

A SNOWBALL EFFECT: LESSONS AND OUTCOMES FROM THE DEC'S PAKISTAN FLOODS RESPONSE 2022-2024

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HUMANITARIAN
ADVISORY GROUP



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The views expressed in this publication are the authors' alone and are not necessarily the views of the DEC or DEC members.

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About us

Humanitarian Advisory Group (HAG) was founded in 2012 to elevate the profile of humanitarian action in Asia and the Pacific. Set up as a social enterprise, HAG provides a unique space for thinking, research, technical advice and training that contributes to excellence in humanitarian practice. As an ethically driven business, we combine humanitarian passion with entrepreneurial agility to think and do things differently.

GLOW Consultants (Private) Limited, based in Pakistan, is a leading national entity providing practice solutions and field implementation support to donors, their implementing partners and research institutions.

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	4
SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION	7
BACKGROUND	7
METHODOLOGY	8
CONTEXT SNAPSHOT.....	11
THE 2022 PAKISTAN FLOODS	11
THE DEC PAKISTAN FLOOD RESPONSE	11
SECTION 2: LESSONS FROM THE 2022 PAKISTAN FLOOD RESPONSE	13
SECTION 3: OUTCOMES AND THEIR ENABLERS	20
HUMANITARIAN OUTCOMES	20
SYSTEMIC OUTCOMES	30
ENABLING FACTORS	34
SECTION 4: LOOKING FORWARD	36
ANNEX I: REVIEW FRAMEWORK	40
ANNEX II: LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED	41
ANNEX III ABBREVIATIONS.....	45

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2022 floods caused immense destruction in Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan described it as a 'climate-induced humanitarian crisis of epic proportions', in many areas compounding the ongoing impacts of and recovery from previous crises, including the 2005 earthquake and 2010 floods.

On 1 September 2022, in response to escalating humanitarian needs, the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) launched the Pakistan Floods Appeal. Within the DEC-funded response, 11 member charities, in partnership with national and local organisations, began providing humanitarian assistance across four provinces in Pakistan. The appeal raised over £49.7 million, including £5 million from UK Aid Match funding, distributed across two distinct phases covering the first six months (phase 1) and the following 18 months (phase 2), which finished at the end of August 2024.

About this review

The DEC commissioned Humanitarian Advisory Group (HAG), in partnership with GLOW Consultants, to capture and document outcomes and lessons from the 2022 Pakistan Floods appeal. The project was not an evaluation, but a learning exercise designed to support future humanitarian action and identify the contribution of DEC members within the overall flood response. The review process utilised an outcome harvesting approach, which focused on identifying, substantiating, and understanding the changes brought about by the DEC's interventions and the contexts in which these changes occurred.

Key learnings from the 2022 Pakistan flood response

The 2022 Pakistan floods offers valuable lessons not only for DEC but also for the broader humanitarian community. Key insights and findings from the response, which can inform future practices in Pakistan and beyond, are outlined below.



Key learning 1: The insufficiency of humanitarian funding to meet the identified needs had wide-reaching consequences.



Key learning 2: Despite efforts to promote inclusivity, efforts to dismantle barriers to inclusion were inconsistent, resulting in some segments of communities unable to access support.



Key learning 3: Contextual challenges and access constraints reduced the effectiveness of support.



Key learning 4: There is a critical community-identified need to strengthen capacity to protect against future shocks.



Key learning 5: Improved communication and collaboration among DEC members which can be facilitated by DEC, can enhance coverage, reduce gaps, and align efforts. It is also important to ensure that new coordination processes build on and don't duplicate existing structures.



Key learning 6: There are clear opportunities to strengthen partnership practices to better enable and sustain local leadership.



Key learning 7: Robust exit strategies are built through equitable partnerships and community ownership.



Key learning 8: Humanitarian agencies used diverse mechanisms to ensure accountability to affected populations, but there remains a need to shift the dial on accountability from process-based activities to outcome-focused results



Key learning 9: DEC members have limited visibility of the programming of other agencies.

Outcomes and their enablers

The findings of this review show how the DEC Pakistan response contributed to a series of meaningful outcomes that, whilst not uniform across all areas, had a snowball effect for affected communities and the humanitarian sector more broadly. This review identified 11 outcomes, of which eight are humanitarian outcomes and three are systemic outcomes. These outcomes and the factors that enabled them are summarised below.

Humanitarian outcomes

focus on changes in the context of flood-affected communities due to DEC-supported programmes. These were observed in several critical sectors, including WASH, health, nutrition, shelter, DRR and preparedness, education and livelihoods.



WASH: DEC-supported communities were protected against waterborne diseases through access to safe drinking water and adoption of safe and dignified hygiene practices.



Health: DEC-affected communities accessed essential services for their physical and mental health in the aftermath of the floods.



Food and nutrition: DEC-supported communities and households enjoyed improved access to food and nutrition services in the aftermath of the flooding.



Livelihoods: DEC-supported communities avoided negative coping mechanisms and benefited from restoration of livelihoods after the floods



Education: Restored access to education for DEC-supported boys and girls in the aftermath of the flooding.



Protection: DEC-supported communities accessed safe spaces and services that provided protection, support and care.



Disaster risk reduction: Some DEC-supported communities are better prepared and informed to act in advance of future disasters.

Systemic outcomes

advance humanitarian system agendas and commitments. They contribute towards humanitarian outcomes, but also align with broader reform agendas



Climate and environment: DEC member charities adopted practices that aimed to reduce or mitigate negative impacts to climate and environment, however lasting results cannot yet be validated.



Local leadership and partnership: The capacity of some local and national partners of DEC member charities was strengthened



Inclusion: The broader humanitarian sector (including the Government of Pakistan, humanitarian agencies and DEC member charities) recognised the importance of identifying and meeting the needs of all disaster-affected groups as a result of targeted advocacy by some DEC members.

