is expected that the volume of remittances will rise to USD \$24.4 billion by the end of 2021.²¹ The volume of remittances increased in 2020 by 6.4% compared to the previous year, seemingly overall unaffected by the COVID-19 pandemic, although remittances from certain markets, such as the USA, did see a drastic reduction (21.6% reduction from 2019 to 2020).²²

Remittances form the first and immediate diaspora response in times of crisis, moving beyond families to vulnerable community members. Interviewees for this research indicated that support is usually channelled through family members, relatives or friends to support relatives and/or fellow community members, often during Ramadan when Muslims pay sadaqa and zakat, as well as in times of crisis.²³ This support is usually in the form of cash assistance to the neediest in the community, identified by friends or family on the ground.

Diaspora organizations are active both in development actions and humanitarian response with a range of structures and set-ups. The diaspora organizations mapped in this research tended to be active both in development and humanitarian sectors; no organization or group was identified that could be considered only humanitarian. Different structures and set-ups were seen evolving over time, such as the Swat Relief Initiative (SRI), as highlighted below. The most common set-up is formal, often with the organization or group being well established in the country of residence, often for decades, with representatives and offices in Pakistan. Some organizations with this structure, such as Penny Appeal, Imamia Medics International and the Minhaj Welfare Trust are also active in humanitarian response in other countries, such as Syria, Yemen and Lebanon, and are close to the model of an INGO. Some diaspora organizations also provide services for Pakistanis in their countries of residence, such as the Pakistani Welfare Society in Saudi Arabia, the Pakistan Association of Dubai (PAD) in UAE and Edhi International Foundation in major global cities (for instance New York, Dacca, Tokyo, Sydney, London, Dubai).

Another type of diaspora organization often active in humanitarian response were those organized by the same profession, such as health professionals (for instance, Midland Doctors, Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America), engineers (for example, Institution of Engineers Pakistan-Saudi Arabian Center) or sector-specific (notably in education, such as the Citizens Foundation and Development in Literacy). These organizations tend to provide ongoing support in their speciality area, upscaling in times of crisis. For example, the Association of Pakistani Physicians and Surgeons of the UK (APPS) has ongoing health activities in Pakistan such as support to health clinics and awareness campaigns. They launched a series of activities in 2020 to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, including providing personal protection equipment for health professionals, setting up telemedicine workshops and establishing a helpline, partnering with the above-mentioned Yaran e Watan initiative.

²⁰ The News (30 May 2021), Pakistani diaspora sends USD \$21.841bln remittances back home in FY19: <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/496593-pakistani-diaspora-sends-21-841bln-remittances-back-home-in-fy19>

²¹ The News (30 May 2021), Pakistan Migration Report 2020: Remittances from informal channels on the rise: <https://www.thenews.com.pk/print/617314-pakistan-migration-report-2020-remittances-from-informal-channels-on-the-rise>

²² Ahmed, J. (February 2021), Impact of COVID-19: Focussing on Remittance Flows to Pakistan. Pakistan Institute of Development Economics: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/348975138_Impact_of_COVID-19_Focusing_on_Remittance_Flows_to_Pakistan

²³ <https://www.globalsadaqah.com/blog/zakat-vs-sadaqah/>

From an informal response to a formal diaspora organization: Swat Relief Initiative

Ms. Zaib un Nisa, the founder and chief executive of SRI, belongs to the traditional royal family of the Swat State, which merged with Pakistan in 1969. Ms. Nisa lives in the USA but is in close contact with the community back home. During the instability in 2009 when millions of people from Malakand Division, mainly Swat district, were displaced, Ms. Nisa collected money from family and friends in the USA and rushed to Pakistan to support those crisis-affected people. She stayed in Pakistan for months to support the people and once she got back to the USA, she discussed with her husband that one-time support was not enough and that she would like to continue supporting her people. Afterwards, she consulted with family and friends abroad and with their support, the Swat Relief Initiative was established. Since then, the organization has not only responded to major humanitarian crises but has also pursued longer-term programs mainly supported by the Pakistani diaspora in the USA. Swat Relief Initiative is registered both in the USA and locally in the Swat district. Today, Swat Relief Initiative is one of the key humanitarian and developmental players in the SWAT district.

Of the diaspora organizations covered in this research, 24 were identified as being regularly active in humanitarian response; half had a physical presence in Pakistan.

This case study identified 24 diaspora organizations that were regularly active in humanitarian response; some half (13) were based in North America (USA with one in Canada), followed by Saudi Arabia (three), UK, (two), Australia (two), Norway (one), UAE (one) and two had offices in multiple locations (including Australia, UK, UAE and the USA).

The diaspora organizations that were more regularly active in humanitarian response tended to have formal structures in their countries of residence with corresponding offices in Pakistan. Over half of diaspora

organizations (15 out of 24) have official status as a non-profit organization or charity in their country of residence, often with staff, volunteers and a governance structure. Four out of the 24 were association-type organizations often with non-profit status and managed mainly by volunteers with some having staff. To a lesser extent networks, teams or groups of volunteers that came together for a common effort in humanitarian aid represented three out of the 24 mapped. Two diaspora organizations were registered and/or based in Pakistan with an affiliate office and/or representatives in countries of residence. However, a further nine diaspora organizations were known to have offices and/or representatives in Pakistan; in total half (12 out of 24) were known to have a presence in Pakistan.

Overview of structures of 24 mapped diaspora organizations



The following is an overview of six of the more formal diaspora organizations engaged in humanitarian action identified through this research. All six are registered in the countries where they are based but with different modus operandi.

They range from project-based interventions dependent on sporadic diaspora contributions implemented by contacts on the ground with no interaction with institutional humanitarian actors, to focused humanitarian and development interventions supported by institutional donors and implemented with or through local partners who participate in institutional humanitarian coordination mechanisms. It should also be highlighted that diaspora organizations can also have a mixed modus operandi combining both these approaches.

Penny Appeal	Swat Relief Initiative (SRI)
Residing country: USA, UK, Australia	Residing country: USA
Active since: 2009	Active since: 2009
Structure: Penny Appeal is a registered charity in the USA, UK, Australia and Pakistan	Structure: SRI is registered in both the USA and in Pakistan as an NGO
Description: Penny Appeal is implementing programs both in the development and humanitarian sectors. In development, it focuses on livelihoods and skills development, women's empowerment, health and education (school construction). It is active in other countries aside from Pakistan, including Yemen, Syria, Lebanon	Description: While mainly implementing humanitarian and relief programs, SRI works across the emergency, early recover and development continuum
Main areas of intervention: Education, livelihoods, WASH (water supply and hygiene kits), shelter	Main areas of intervention: Livelihoods, WASH, health and education
	Main partners: Human Development Foundation, Khapal Kor Foundation, communities
Funding: Diaspora contributions, institutional donors and general public	Funding: Diaspora contributions and foundations
Engagement with humanitarian system: Penny Appeal implements directly as well as through partner organizations. In both cases, Penny Appeal participates in the coordination system in place at different levels and is fully integrated in the institutional humanitarian system	Engagement with humanitarian system: Participates in coordination meetings and mechanisms
Geographic focus: Sindh, KP, Baluchistan and Punjab provinces	Geographic focus: Swat district of KP province

The Citizen Foundation	Pakistan Association of Dubai (PAD)
Residing country: USA	Residing country: UAE
Active since: 1995	Active since: 1963
Structure: A registered charity with 42 chapters across the USA and registered as a NGO in Pakistan	Structure: Registered as a non-profit, social welfare and cultural organization in UAE working through volunteers with staff in Pakistan
Description: The Foundation operates a network of 1,652 schools, educating 266,000 students through 12,000 teachers and principals, with over 17,400 employees. The Foundation is the largest private employer of women in Pakistan with an all-female faculty of 12,000 teachers and principals. The Foundation is active both in development and humanitarian sectors, including in economic development and environment protection	Description: PAD provides development and humanitarian assistance with the help of volunteers and staff. They have established an orphanage and are supporting it on a regular basis. They are working on skills enhancement, education, women's empowerment, health. They also provide support to orphans and Pakistani prisoners upon their release from UAE jails
Main areas of intervention: Education, livelihoods, gender/women's empowerment	Main areas of intervention: Education, livelihoods, WASH
Funding: Diaspora contributions and institutional donors	Funding: Diaspora contributions and private companies
Engagement with humanitarian system: The Pakistan Chapter of the Citizen Foundation is part of the broader humanitarian structure in country	Engagement with humanitarian system: No formal engagement with humanitarian system
Geographic focus: Sindh, KP, Punjab and Baluchistan provinces	Geographic focus: Swat District of KP Province of Pakistan

Human Development Foundation (HDF)	Association of Pakistani Physicians and Surgeons of UK (APPS)
Residing country: USA	Residing country: UK
Active since: HDF was established in 1997 and has been active in Pakistan since 1999	Active since: 2004
Structure: HDF is registered in the USA and as a non-profit organization in Pakistan	Structure: APPS is a registered charity in the UK
Description: HDF is implementing development and humanitarian programs. Likewise, the organization has regular advocacy programs on tobacco control, social capital development, education and literacy, primary health care, economic development, women's empowerment	Description: The aim of APPS is to build bridges among health professionals of Pakistani heritage and promote the highest standards of patient care and education. APPS carries out activities both for the UK Pakistani community and in Pakistan. The projects range from improving medical education to mobile health units
Main areas of intervention: Education, health, economic development, gender/women's empowerment, WASH, shelter	Main areas of intervention: Health, education
Funding: Diaspora contributions, foundations, institutional donors	Funding: Diaspora contributions No formal engagement with humanitarian system
Engagement with humanitarian system: Actively engaged and participates in cluster meetings	Engagement with humanitarian system: No formal engagement with humanitarian system
Geographic focus: HDF is active in 34 districts across different provinces of Pakistan	Geographic focus: UK and Pakistan

4. DIASPORA HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

4.1. Motivations for humanitarian response

A sense of belonging, socio-cultural and religious obligations, and a desire to alleviate suffering and provide longer-term support for Pakistan are drivers for diaspora humanitarian response. Diaspora are alerted to crises through multiple channels in addition to formal requests from the Pakistani government.

Individuals and the more informal diaspora groups are usually motivated by the religious teachings of giving, sadaqa and zakat as described above. This can also be used by the more formal diaspora organizations as an appeal for funds.²⁴ According to interviewees,

there is also a strong socio-cultural obligation for Pakistanis abroad to help their villages and/or regions of origin. This also extends to those who migrate from rural areas to work in the larger cities of Pakistan. This type of support, often in the form of cash transfers or commodities, traditionally passes through families and friends based in the home regions and they then select the most vulnerable in the communities. The diaspora organizations with a geographical focus also facilitate such support, such as the SRI active in the Swat district of the KP province and the Sindhi Association of North America active in the Sindh province.

In addition to these motivations, according to interviewees, diaspora organizations are motivated by a desire to alleviate suffering and contribute to the long-term development of Pakistan. This means that the development projects and humanitarian interventions supported and implemented often extend beyond home regions, as seen with Development in Literacy, Penny Appeal, Human Development Foundation (HDF) and Crescent Relief amongst others. This approach can also extend to helping Pakistanis with humanitarian needs in other countries, in addition to diaspora organizations acting similarly to humanitarian INGOs in other countries in times of crisis, as described above.

The motivation to contribute to the long-term development of Pakistan is particularly well illustrated by diaspora organizations with a distinct specialization. For example, the

Midland Doctors provide more long-term support such as hospital construction, purchasing ambulances, establishing children's clinics and ongoing training for health personnel. The organization becomes active in times of crisis, such as for COVID-19 and the 2019 earthquake in the Kashmir region.

Diaspora and diaspora organizations are alerted to emerging and current crises through multiple channels, primarily from their friends and extended families, media coverage and their volunteer networks, partners and staff in Pakistan. The organizations can also be alerted by the Pakistani government and officially requested to support a humanitarian response, as seen with the Yaran e Watan initiative where twelve diaspora organizations have partnered with the Ministry of National Health Services.

²⁴ For example, Penny Appeal, Crescent Relief, the Citizens Foundation, Hope Charities and the Human Development Foundation all have sadaqa and/or zakat appeals for funds on their websites.

4.2. Diaspora response activities

Diaspora organizations in Pakistan primarily build on their existing development programmes and projects to scale up in times of humanitarian crisis, and are mainly active in education, health and livelihoods.

This has been seen in their response to the COVID-19 pandemic, where many diaspora organizations were active across a range of areas including education, health, food security and livelihoods and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH). Although most diaspora organizations revert to their development and ongoing activities following a crisis, examples are seen where they will provide ongoing support to communities suffering in the aftermath. For example, the PAD provides ongoing financial support to a L/NNGO called Parwarish for children that were orphaned as a result of the insurgency in the Swat district some ten years ago.

The 24 diaspora organizations assessed were involved in mainly three areas of intervention. Although some organizations had a specialization, such as education or health, examples were seen where even these organizations worked in other areas during a crisis, as seen with the Midland Doctors carrying out WASH activities in an earthquake response (see further below). The main activities of the mapped diaspora organizations were:

- **Education:** including funding and support for students and their families from vulnerable groups such as refugees and displaced children; girls’ education and gender equality; and vocational training for health professionals, engineers and teachers. Additional interventions were seen in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, such as supporting schools in adapting to remote teaching. Many diaspora organizations link these actions with their longer-term support to education in Pakistan.
- **Health:** including providing medical equipment and supplies; and dispatching local and diaspora medical teams to scale up existing medical services. For example, during the COVID-19 response, the PAD supported the government in adapting a hospital for COVID-19 positive patients. Many diaspora organizations active in the medical field built on their existing medical programmes and partnerships in times of crisis.
- **Food security and livelihoods:** including providing cash, food, and support for women’s livelihoods.
- **WASH:** Providing water (e.g. temporary water tanks); repairing and/or installing water installations and WASH in schools serving vulnerable communities.

Activities not undertaken: As described above, formal diaspora organizations undertake a range of humanitarian response activities. Although none were identified as being active in protection, some were involved in activities such as legal aid and gender equality which have protection elements. Given their development experience, some diaspora organizations were also capable of carrying out longer-term responses, such as provision of direct healthcare and nutrition programs.

Type of crises: As seen in the examples below, the large majority of humanitarian interventions by diaspora organizations were for sudden onset crises such as floods and earthquakes, in addition to responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. There were examples seen where organizations have responded to more protracted crises like population displacement, such as the SRI highlighted earlier. In spite of the propensity for drought in Pakistan, diaspora organizations were less active in prevention activities. Almost all diaspora organizations identified were providing longer-term support to communities in the fields of education and health. In this respect, the organizations were working along the humanitarian-development nexus even if they did not necessarily identify it as such.