Enablers	
	Adaptive management approaches based on community priorities
	Flexibility and integrated approaches
	Participation and ownership
	Partnerships with local and national actors
	Multipurpose cash
	Production and dissemination of evidence and learning
	Effective coordination

Summary of recommendations

The review offers recommendations for the DEC Secretariat and member charities based on insights from the Pakistan context, applicable to future appeals and initiatives beyond active appeals. The *what* and *who* of the recommendations are summarised here, and the details – including the *how* and *why* – are in the recommendation section of this report

What	Who
Continue to drive the shift towards holistic approaches to AAP	DEC Secretariat to enable DEC members and partners to lead
Strengthen learning, exchange and visibility between DEC members during appeals	DEC Secretariat to coordinate DEC members and partners to participate
Leverage the power of DEC to advocate for others to meet humanitarian needs in underfunded crises	DEC Secretariat to coordinate DEC members and partners to participate
Strengthen learning, sharing and communication around good practice sustainable exit strategies	DEC Secretariat to coordinate
Continue to build on recent progress within the DEC by enhancing targeted support strategies that address the specific needs of vulnerable groups. This approach should leverage the specialised expertise of member agencies.	DEC Secretariat to support DEC Members to proactively engage
Continue to increase investments and evidence in DRR in appeals	DEC Secretariat to monitor DEC members to implement
Strengthen outcome definition and reporting within the DEC	DEC Secretariat
Continue to employ and learn from outcome harvesting in future appeals	DEC Secretariat
Apply contextualised approaches to working collectively with civil society	DEC Secretariat to coordinate Members to actively engage

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

BACKGROUND

In June 2022, Pakistan experienced extreme monsoon rains, causing severe flash flooding and landslides. This disaster affected 33 million people, about 15% of the country's population. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reported that 20.6 million people, of whom half were children, required urgent assistance. Approximately 7.9 million people were displaced, with 664,000 relocating to relief camps and informal sites.¹ On 28 August 2022, Foreign Minister Bilawal Bhutto-Zardari called for international aid as the situation worsened amidst a severe economic crisis and high inflation.

On 1 September 2022, in response to escalating humanitarian needs, the Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) launched the Pakistan Floods Appeal. Within the DEC-funded response, 11 member charities, in partnership with national and local organisations, began providing humanitarian assistance across four provinces in Pakistan. The appeal raised over £49.7 million, including £5 million from UK Aid Match funding, distributed across two distinct phases covering the first six months (phase 1) and the following 18 months (phase 2), which finished at the end of August 2024.

The DEC commissioned Humanitarian Advisory Group (HAG), in partnership with GLOW Consultants, to capture and document outcomes and lessons from the 2022 Pakistan Floods appeal. The project was not an evaluation, but a learning exercise designed to support future humanitarian action and identify the contribution of DEC members within the overall flood response. However, an evaluative lens was applied in assessing the contribution of the DEC to the broader humanitarian effort.

About the DEC

The DEC is a unique and dynamic membership organisation, which comprises 15 of the United Kingdom's leading humanitarian charities: Action Against Hunger UK, ActionAid UK, Age International, British Red Cross, the Catholic Agency for Overseas Development (CAFOD), CARE International UK, Christian Aid, Concern Worldwide UK, International Rescue Committee UK, Islamic Relief Worldwide, Oxfam GB, Plan UK, Save the Children UK, Tearfund, and World Vision UK. Since its founding in 1963, the DEC has run over 77 fundraising appeals and raised more than £2 billion to help save lives and protect livelihoods in disaster-affected communities around the world.

The specific objectives of the review were:

- ▶ To explore the key lessons DEC members learned, both in terms of overall programming and in specific areas of focus aligned with DEC's research priorities (see the Methods section for more about these areas)
- ▶ To determine how DEC members' programs contributed to the broader flood response and in improving humanitarian practice in the sector as a whole
- ▶ To inform learning across the DEC, both in the context of Pakistan and more broadly.

This report documents learning, outcomes and opportunities that emerged from the review. Whilst the review focused on Pakistan, many of its lessons and recommendations apply to DEC responses in future appeals in other countries and regions.

¹ UN OCHA (2022) [Revised 2022 Floods Response Plan Pakistan](#).

STRUCTURE

This report has four key sections.

- ▶ **Section 1** introduces the report, including providing an overview of the context.
- ▶ **Section 2** provides an overview of the key learnings that have emerged.
- ▶ **Section 3** summarises the outcomes harvested through this analysis in terms of humanitarian outcomes and system-level outcomes.
- ▶ **Section 4** details recommendations for the DEC Secretariat.