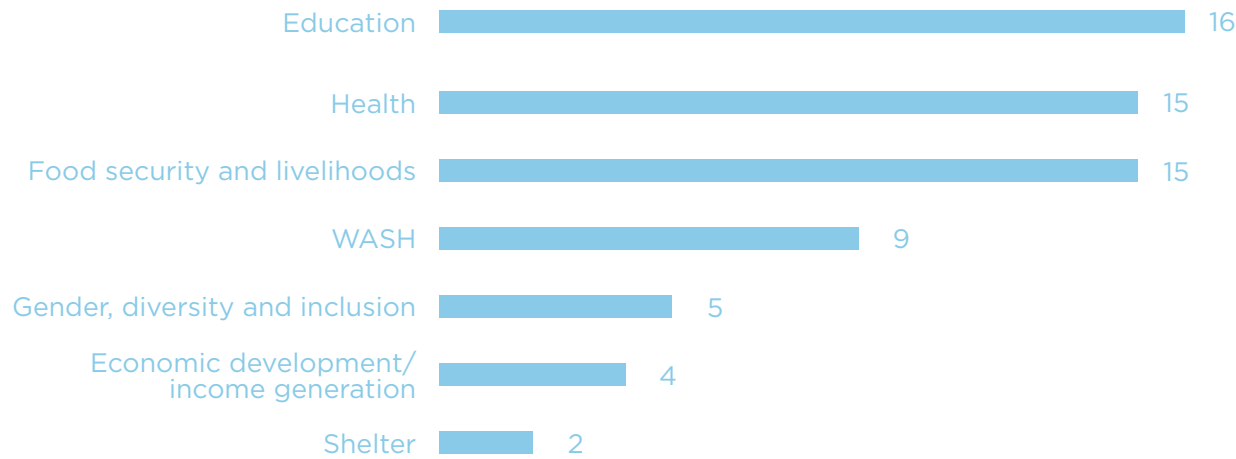


Figure 1: Main areas of intervention (24 diaspora organizations – multiple responses)

4.3. Coordination and implementation

Diaspora organizations implement humanitarian activities both directly as well as with partners.

The 24 formal diaspora organizations identified by this case study implemented humanitarian activities both with partners and directly with their staff and volunteers in Pakistan. Most of the diaspora organizations had several partners in Pakistan, with the most commonly seen partners being L/NNGOs followed by educational institutes and medical structures.

Half of the diaspora organizations were known to have their own offices, staff and volunteers in Pakistan and were carrying out and/or supervising direct project implementation in the country. This response modality can also be seen at the very local level. A district social welfare officer²⁵ could identify several community-based organizations which respond to humanitarian crises locally and whose parent organizations are established abroad. All local and national representation of diaspora organizations have to be formally registered in Pakistan in order to operate, implying that they must also coordinate with the relevant authorities. However, some of the less formal diaspora networks are not registered and are still able to raise funds and carry out activities.

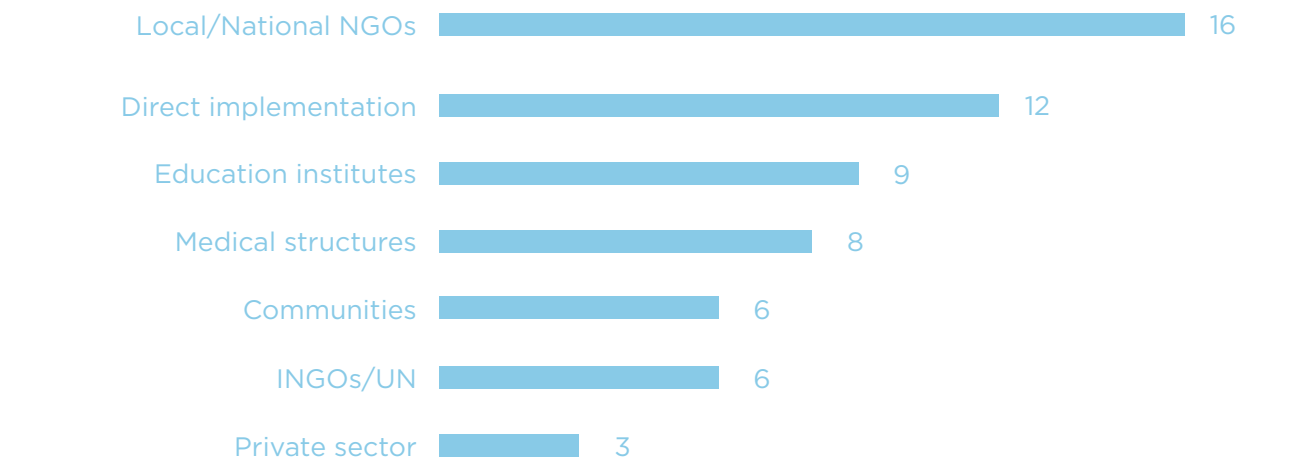
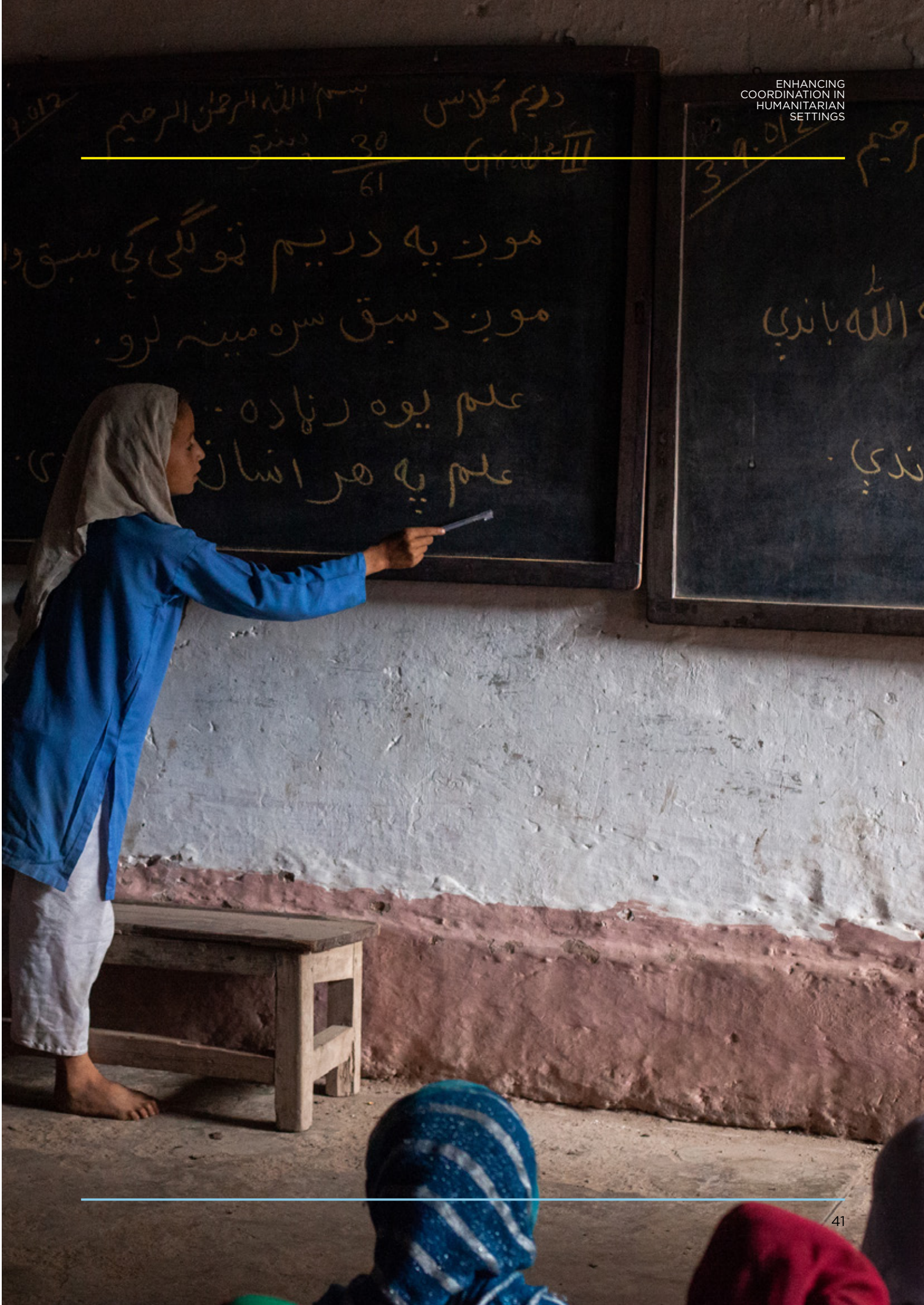