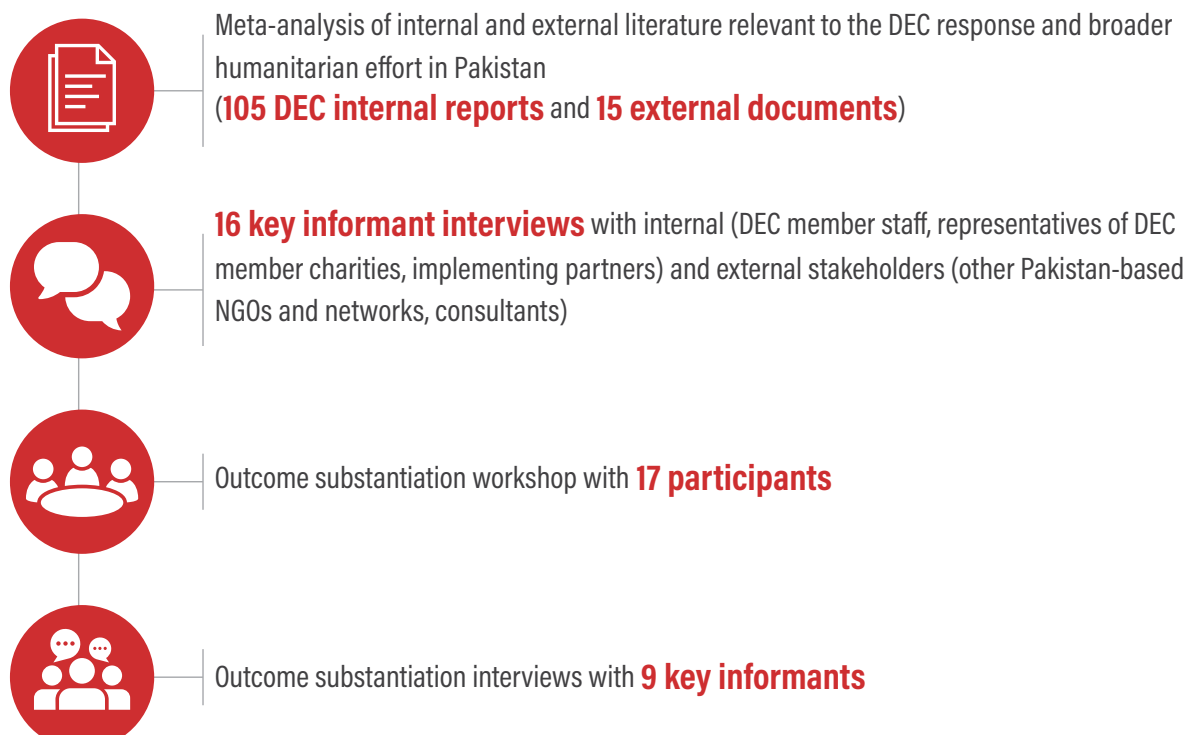
METHODOLOGY

The review process utilised an outcome harvesting approach (see Box 1 below), which formed the basis of the overall review. The reviewers sought to answer the following questions:

1. What changes occurred as a result of DEC's flood response in Pakistan (within the context of the broader humanitarian response)?
 - a. What factors enabled these changes to take place?
 - b. How were findings from phase 1 reviews incorporated into phase 2?
2. What was learned from the DEC response (within the context of the broader humanitarian response) and how can these lessons be taken forward?

Figure 1 below provides a snapshot of the methodology taken for the review process. The overall review framework can be found in Annex 1.

Figure 1: Methodology



LIMITATIONS

The review team identified a series of limitations in undertaking this piece of work

1. **Limited visibility of member agencies across other member interventions:** The review team found that often, members could not comment on the DEC-wide contributions, or those of other members. This is limiting in the context of applying outcome harvesting to a mechanism-wide intervention, though some opportunities to overcome this in future have also been put forward.
2. **Contributions capturing DEC funding, and not other funding sources that may have augmented the DEC-components:** this review intentionally focused on contributions made by DEC funding, however as several members pointed out, significant and complementary contributions were covered

by other funding sources. DEC funds may have been intentionally used to cover those aspects of a programme for which an alternative funding source was unavailable, and in this way, reviewing DEC-only spend may not always be representative of the overall programmes that were supported or facilitated. This limits in some cases the scope of what has been captured not representing co-financed contributions, or other sectors.

3. **Limited external visibility of the DEC's contribution to member programmes:** the ability of the review team to identify independent substantiators with visibility of what the DEC funding contributed to was constrained, as whilst some stakeholders and other actors could speak to contributions of agencies, they did not know whether or not DEC funding was involved.

Photo: Khaula Jamil/DEC



Box 1: Outcome harvesting and its relevance to this review

Outcome harvesting is an appropriately nuanced approach to the difficult task of assessing the results of and lessons generated from humanitarian interventions. It is well suited to the dynamic and unpredictable nature of humanitarian crises, such as the 2022 floods in Pakistan, in which the pathways to achieve outcomes are often not articulated explicitly, and to settings where there are linked or cumulative contributions from multiple actors. Using outcome harvesting, HAG and GLOW is capturing these changes for DEC, with the aim of providing a more rounded understanding of DEC's contributions to and the lessons from the 2022 flood response in Pakistan.

Standard definitions²

Outcome: A change in the behaviour, relationships, actions, activities, policies, or practices of an individual, group, community, organisation or institution.

Outcome harvesting: The identification, formulation, analysis and interpretation of outcomes to answer useful questions.

Outcome statement: The written record of who changed what, when, and where, and how it was influenced by an intervention. It may include the outcome's significance, context and history, amongst other dimensions.

Review-specific definition:

For the sake of this review, we proposed the following definition of an outcome in the context of the DEC Pakistan response, in order to improve our ability to capture less tangible changes such as in attitudes of individuals or adjustments in organisational approaches and learning:

A change in the behaviours, attitudes, relationships, actions, policies or practices of community members, groups, organisations, institutions or systems that were affected by floods in Pakistan and influenced by DEC members' work funded through the Pakistan appeal. These changes may have occurred at various levels, including the community, district, national or United Kingdom (UK)/ Global level.



An important note on outcomes: Outcomes in this review are detailed in terms of the specific areas in which they were achieved. They have not been put forward to suggest they could or should be extrapolated to communities outside of the DEC intervention, or those that only benefited from some kinds of DEC support. Efforts to clearly outline the scope have been made under each outcome statement.