Figure 2: Implementation approaches of diaspora organizations (24 organizations - multiple responses)

²⁵ District Social Welfare Office is a government department mandated to oversee the affairs of the community-based organizations.



Although most diaspora organizations participated in humanitarian coordination mechanisms, the level of coordination varied depending upon the type of their activities and nature of the diaspora organization. Those involved in a distinct sector limited coordination to within the sector. Less formal groups did not participate in coordination mechanisms.

According to interviewees, the majority of diaspora organizations identified participate in humanitarian coordination mechanisms, either directly or through partners. For example, the diaspora organizations that were registered in Pakistan and operated nationally, such as Penny Appeal and HDF, actively participated in the government and UN coordination fora as they had profiles in Pakistan similar to L/NGOs. The humanitarian actors interviewed indicated there is little distinction between the two; their specificity and uniqueness as diaspora organizations may not be known by all actors.

The diaspora organizations with a distinct area of specialization, such as health or education, tended to coordinate within their relevant sector, such as with the relevant government-led fora at national, provincial and district levels. The less formal groups and networks, such as PAD and the Pakistan Welfare Society were not part of existing coordination mechanisms, tending to implement their activities alone or with partners but not with significant coordination beyond this. Some of these groups were aware of the broader humanitarian system but believe that international humanitarian actors are not interested in interacting with small diaspora organizations as the latter do not bring enormous resources to the table, as this diaspora organization commented:

“We are happy to work with other organizations. But do they want to work with an organization that does not have a budget of millions in Pakistan? We have zero administrative costs due to volunteer work and whatever minimal overheads we incur come from our own pockets. I do not believe the UN agencies and other organizations are interested in charities which are smaller scale.”

Interviewees in general agreed that coordination between diaspora organizations and other humanitarian actors could be reinforced. UN agencies and INGOs thought that diaspora organizations could be more active in coordination to avoid duplication and respond to priority needs, such as exchanging information on their activities and focusing their response to areas of need rather than only their home regions. Diaspora organizations not formally involved in coordination were also interested in greater coordination, also as a means to distinguish themselves from informal responses that could face challenges with the authorities.

There were no coordination or umbrella bodies of diaspora organizations identified in their main countries of residence, such as in Saudi Arabia, the US or UK, that this research could identify. There are national level organizations such as the British Pakistan Foundation that aim to represent all people of Pakistani descent in countries of residence, yet they are not umbrella bodies of diaspora organizations.

The following approaches to implementation were seen for diaspora organizations:

- For rapid response, such as seen for COVID-19, diaspora organizations build on their existing longer-term programmes and mobilized their structures already in place in Pakistan. This was the case for Citizens Foundation and their COVID-19 response, using their network of schools in Pakistan with their teachers and alumni implementing the project (see further below). HDF also responded to COVID-19 through its existing structures in place, such as 600 field workers and eight community centres, giving it broad reach in the country, e.g. delivering 5.5. million meals as part of their COVID-19 response.
- Diaspora also respond to alerts from organizations based in Pakistan, as seen with Support to the Poor described below. The organization has developed a network of diaspora supporters who send small cash transfers when alerted to needs through WhatsApp by volunteers on the ground. The volunteers then purchase food for distribution to the most vulnerable, as was the case for their COVID-19 response.
- Diaspora organizations also work closely with communities and L/NGOs and coordinate with authorities in implementing humanitarian response. For example, the SRI has focused their support mainly in nine villages in the Swat province. In each village they have supported setting up village development organizations whose volunteers assist in implementing projects, both development and humanitarian, as seen most recently with the COVID-19 response.
- A virtual response has also been seen in the COVID-19 response. APPS has offered virtual training and coaching by diaspora health professionals based in the UK and USA on intensive care procedures for COVID-19 for health professionals in Pakistan. A telemedicine helpline app was also developed by members of the APPS for the Punjab province. These activities built on the existing networks and connections between the APPS members and health professionals in Pakistan.
- Some diaspora organizations also carried out humanitarian response as implementing partners for INGOs and UN agencies, such as Development in Literacy with the International Rescue Committee as detailed below. This implied that they had gone through a competitive bidding process and for the concerned project were operating in line with the procedures of the international agency.

Diaspora organizations also combined these above approaches to implementation. For example, the HDF implements projects with L/NGO partners, carries out direct implementation and is also an implementing partner for INGOs, e.g. with Oxfam on women's empowerment.

4.4. Diaspora financing for humanitarian response

All diaspora organizations raised funds from their supporters in their countries of residence with some receiving support from companies, foundations and institutional donors.

A commonality of all 24 of the diaspora organizations assessed was that they were primarily supported through direct fundraising with the diaspora in their countries of residence. A second source of funding for some diaspora organizations was from private companies. SRI and HDF also received funding from US-based foundations. Many of the diaspora organizations have also set up online donation pages, using crowdfunding techniques, providing the opportunity to donate for individual projects and see funds raised to date.²⁶ Diaspora organizations also maintained and developed contacts through social media as explained in the example of Support to the Poor below.

A small number of diaspora organizations receive funds from institutional donors. Examples include Friends of the Mind (no longer operational) which accessed funding from the Norwegian government; Development in Literacy from the UK (DFID/FCDO funding for an emergency program as an implementing partner with the International Rescue Committee)²⁷; Hope Charities from the USA, Japanese and German governments; and PAD from the Emirates Red Crescent. Several diaspora organizations had also carried out projects with INGOs and UN agencies and received funds in this respect; all diaspora organizations and their local partners interviewed were unanimous in their need to strengthen their strategies for resource diversification.

An informal diaspora organization locally “grown”: Support to the Poor

Support to the Poor is a unique diaspora organization. Unlike other organizations and groups which were established by Pakistanis abroad, this group was created by volunteers in the village of Islampur, Swat district who wanted to support their fellow villagers in hard times. During the earthquake of 2016 when houses of the most vulnerable village residents were damaged, this group started collecting donations locally. At that moment, the volunteers also realized that a considerable number of villagers were working abroad and could be a good source of support in such times. They collected their contact details and approached them through social media with an appeal for support to the affected population. The Islampur diaspora contributed generously, some USD \$3,200 in 2016. Similarly, during the COVID-19 pandemic the volunteers approached their diaspora for support. Today, the majority of supporters are diaspora in the Middle East who send money to support the volunteers on the ground when an appeal is made through WhatsApp.