2 Wilson-Grau R (2018) Outcome harvesting: Principles, steps and evaluation applications, Evaluation Society.

CONTEXT SNAPSHOT

THE 2022 PAKISTAN FLOODS

The 2022 floods caused immense destruction in Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan described it as a 'climate-induced humanitarian crisis of epic proportions', in many areas compounding the ongoing impacts of and recovery from previous crises, including the 2005 earthquake and 2010 floods, which also triggered a DEC appeal.³ Ninety-four districts were labelled 'calamity-hit', with the most significant impacts occurring in the southern and central regions of the country; a national emergency was declared on 25 August 2022.⁴ On 28 August 2022, Pakistan appealed to the international community for humanitarian aid as the situation continued to deteriorate rapidly.⁵ Figure 2 provides key statistics from the emergency.

Figure 2: Key statistics on Pakistan's 2022 flood emergency

-  33 million people affected and more than 8 million displaced
-  2.3 million homes destroyed
-  Over 1.7 million hectares (4.4 million acres) of crops and 800,000 livestock destroyed
-  At least 1,739 deaths and 13,000 injured
-  Out of the 25 poorest districts in the country, 19 were calamity-affected⁶
-  More than 18,000 schools damaged⁷
-  Around USD 30 billion in economic losses (infrastructure, housing, agriculture, and livestock)⁸

3 <https://www.dec.org.uk/appeal/pakistan-floods-appeal-2010>

4 The Government of Pakistan highlighted existing needs and possible ways to meet them in the [Pakistan Flood 2022: Post Disaster Needs Assessment](#) and the [Resilient Recovery, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Framework \(4RF\)](#).

5 [Pakistan Flood 2022: Post Disaster Needs Assessment](#) and the [Resilient Recovery, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction Framework \(4RF\)](#).

6 *ibid.*

7 *ibid.*

8 UNOCHA (2023) [2022 Floods Response Plan Pakistan - Final Report](#)

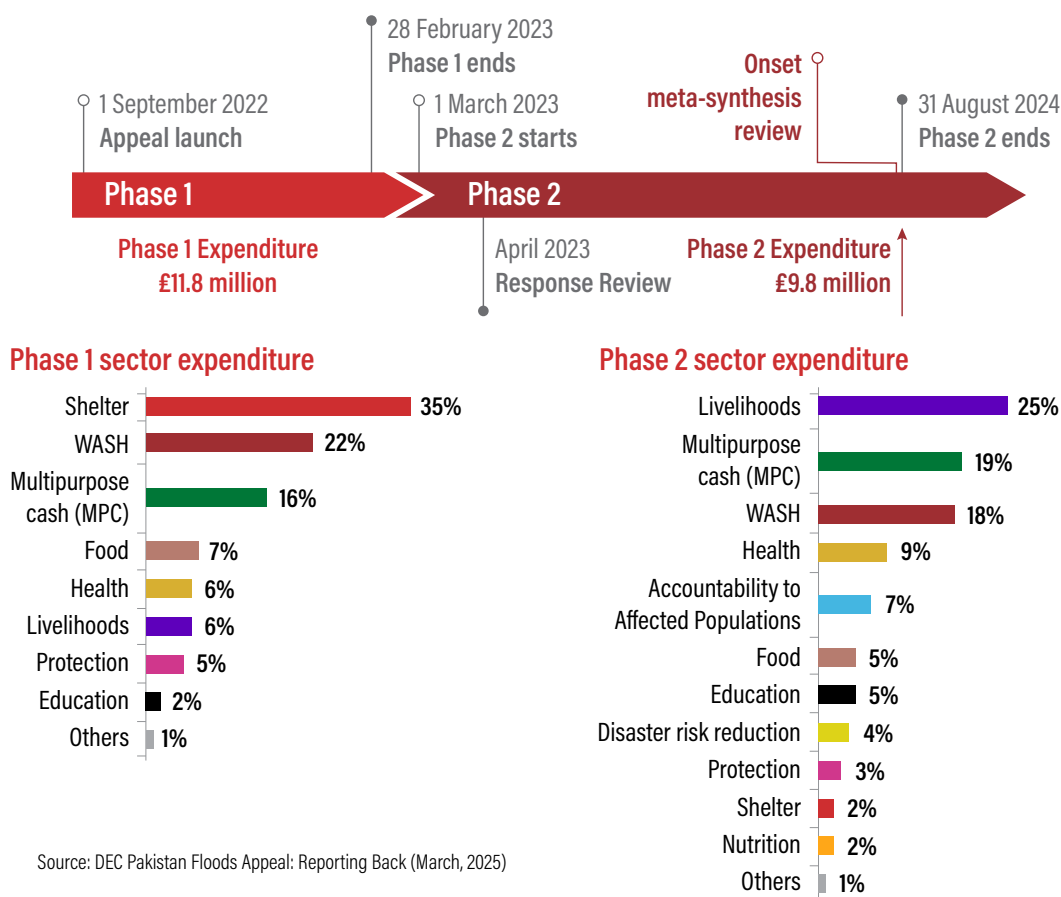
9 OCHA Financial Tracking Service

THE DEC PAKISTAN FLOOD RESPONSE

The Pakistan Floods Appeal raised over £50 million, including £5 million from UK Aid Match funding, implemented in two phases. Over 24 months, across four provinces in Pakistan. Eleven DEC member charities, in collaboration with national and local partners, delivered support to affected communities. The DEC was a significant contributor to the overall Pakistan response plan – the seventh-highest contributor to the 2022 plan, and fourth highest to the 2023 plan.⁹

Phase 1 of the Pakistan Floods Appeal, consisting largely of relief work, lasted from September 2022 until February 2023. It focused on the provision of life-saving assistance and basic services such as emergency water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), shelter, health and nutrition, and emergency education. Phase 2 (1st March 2023 to 31st August 2024) focused on recovery. During phase 2, DEC member charities still aimed to provide life-saving assistance and basic services but also focused on strengthening resilience and building the capacity of communities, volunteers and partners. Figure 3 provides an overview of the overall timeline of the appeal and how the funding was spent across sectors.