²⁶ See for example, the fundraising page of the Citizens Foundation: <https://support.tcf.org.pk/social/campaigns.aspx>

²⁷ Institutional funding was also seen for development projects of diaspora organizations, for example Development in Literacy was funded by USAID for their project “Ready to Know Ready to Grow”.

4.5. Planning, targeting and selection criteria

Diaspora organizations had diverse approaches to planning, targeting and selection criteria.

Although diaspora organizations did coordinate with the humanitarian sector and authorities, their planning and selection of beneficiaries were largely carried out independently. Most diaspora organizations relied on their staff, volunteers or partners on the ground to identify the needs and beneficiaries. For example, Support to the Poor relied on their local volunteers to identify people in need for their COVID-19 response. A diaspora partner explained the advantages of this approach:

“We are from this area, we know the people who are the hardest hit and the most vulnerable, therefore we are confident that we can select the people in need.”

Some diaspora organizations have planning and selection criteria in place that are similar to those of other humanitarian actors. For example, Penny Appeal and HDF use vulnerability criteria to select beneficiaries, involving community committees in the process to ensure transparency. Verification processes are in place to avoid duplication and/or non-adherence to the criteria. The diaspora organizations with a distinct specialization have another approach to targeting and selection criteria. As they often are already working with specific populations through their development projects, their humanitarian response often provides an increased support to these populations in times of crises. For example, the Citizens Foundation’s main COVID-19 response was providing cash-based relief to families of the most vulnerable communities in locations where they support schools on an ongoing basis.

Interviewees highlighted both advantages and disadvantages of the planning and selection criteria of the diaspora organizations. An advantage was that the selection of beneficiaries was often based on the direct assessment of the diaspora organizations or their partners, staff or volunteers on the ground. Their funding model also gave them the flexibility to select those they considered most in need.

A disadvantage was that the diaspora organizations may directed support, at times, to focus on their home region rather than regions where the greatest need was. The example was provided where instead of following a cluster response plan, diaspora organizations would divert their response to their home region, also to satisfy diaspora members who had provided the financial support and were from the same home region.

The diaspora humanitarian response is not static or limited by geographic region, rather it is dynamic and evolving. Those with clear links to their home regions, such as the SRI or the Sindh Association of North America more often provide support to their own home communities during times of crisis, and this tends to be where they are already providing ongoing support.

The diaspora organizations that have national coverage tend to focus their humanitarian support on areas hardest hit by the crisis at hand. For over a decade the concentration of many diaspora activities was in the KP province as it was the most affected by multiple disasters including the 2005 earthquake, population displacement in 2009 due to unrest, floods in 2010/2011, another earthquake in 2015 and the ongoing conflict in merged districts, in addition to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020/2021. The diaspora organizations with a distinct specialization often provided support across Pakistan, for example the online training offered by APPS is open to all health professionals across Pakistan. As noted above, some diaspora organizations provide assistance to Pakistanis in need in other countries and to other countries in crisis.



5. OVERVIEW OF DIASPORA HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Diaspora humanitarian response was perceived as rapid and flexible and diaspora organizations were seen to have the ability to quickly mobilize resources. While often short-term in nature, diaspora organizations were concerned with the long-term sustainability of their actions.

Due to this rapid and flexible nature of the diaspora response in times of crisis, interviewees highlighted that diaspora organizations were able to respond before other humanitarian actors were in place. While often small-scale in nature, some diaspora interventions reached millions, as seen in the example of HDF below. For the COVID-19 response, several diaspora organizations, e.g. SRI, Penny Appeal, HDF, and Support to the Poor were able to start activities within a week according to the organizations themselves. Their field teams could assess the situation rapidly while their parent organizations were able to generate funds from their diaspora supporters and launch activities nearly immediately. However, timeliness of response can be impacted by the need to receive the necessary government approval. All humanitarian actors have to obtain a No Objection Certificate (NoC)²⁸ from the relevant authorities before commencing activities (the COVID-19 response was an exception as described above). Some diaspora organizations which have quickly mobilized resources deliver support informally through family and friends to avoid the delays that an NoC can entail.

Diaspora organization humanitarian engagement is looked at with a mixture of appreciation and criticism. The recipient communities interviewed estimated the diaspora response to be among the quickest during crisis times. At the same time, the institutional humanitarian actors are concerned about the lack of coordination especially by the more informal groups. The lack of coordination, monitoring and documented reporting of some diaspora interventions make it challenging to distinguish between those who have received assistance and those who did not. This runs the risk of community members receiving double assistance at the expense of others according to interviewees. On the other hand, interviewees also provided examples of where the diaspora response was integrated into the institutional humanitarian system as described above. A snapshot of recent diaspora organization humanitarian response illustrates their activities and initial results.

²⁸ An NoC issued by the Pakistan government to prove that a program/project is authorized and supported by the government. It is a legal requirement to have an NoC before initiating a program/project.

Snapshot of recent diaspora humanitarian response in Pakistan

The **Swat Relief Initiative** provided food and non-food items to 14 villages supporting some 5,000 people in the Swat region as part of their COVID-19 response.

Support to the Poor provided food items for 400 household vulnerable due to COVID-19 in the village of Islampur in 2020.

Humanitarian Development Foundation has provided over 5.5 million meals as part of their COVID-19 response across Pakistan.

As part of their COVID-19 response, **The Citizens Foundation** have provided cash-based relief to 45,500 households across Pakistan.

Hope Charity in 2021 provided clothes, food and school supplies to over 850 vulnerable children and families in Kashmir.

In 2019, the **Midland Doctors** installed 100 water tanks in villages affected by the 2019 earthquake in Kashmir.

Penny Appeal provided food and water for 2000 people affected by the 2020 floods in the Sindh province.

Following is a brief description of selected diaspora responses to illustrate further these results:

Support to Poor - COVID-19 response:

Active in the village of Islampur, KP province, the Support to Poor volunteers on the ground identified community members in need when COVID struck, and alerted their diaspora supporters via their WhatsApp group calling for donations. With funds raised, they could quickly purchase food items for delivery to some 400 households and completed the whole process in a week.

Citizens Foundation - COVID-19 response:

Active in over 1,600 schools across Pakistan, Citizens Foundation's COVID-19 response focused on providing cash-based relief to families in their most vulnerable school communities. The efforts were led by thousands of their teachers and alumni who identified the most vulnerable households. A partnership was established with JazzCash, a mobile payment system to distribute the cash transfers to households. The Citizen's Foundation raised over USD \$700,000 from their diaspora supporters for the response with 45,500 households in 250 communities receiving support.

Midland Doctors - Earthquake response:

Actively supporting medical services in Kashmir, the Midland Doctors carried out a one-off response to the 2019 earthquake in Kashmir. A diaspora volunteer was in Kashmir at the time of the earthquake and liaised with the Pakistani Army, Mirpur City Administration, hospitals and other major humanitarian organizations, to assess the situation and identify where the Midland Doctors could provide support. There was an urgent need for clean water as many of the village water wells had collapsed. Using funds from the Midland Doctors, 100 water tanks were purchased locally and installed in the affected villages under the supervision of the diaspora volunteer and Mirpur Development Authority representatives.

Penny Appeal - 2020 flood response:

In response to the 2020 floods in the Sindh province, Penny Appeal launched a public fundraising campaign targeting diaspora and the general public to support their response. Working with local partners, Penny Appeal provided support to 2,000 affected people including providing meals for 500 people daily for ten days, and clean water and food packs for a month. Following the crisis stage, Penny Appeal reported working on the rehabilitation of water facilities and housing in the affected areas.

The diaspora organizations interviewed highlighted that despite the short-term nature of their humanitarian activities, they were concerned with the sustainability of their actions. The HDF referred to their model villages in response to the 2010 floods where they had supported over 100 families by rehabilitating their damaged houses.²⁹ During the 2009 population displacement in the Swat district, the SRI supported girls' education in a severely affected village in the region and has continued its support for over ten years. It has been supporting the community ever since, and today has established a secondary school for girls. They established a partnership with a L/NGO, the Khpai Kor Foundation, to support the education needs of the girls, whose parents were also expected to contribute. This tripartite arrangement makes the process affordable for all the parties involved and thus sustainable as well.

5.1. Diaspora transparency and accountability

Diaspora organizations have adopted different transparency and accountability approaches, often depending upon demands of their supporters.

Humanitarian response from the more informal diaspora groups and organizations is often provided as one-off emergency assistance routed through friends and family with no formal accountability system in place. However, any such response is based on high levels of trust between the diaspora and those in Pakistan. The diaspora organizations also have different demands from their diaspora supporters as this diaspora organization explained:

“There are three types of diaspora donors: one is not interested and just gives money. The second one wants to know a little bit and the third wants to know in-depth how the money was spent. We provide information on what we have done through Facebook and through our own webpage.”

The more formal diaspora organizations have developed systems of accountability and transparency not only towards their supporters but also to ensure downward accountability and transparency to local humanitarian actors and communities. Some diaspora organizations conduct field visits at different intervals and provide regular progress reports for their supporters. For example, the HDF publishes weekly situation updates on its COVID-19 response.³⁰ Interviewees also highlighted that diaspora organizations are often not only mobilizing resources but also provide technical guidance to their implementing partners.

Humanitarian actors interviewed were concerned that diaspora organizations, especially the more informal groups, do not necessarily adhere to humanitarian principles when deciding who to assist and thus run the risk of negatively impacting and casting a poor light over the sector as a whole. One humanitarian actor commented:

“There is a high probability of overlap. Likewise, the unstructured support from diaspora also runs the risk of not adhering to quality standards with possible implications for traditional actors as the communities may not distinguish between the two.”

In interviews with diaspora organizations and their partners they clearly referred to the need to strengthen accountability systems, highlighting an openness to receiving support in reviewing existing systems, identifying gaps, and putting in place risk mitigation measures.

²⁹ Business Recorder (31 December 2010), HDF to construct 13 model villages in flood-affected areas: <https://www.brecorder.com/news/3832168/hdf-to-construct-13-model-villages-in-flood-affected-areas-201012311140161>

³⁰ See: <https://hdfpk.com/emergency-response-hdfna/>

6. GAPS AND CHALLENGES IN DIASPORA HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

Gaps and challenges identified in the humanitarian response of diaspora organizations included adhering to humanitarian principles and standards, capacity limitations, administrative issues and recognition as diaspora organizations.

The main gaps and challenges identified by interviewees are as follows:

- **Adhering to humanitarian principles and standards:** The humanitarian response of the more informal diaspora organizations do not always take into consideration proper beneficiary identification processes. Quality and accountability standards and humanitarian principles are not always adhered to, according to institutional humanitarian actors. Similarly, some diaspora responses are motivated by religious, cultural or clan affiliations and there is a risk that such assistance is not delivered to those most in need.
- **Capacity limitations of diaspora organizations:** The diaspora organizations indicated that they faced resource constraints in terms of delivering assistance at scale in addition to resource mobilization and diversification. The organizations were largely reliant on their diaspora supporters for funding and sometimes reported facing challenges in financing all projects if the diaspora were not interested in supporting a given theme or intervention.
- **Administrative impediments:** Diaspora organizations reported that they did sometimes face challenges in receiving the necessary permission to operate from the relevant authorities. Another challenge they encountered is the transfer of money from abroad amid the increasing scrutiny to ensure that the money is used for charitable purposes only.
- **Recognition as diaspora organizations:** The formal diaspora organizations are integrated into the humanitarian system but are perceived as L/NGOs. This makes it challenging for institutional humanitarian actors to recognize their activities as diaspora response. This was highlighted and referred to as a challenge in interviews with the Pakistan Humanitarian Forum, INGOs, humanitarian consultants and with all local humanitarian NGOs and government bodies. The lack of recognition as diaspora organizations implied that they were not always being called upon or recognized for their positive and specialized capabilities as diaspora organizations, such as their ability to raise funds and mobilize quickly, their local knowledge and access. Further, the support from informal diaspora groups is neither documented nor coordinated, which makes it less visible in the humanitarian system.



7. FUTURE DIASPORA RESPONSE AND ENGAGEMENT IN PAKISTAN

In Pakistan, the diaspora are an important pillar in the country's development, and their support in crises, such as seen with the COVID-19 pandemic, illustrates their role in bringing rapid relief to Pakistan from their supporter base in countries of residence.

The diaspora organizations have been supporting Pakistan in development projects for decades and are emerging actors in humanitarian response, alongside national and local authorities, L/NGOs, INGOs and UN agencies.

With many diaspora organizations having a physical presence in Pakistan, they will most likely become more visible and active as humanitarian actors. The more established diaspora organizations are already part of the humanitarian system and more could be done to recognize and utilize their uniqueness and added value of being diaspora organizations. Further, there are synergies to be found with those diaspora organizations with a specialization that are sporadically involved in humanitarian response.