Figure 3: Appeal timeline and spend by sector¹⁰



The context in Pakistan gave the DEC response some notable features including¹¹:

- ▶ **Seasonal disaster with learning and good practice available:** The DEC had a reasonable amount of learning from previous rapid-onset disasters that it could apply, both from a previous response in Pakistan¹² and responses in other contexts
- ▶ **Climate change-induced severity:** Climate change intensified the floods, leading to unprecedented levels of destruction. The DEC needed to consider ways to support communities to bounce back and prepare for climate-related risks
- ▶ **National civil preparedness and response:** Pakistan has a robust disaster management framework, including both governmental and non-governmental actors. This meant that humanitarian actors needed to work in close coordination with existing national and local structures, ensuring complementarity to national response capacities
- ▶ **Predominantly rural focus:** The floods mostly affected rural areas, requiring a response from DEC that was attuned to the unique needs of rural communities, such as livelihoods, agriculture, and infrastructure recovery
- ▶ **DEC partners on the ground:** Some DEC member organisations and implementing partners had a strong presence in Pakistan before the disaster.

¹⁰ <https://www.dec.org.uk/appeal/pakistan-floods-appeal>

¹¹ Alexander J & Mitchell J (2024) The Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) Lessons Paper: Strategic Period (2019-2023)

¹² The DEC ran an appeal a decade earlier in response to flooding in Pakistan

SECTION 2: LESSONS FROM THE 2022 PAKISTAN FLOOD RESPONSE

The 2022 Pakistan flood offers valuable lessons not only for DEC but also for the broader humanitarian community. Key insights and findings from the response (aside from the work of DEC members), which can inform future practices in Pakistan and beyond, are outlined below. This also includes examples of how learning from phase 1 was used to make adaptations or changes into subsequent stages of programming. These range from programmatic adjustments (e.g. altering scope and reach) to strategic adaptations (e.g. revising goals and approaches based on context and feedback).



Key learning 1: The insufficiency of humanitarian funding to meet the identified needs had wide-reaching consequences.

The 2022 Pakistan floods caused devastation at a scale that far exceeded the humanitarian assistance that was mobilised, leaving many affected individuals and communities underserved.¹³ Some DEC member charities recognised that the mismatch between the volume of humanitarian assistance and the level of need highlighted the necessity for more substantial and scalable support mechanisms, but were hampered by inadequate resources and funding to allow them to reach the required scale of population.¹⁴ Some expanded reach and increased targets for various initiatives, whilst others chose to deepen their engagement and coverage within a small number of villages, aiming to enhance intervention effectiveness and the cumulative impact of recovery efforts. Several reviews recommended that DEC member charities undertake active joint advocacy with major donors to increase funding and with the government to channel more support into disaster response.¹⁵

While the DEC's commitment to Pakistan was substantial, the scale of the disaster required even greater support. This underscores the

need for DEC and its member organisations to advocate for and secure increased funding, especially in large-scale emergencies
(representative of DEC member charity).¹⁶

Hence, whilst DEC member charities and their implementing partners consulted in this study felt that they were able to support flood-affected communities in many ways and achieved several useful humanitarian outcomes, they also felt that their support was inadequate given the enormous need. Another review suggests that an estimated 50–70% of the affected and in need population across the targeted districts and provinces could not receive assistance due to insufficient resources.¹⁷ Humanitarian needs still prevailed in the resourcing of the UN Humanitarian Response Plans (HRP) also, with 22% of the 2022 HRP unfunded¹⁸ and 25% of the plan for 2023 unfunded.¹⁹ This inadequate support in the Pakistan floods led to many cases in which DEC member charities and their partners were the only ones providing assistance to the affected communities.²⁰ Community representatives consulted in another review also reported significant unmet needs, particularly in areas of shelter provision, WASH, and livelihoods²¹ – sectors that had received the most resources during the DEC Pakistan floods appeal (see Figure 3).

13 Murtaza N & Khan A (2024) Affected Persons Perception Survey Report Second Round: DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal

14 Key informant interviews 1, 3, 10 & 11

15 Murtaza N & Khan A (2024) Affected Persons Perception Survey Report, p. 5

16 Key informant interview 11

17 Murtaza N & Khan A (2024) Affected Persons Perception Survey Report, p. 10

18 <https://fts.unocha.org/plans/1108/summary>

19 <https://fts.unocha.org/plans/1140/summary>

20 Key informant interviews 1, 2 & 11; Murtaza N & Khan A (2024) Affected Persons Perception Survey Report, p. 3

21 Murtaza N & Khan A (2024) Affected Persons Perception Survey Report, p. 20



Key learning 2: Despite efforts to promote inclusivity, efforts to dismantle barriers to inclusion were inconsistent, resulting in some segments of communities unable to access support.

Accessibility and mobility issues prevented some community members from benefiting from some of DEC member charities' services. For example, some people with disabilities struggled to access funds through mobile phone vendors and banks, which were not equipped to accommodate their specific needs. Further, a previous review identified that a stronger focus on gender equity in disaster response is needed, such as through setting up, strengthening and utilising women's organisations in all affected areas.²² Strategies identified to overcome these challenges included building in more flexibility to enable marginalised groups to access support (e.g., ensuring that program plans and budgets can cater for costs to support people with disabilities to access services), therefore ensuring that programs can adapt if proposed approaches to reach all groups prove unfeasible.²³ Some DEC member charities advocated for strengthening inclusion of women, people with disabilities and other groups on local committees, and developed an inclusive need assessment tool that was used to promote input from these groups.²⁴

Whilst consultations with DEC member charities noted that the DEC Secretariat has encouraged an inclusive approach and provided support, such as ensuring member charities have access to technical assistance for inclusivity,²⁵ interviews highlighted the critical need for harmonising inclusion strategies across DEC member charities. This coordination is essential to ensure that marginalised and vulnerable community members can access DEC-funded (or other)

humanitarian assistance across all sectors. Improved coordination and information sharing were identified as key, enabling DEC member charities to collaborate more effectively and meet needs that other organisations cannot.

Activities focused on the needs of older people should have been better coordinated. If older people needed food or agricultural support, there should have been referrals between organisations ... Similarly, we should have referred our beneficiaries needing assistive devices to other relevant charities
(representative of DEC member charity).²⁶



Key learning 3: Contextual challenges and access constraints reduced the effectiveness of support.

Whilst some positive multi-sectoral outcomes were delivered, reaching populations who may not have otherwise been able to access support, there were specific challenges throughout that have informed key learnings and findings from the response as a whole. In particular, humanitarian agencies (including DEC member charities) faced numerous challenges, including bureaucratic hurdles, access restrictions, and logistical difficulties, which reduced the timeliness and effectiveness of support provided, particularly during phase 1 of the DEC response. For instance, in the emergency phase, significant delays in providing emergency shelter left many families exposed and unsafe.²⁷ Additionally, the supply of essential items such as food and clean water was not uniform, causing further hardship.²⁸

These operational constraints and delivery pressures led to programs focusing on people

22 Murtaza N, Shaikh R, Khan A, Batool SM, Amir A & Khataak A (2023) Real-Time Response Review Report: DEC Pakistan Floods 2022 Appeal, DEC, London

23 DEC member charities program report (internal)

24 DEC member charities program report (internal)

25 Key informant interviews 1, 3 & 8

26 Key informant interview 8

27 Substantiation interview 1

28 Murtaz, N & Khan A. (2024). Affected Persons Perception Survey Report, p. 11

in easily accessible areas at the expense of communities in remote and hard-to-reach areas (see also learning 2 above). There were some examples of this being adjusted into phase 2 based on phase 1 learning; for example, agencies choosing to reduce the number of villages they worked in to maximise impact²⁹ or moving to areas with fewer responding agencies.³⁰ Despite these constraints, which created bottlenecks in implementation, DEC member charities demonstrated strong contingency planning, efficient redistribution of organisational resources, and flexibility. For example, economic challenges, such as inflation, required some agencies to increase allocation for multi-purpose cash and livelihood support.³¹ Some DEC member charities also had to carefully plan and account for the timing around local elections to maintain perceptions of neutrality and avoid tensions.³²

Members also faced unforeseen challenges in providing support to hard-to-reach and marginalised communities that had limited access to services before the disaster. For example, one agency reflected on the improved support provided to a health facility. The increased quality of support the population then had access to led to an increased patient load, resulting in a strain on their medicine supplies. Another agency supported a community with chickens to improve nutrition and generate income through egg production. The birds however suffered a high mortality rate and poor production capacity as the community did not have sufficient funds for the commercial feed that the birds had been raised on.



Key learning 4: There is a critical community-identified need to strengthen capacity to protect against future shocks.

The feedback from affected communities considered in DEC's real-time response review emphasised a critical need for long-term investment in capacity-building to better prepare for future shocks, including support for district administrations in formulating disaster risk reduction (DRR) policies.³³ Communities shared that agencies should equip them with the skills, knowledge and resources necessary to enhance their resilience and capacity to respond. Consequently, phase 2 of DEC's response included significant investments in community capacity building in DRR, linking with government early warning and preparedness systems, and advocacy and restoration of livelihoods.

However, DEC member charities and implementing partners noted that the areas where the DEC response was implemented remain challenged in terms of capacity to bounce back, which is especially problematic given that these areas remain disaster prone. This was particularly evident during the floods and heatwave of 2023, which placed further strain on communities, especially those reliant on livestock and agriculture. Several respondents acknowledged that supporting community resilience at scale through DEC funding would be difficult, particularly given the short timeframe and recognition of the fact that the response was so underfunded in meeting emergency needs.³⁴ Recommendations for improvement included exploring linking with anticipatory action mechanisms and integrating comprehensive climate adaptation strategies for shelter, water, livelihoods and DRR in coordination with other agencies and government departments.³⁵

29 DEC member charities program report

30 Key informant interview 5

31 DEC member charities program report (internal)

32 DEC member charities program report (internal)

33 Murtaza N & Khan A (2024) Affected Persons Perception Survey Report, p. 5.

34 Key informant interviews 1, 4, 8 & 11; Substantiation interviews 1 & 2

35 Also see HAG and GLOW Consultants. [Bridging localisation and climate adaptation pathways: Case studies from Asia, the Middle East and Africa.](#)

The repeated heatwaves and floods highlight that the interventions, although aimed at two-year resilience, face ongoing challenges. If there had been no other disasters in the past two years, such as droughts or heatwaves, the communities might have been more capable of sustaining themselves (representative of DEC member charity).³⁶



Key learning 5: Improved communication and collaboration among DEC members which can be facilitated by DEC, can enhance coverage, reduce gaps, and align efforts. It is also important to ensure that new coordination processes build on and don't duplicate existing structures.