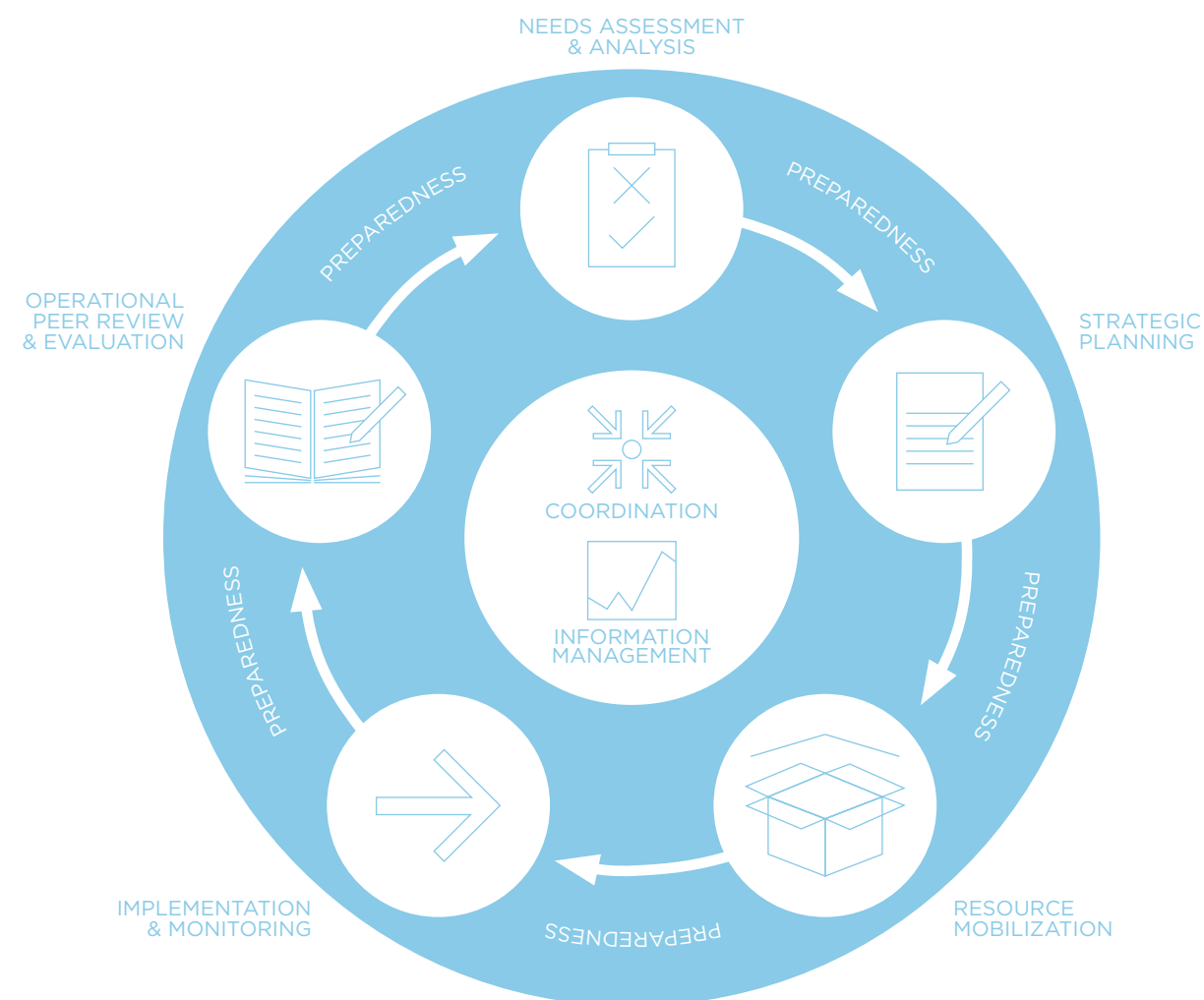
RECOMMEN- DATIONS

This case study aimed to contribute to strengthening the DEMAC platform by providing insights into the current modalities of diaspora humanitarian response and to support potential operational and strategic communication and cooperation between diaspora and institutional humanitarian actors. On this basis, building on the feedback and insights gathered, it is proposed that DEMAC strengthen its role in leading and supporting greater engagement between the institutional humanitarian system in Pakistan and the Pakistani diaspora globally. Recommendations to support this are organized here around the humanitarian program cycle. These recommendations require further inputs and validation from the diaspora organizations, their partners and other humanitarian actors.

It is important to bear in mind that these recommendations feed into an overarching

operational framework which is being developed on the basis of this case study and other country studies undertaken as part of the research. The operational framework sees DEMAC taking on a leading role as a convener in relation to humanitarian diaspora engagement at a global level – a role which should then be mirrored in select countries, including Pakistan.

The recommendations below require leadership and spearheading from DEMAC to steer the entire process. The recommendations also require collaboration with key entities from within the institutional humanitarian system, such as the NDMA, the Pakistan Humanitarian Forum, the NHN, OCHA, the HCT, institutional donors, INGOs, UN agencies and L/NNGOs, in addition to buy-in and endorsement from diaspora organizations, groups and their partners.



Alerts and needs assessment: Interviewees from diaspora organizations, their partners and humanitarian actors all agreed that the exchange between diaspora organizations and other humanitarian actors on identifying and sharing information on needs should be increased. Increasing engagement during the early warning and needs assessment phase would include defining systematic approaches to:

- Including in needs assessments an analysis of existing diaspora projects and programs in order to capitalize on their expertise and know-how.
- Explore possibilities to integrate diaspora feedback into national early warning systems and mechanisms.
- Including diaspora organizations and their partners in needs assessments and ongoing monitoring coordinated by the authorities, inter-agency (humanitarian actors) and joint efforts in Pakistan.
- Building capacity of diaspora organizations and their partners through participation in monitoring and needs assessments exercises.

Strategic planning: Diaspora organizations integrated within the humanitarian system had the opportunity to be involved in joint planning, although it seemed that most diaspora response planning was carried out independently of the wider sector. Opportunities to support the involvement of diaspora organizations into institutional humanitarian planning processes should be identified. This is likely to include:

- Seeking greater input from diaspora organizations and their partners into national disaster response plans, the HRP and cluster strategies.
- Recognizing the distinct advantages of the diaspora organizations (in terms of rapidity, securing funding, providing potential long-term support for recovery) in strategic planning by the authorities and the humanitarian system.
- Integrating diaspora knowledge and insights into the planning and strategy development of national and provincial disaster response planning.
- Proactive invitations to diaspora organizations, groups and partners to participate in capacity-strengthening activities, particularly in relation to humanitarian principles, standards and ways of working.

Resource mobilization: As described in the case study, the large majority of funding for Pakistani diaspora organizations comes from diaspora supporters and to a lesser extent private companies, foundations and institutional donors. While providing flexibility, these sources do not currently provide all diaspora organizations with a secure and continuous financial base for humanitarian operations. There are several areas where institutional humanitarian actors could further engage with diaspora organizations in order to strengthen their access to more predictable forms of financing:

- Governments of countries where diaspora organizations are based could provide further support, including through advocacy efforts, to adapt financial transaction regulations to facilitate the transfer of funds for humanitarian action between diaspora organizations and their counterparts in Pakistan.
- Governments and donors in countries where diaspora organizations are based could provide humanitarian response funding targeting diaspora organizations and/or provide a funding stream within existing mechanisms, such as national emergency funding pools. This could also take the form of matching funds, where institutional donors match funds raised directly by diaspora organizations from their supporters. Depending upon funding and strategic priorities, funds could be for short-term crises or to support longer-term programming.
- Support diaspora organizations, groups and their partners in understanding the humanitarian funding landscape and of the funding opportunities available.
- Promote diaspora organizations, groups and their partners to consider joining funding mechanisms such as the Start Network that would provide them with access to sudden-onset emergency funds.
- Support diaspora organizations to explore more private sector funding opportunities, for example by learning from diaspora organizations who are already securing such funding, such as the Citizens Foundation.
- Support diaspora organizations to integrate data on their responses in OCHA's Financial Tracking System.

Implementation: The operating models of diaspora organizations in Pakistan differ depending upon the type of organization, their ongoing activities and experience. Interviewees identified a number of areas where synergies could be increased during implementation:

- National and provincial authorities and institutional humanitarian actors should consider diaspora organizations and their partners as potential partners in implementation, favoring joint partnerships rather than sub-granting.
- Institutional humanitarian actors should liaise with diaspora organizations and their partners during the implementation of their humanitarian response to determine how both their larger and smaller-scale responses can be integrated into operations.
- Extend proactive and systematic invitations to diaspora organizations and their partners to cluster coordination meetings and other national and provincial fora to facilitate two-way information sharing and potential coordination on responses during acute crises such as earthquakes, floods, displacement and spikes in droughts.
- Create opportunities for diaspora organizations experienced in direct implementation and longer-term programming to exchange experiences and know-how with other diaspora organizations that aspire to scaling-up their activities.
- Offer support to diaspora organizations and their partners to strengthen their accountability approaches and systems.

Peer review and evaluation: Some of the more formal diaspora organizations and their partners are involved in reviews and evaluations of their own responses but no links or synergies were seen with other humanitarian actors. There are further opportunities in this area:

- Initiate involvement of the diaspora organizations and their partners in any inter-agency accountability mechanism and government-led initiatives such as joint evaluations and reviews.
- Encourage an exchange between diaspora organizations and their partners with the humanitarian actors on good practices in monitoring, evaluation and learning.

Coordination: The majority of diaspora organizations were participating in coordination fora either directly or through their partners. Nevertheless, there was a suggestion from interviewees for both greater coordination from the side of the diaspora organizations and more recognition and visibility for their role in humanitarian response:

- The Pakistan Humanitarian Forum and the NHN are suitable fora where diaspora organizations could be given proper recognition by encouraging membership. This could potentially include a certain quota reserved for them in the decision-making bodies.
- Conduct outreach to diaspora organizations and their partners to be further involved in government and UN-lead coordination fora within the regions where they are active.
- Involve diaspora organizations in any discussions in coordination fora on access and administrative issues in Pakistan.
- Diaspora organizations present in Pakistan could consider carrying out joint advocacy and networking to increase their voice with both the authorities and humanitarian actors.
- Diaspora organizations could consider joint advocacy and networking in their countries of residence to strengthen their voice with their host governments and INGOs.

Information management: The sharing of information within diaspora organizations and their partners was taking place but was limited between them and with the humanitarian sector. This could be further strengthened by:

- Establishing mechanisms to ensure that information is systematically shared and then integrate data on the diaspora response more systematically into humanitarian updates, bulletins and dashboards of the humanitarian actors and authorities.
- Create opportunities for diaspora organizations with a distinct specialization, e.g. health or education, to engage and exchange with humanitarian agencies also active in their field. In the area of education, this could include e.g. an exchange between the education-focused diaspora organizations with UNICEF and education-focused L/NNGOs and INGOs.
- Encourage diaspora organizations and their partners active in Pakistan to exchange information and updates between themselves.
- Donor governments and institutional donors should establish a mechanism through which information and know-how from diaspora organizations can be fed into their own humanitarian analysis and priorities; further efforts could be made to integrate Pakistani diaspora organizations into such reflections of the Ministries of Foreign Affairs, think tanks, academia and their equivalents.

ANNEX A

TABLE OF PEOPLE INTERVIEWED

No.	Type of organization	Organization	Location
1	CBO linked with informal DO	Jehad for zero Thalassemia	KP, Pakistan
2	CBO linked with informal DO	Al-Falah Tanzeem	Islampur Swat, Pakistan
3	Diaspora Organization / Community Organization	Support for the Poor	Islampur Swat, Pakistan
4	Diaspora organization	Swat Relief Initiative	USA
5	Diaspora organization	APPS - UK	Islamabad, Pakistan
6	Diaspora organization	Human Development Foundation	USA
7	Diaspora organization	Paani	USA
8	Diaspora organization	Pakistan Association of Dubai	UAE
9	Diaspora organization	Institution of Engineers Pakistan - Saudi Arabian Center	UAE
10	Diaspora organization	Imamia Medics International	USA
11	Government unit/ Humanitarian Actor	Focal Person District COVID-19 Response Unit	KP, Pakistan
12	Government unit/ Humanitarian Actor	Social Welfare Department - Swat Khyber Pakhtunkhwa	Mingora, Swat, Pakistan
13	Humanitarian Actor	Pakistan Humanitarian Forum (PHF)	Islamabad, Pakistan
14	Humanitarian Actor	Human Appeal	Islamabad, Pakistan
15	Humanitarian Actor	Environmental Protection Society (EPS)	Islamabad, Pakistan
16	Humanitarian Actor	IRC	Islamabad, Pakistan
17	Humanitarian Actor	OCHA	Islamabad, Pakistan
18	Humanitarian Actor	Pakistan Red Crescent Society	Islamabad, Pakistan
19	Humanitarian Actor	Humanitarian practitioner	Islamabad, Pakistan
20	Humanitarian Actor	JEN (Japanese INGO)	Islamabad, Pakistan
21	Humanitarian Actor	DRC	Islamabad, Pakistan
22	Humanitarian Actor	CWSA	Islamabad, Pakistan
23	Humanitarian Actor	Institute of Rural Management	Islamabad, Pakistan
24	Humanitarian Actor	Islamic Relief	Islamabad, Pakistan
25	Humanitarian Actor	Human Appeal	Islamabad, Pakistan
26	L/NGO	Environmental Protection Society (EPS) - Swat	Islamabad, Pakistan
27	Partner of DO	Anonymous affiliated with a diaspora organization but did not want to be identified	Islamabad, Pakistan
28	Partner of DO	Swat Relief Initiative (SRI) - Swat Pakistan	Saidu Sharif, Pakistan
29	Partner of DO	Khpal Kor Foundation	Mingora, Swat, Pakistan
30	Partner of DO	Parwarish	Mingora, Swat, Pakistan
31	Partner of DO	Friends of the Mind	Peshawar, Pakistan

ANNEX B

LIST OF DIASPORA ORGANIZATIONS ASSESSED

No.	Name of diaspora organization	Website (where available)	Residing country(s)
1	Institution of Engineers Pakistan-Saudi Arabian Center	https://iep-sa.org	Saudi Arabia
2	Association of Physicians of Pakistani Descent of North America (APPNA)	https://appna.org	USA
3	Advancing health, changing Lives (APPS) UK	https://appsuk.org	UK
4	American Pakistan Foundation	https://www.americanpakistan.org/	USA
5	Midland Doctors	https://www.midlanddoctors.org	UK
6	Friends of The Mind	http://friendsofthemind.org.pk/	Norway
7	Edhi International Foundation Australia	https://edhi.org/australia/	Australia (with affiliates in UK and North America)
8	Crescent Relief	https://crescentrelief.org.au/	Australia
9	Pakistan Association Dubai (PAD)	https://pad.ae/	UAE
10	Pakistan Welfare Society (PWS)	https://www.arabnews.com/node/284957	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
11	Health Oriented Preventive Education (HOPE)	https://www.hopecharityusa.org	USA
12	The Citizen Foundation, USA	https://www.tcfusa.org/	USA
13	Human Development Foundation- USA	https://www.hdf.com/	USA
14	Development in Literacy (DIL)	https://www.dil.org/about-us	USA (Affiliates in Canada, UK and Hong Kong)
15	Hassan Foundation	https://hassanfoundationusa.org/	USA
16	Imamia Medics International	www.imamiamedics.com	USA
17	Sindh Association of North America (SANA)	https://sanaonline.org/	USA
18	Minhaj Welfare Trust	http://www.welfare.org.pk/english/tid/8723/About-MWF.html	Canada (affiliates in UK and other countries)
19	Transparent Hands	https://www.transparenthands.org/about-us/	USA, UAE
20	Human Development Foundation	https://www.hdf.com/	USA
21	Sabaoon Welfare organization	https://www.facebook.com/Sabaoon-Welfare-Organization-Distt-Malakand-115069996801193/	Kingdom of Saudi Arabia
22	Swat Relief Association (SRI)	https://swatreliefinitiative.org/	USA
23	Saharo Foundation	http://www.saharo.org/	USA
24	Penny Appeal	https://pennyappeal.org/	UK (with affiliates in the USA, Australia)

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