In most interviews, DEC member charities – as well as implementing partners – felt that coordination within the DEC Pakistan floods response could have been strengthened, particularly given the limited coordination mechanisms at the national and district levels.³⁷ Whilst some reported that DEC implemented a degree of coordination at the technical working group level (i.e. members participating and chairing such groups), there was limited formal interaction among partners beyond these meetings.³⁸

I think what I see is that there should be more communication or interaction between the partners of DEC. Frankly, I don't know which partner is working where. But since we are working in the field, we get some news from here and there. But we don't get any news directly from DEC, nor do we get the same information from the government (representative of DEC member charity).³⁹

DEC member charities and implementing partners felt that strengthening collaboration

amongst them could ensure more comprehensive coverage of needs, which was pivotal in the context of limited resources (see key learning 1). Better coordination and complementarity across DEC is also particularly important in managing community expectations and disappointment among affected communities excluded from aid. By understanding the work and eligibility criteria of other member charities, organisations can bridge information gaps and help the community tap into additional resources. Some member charities reported improving coordination through informal meetings and engagements.⁴⁰

The DEC member charities and partners can implement coordinated approaches, particularly early in the response, to minimise duplication across activities that are cross-cutting with respect to programmes. Examples include joint assessments, community meetings and shared approaches to complaint and feedback mechanisms. Communication modes could include WhatsApp and email groups to facilitate knowledge sharing on innovative practices, joint programming and representation. Whilst there is a need to strengthen this coordination, it is important to ensure that coordination processes don't duplicate existing coordination structures.



Key learning 6: There are clear opportunities to strengthen partnership practices to better enable and sustain local leadership.

Local partners emphasised the need to strengthen support for local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), including via more funding for administrative costs and benefits for staff.⁴¹ Some DEC member charities recognised the importance of supporting implementing partners through organisational capacity

36 Key informant interview 8

37 Key informant interviews 1, 4, 5, 8, 9 & 11–16

38 Key informant interview 9

39 Key informant interview 5

40 DEC member charities program report (internal)

41 Murtaza N & Khan A (2023) Affected Persons Perception Survey Report

strengthening (refer to local leadership and partnership outcome in Section III below),⁴² but local implementing partners also called for greater autonomy and involvement in leadership roles during program implementation.⁴³ During the response, there was recognition that ensuring leadership and participation of implementing partners in governance mechanisms is critical, such as through the creation of a local response reference group that ‘that holds up the mirror to the DEC agencies’.⁴⁴ There was also an identification of the strong capacity of civil society in Pakistan, and the importance of supporting local actors’ roles in ensuring sustainability of interventions (see also learning 7 below).⁴⁵ Other reviews showed that DEC actors often localise the administrative burdens and risks of managing relationships with national and local governments but do not supply additional resources, leaving them to navigate bureaucratic delays and challenges.⁴⁶ For example, local NGOs were assigned with obtaining permits and coordinating with multiple government agencies, as many international actors must work with local and national partners in Pakistan due to government restrictions on international NGOs (INGOs), and limitations on INGO access to field locations and therefore affected communities. This highlights the need for DEC actors to better equip local partners with both financial and technical support to manage these complexities effectively.

As soon as the system kicks in there is a power dynamic – we risk operating in autopilot. Often there isn't the opportunity to do that capacity mapping, understanding the gaps, capacity exchange etc. but would have wished a bit more for the meaningful or

transformational partnership – e.g. the local reference group – that holds up the mirror to the DEC agencies (representative of DEC).⁴⁷



Key learning 7: Robust exit strategies are built through equitable partnerships and community ownership.

The 2022 Pakistan floods provided a clear case for international humanitarian actors, particularly UN agencies and international NGOs, to rethink how they mount responses in middle-income countries that have substantial government, civil society, and disaster management capacity.⁴⁸ A key argument was that the international humanitarian response model needs to shift towards more sustainable and locally driven approaches, with a critical focus on well-planned exit strategies. For DEC member charities, examples of promising practices around exit strategies included:

- ▶ Ensuring strong partnerships between government departments to maintain the continuity of services and support (e.g. maintenance of infrastructure built during disaster responses)
- ▶ Capitalising on the presence of local implementing partners (however, only a few DEC member charities reported supporting their implementing partners to secure additional funding to continue the programs)
- ▶ Linking local community structures to district/village development agencies (e.g. a development committee overseeing WASH support was trained in ensuring the proper utilisation and maintenance of the community level assets and infrastructure).

⁴² DEC member charities program report (internal)

⁴³ Interview 14

⁴⁴ Substantiation interview 2

⁴⁵ Key informant interviews 1, 14 & 15; Substantiation interviews 1, 2, 3, 5 & 8

⁴⁶ Humanitarian Advisory Group, GLOW Consultants, KAE Consulting and NSDation Consultancy Services. [Toward transformation: Progressing partnerships within DEC.](#)

⁴⁷ Substantiation interview 2

⁴⁸ Humanitarian Outcomes, Sustainable Development Policy Institute, and UK Humanitarian Innovation Hub. (2022). Floods in Pakistan: Rethinking the Humanitarian Role.

Consultations with member agencies revealed that DEC makes it a priority to communicate the responsibilities and expectations regarding the exit or phase-out strategy to both the communities and the respective authorities.⁴⁹ However, another review revealed that communities were largely unaware of these exit strategies, suggesting DEC member agencies should more proactively communicate these plans.⁵⁰ These exit strategies have significant implications for the sustainability of the response outcomes achieved and DEC's contribution to them (see recommendations section), as well as the empowerment of local leadership to take carriage of outcomes. There is also an opportunity for a more formal appeal closure process, including local partners, as part of the DEC-level mechanism exit strategy planning.⁵¹

In all villages [I visited for DEC monitoring visit] nobody said, 'don't stop' [the support provided]. People were saying thank you, people were confident ... saying '[partner] came and helped us (representative of DEC).⁵²



Key learning 8: Humanitarian agencies used diverse mechanisms to ensure accountability to affected populations, but there remains a need to shift the dial on accountability from process-based activities to outcome-focused results

DEC member agencies employed various mechanisms to collect feedback, including provision of multiple, anonymous and continuous channels for sensitive feedback for protection purposes. For example, some DEC member agencies placed complaint boxes in villages and distributed cards with mobile/WhatsApp numbers to report/file complaints and seek help/

support. Others organised village committees to help in solving problems, particularly in clarifying the criteria for humanitarian assistance. In another review, community members reported that they had no complaints to file and instead discussed their complaints and issues face to face.⁵³ Consultation with DEC member charities revealed that they value adherence to the Core Humanitarian Standard (CHS), and undertook training and reviews to ensure that staff understood and upheld accountability to affected populations (AAP).

DEC's flexibility and adherence to core humanitarian standards have been strengths in the response (representative of DEC member charity).⁵⁴

The findings of both phase 1 and 2 rapid response review pointed to ways to strengthen AAP, such as:

- ▶ using banners to advertise program details in communities
- ▶ aligning complaint mechanisms with the needs of specific groups (e.g. women, the elderly) (phase 1)⁵⁵
- ▶ increasing communities' awareness of the technical and accountability principles and standards to which the member charities adhere, and of the importance of communities identifying noncompliance through complaint mechanisms (phase 2).⁵⁶

Beyond these recommendations, DEC member charities can continue to move towards an outcome-focused approach that shifts the emphasis from processes (e.g. established protocols, guidelines and checklists, demonstrating AAP-related outputs and activities) to results (*what difference is AAP making for people?*) acknowledging the intrinsic

49 Key informant interviews 7, 10 & 11

50 Murtaza N & Khan A (2024). Affected Persons Perception Survey Report, p. 21

51 Key informant interview 1

52 Key informant interview 1

53 Murtaza N & Khan A (2024). Affected Persons Perception Survey Report, p. 15

54 Key informant interview 9

55 Murtaza et al. (2023) Real-Time Response Review Report.

56 Murtaza N & Khan A (2024). Affected Persons Perception Survey Report, p. 5.

connection between AAP and people's dignity and rights. Additionally, whilst members are reporting the ways they are accountable to affected populations, there is limited evidence in member reporting on the extent to which the CHS has been applied in the Pakistan flood response. The current reporting templates do not ask questions related to implementation of the CHS (although plan templates do); modifying them to include the CHS would strengthen information about AAP and CHS application in future appeals.



Key learning 9: DEC members have limited visibility of the programming of other agencies.

The outcome harvesting process highlighted that the scope of DEC interventions is broad and that visibility across the DEC membership of other agency programs is inconsistent. The review team found that members could confidently speak to the contributions of their agencies, but when asked about DEC-wide contributions, there were clear gaps in their knowledge (see also key learning 5).

Not all of us know a lot about what our peer agencies were doing. I think that's a tragedy. We should have known more rather than wait for DEC-related reports to be circulated through our networks and forums
(representative of DEC member charity).⁵⁷

Many interviewees did not feel they could comment on sectors other than their own. Further, during the substantiation phase, several workshop participants and interviewees reported that they were uncertain about the extent to which outcomes had been achieved, or that they could not comment. The outcomes with the lowest visibility included education, shelter, DRR and education. This is a consideration for the DEC to take forward in terms of the

use of outcome harvesting in future appeals (refer to the recommendations in section 4). It also suggests that it should strengthen communication mechanisms that highlight areas of focus, progress, achievements and challenges by all partners, and the consistent sharing of these throughout the lifecycle of a DEC appeal. This approach would improve transparency by enhancing visibility across all sectors and keeping DEC member charities informed of ongoing developments. It will also enable informal coordination and timely adjustments to programming as member charities understand the evolving landscape of needs and gaps. Lastly, fostering collective understanding of progress, achievements and challenges by all DEC member charities and their implementing partners can better support collaborative problem-solving, including understanding of good practices, to maximise impact and resources.

The outcome harvesting process also identified that some sectors or priorities may not have been covered with DEC funds, but were being prioritised by member charities with funding from other sources. For example, whilst there was weak visibility of DEC contributions towards the education outcome (and the education sector received a relatively small amount of funding from the DEC appeal), members reflected that their organisations were undertaking more education work with other sources of funding.⁵⁸ Other examples include from the British Red Cross, which mainstreamed protection, gender and inclusion interventions across programs funded via the Australian and Canadian Red Cross societies.

As far as my knowledge is, I am unaware of any work around education through the DEC funding
(representative of DEC member charity).⁵⁹

Little DEC funding was directed towards education-related activities like loss of school time, but some was used to carry out DRR-related or restoration activities in schools.⁶⁰

⁵⁷ Key informant interview 5

⁵⁸ Substantiation workshop

⁵⁹ Substantiation interview 3

⁶⁰ Substantiation interview 4

SECTION 3: OUTCOMES AND THEIR ENABLERS

This section details the outcomes that were harvested through the meta-analysis, substantiated through a workshop with DEC member charities and their implementing partners, and further examined through outcome substantiation interviews with independent sources. This review identified 11 outcomes, of which eight are humanitarian outcomes and three systemic outcomes. These are defined below.

- ▶ **Humanitarian outcomes** focus on changes in the context of flood-affected communities due to DEC-supported programs. These were observed in several critical sectors, including WASH, health, nutrition, shelter, DRR and preparedness, education and livelihoods.
- ▶ **Systemic outcomes** advance humanitarian system agendas and commitments. They contribute towards humanitarian outcomes, but also align with broader reform agendas. Outcomes observed in these areas included strengthened sector-wide approaches to inclusion as a result of collective advocacy, reinforcing local capacity, and mitigation of negative environmental impacts.

HUMANITARIAN OUTCOMES

Activities and programs under the DEC-funded response contributed to key achievements connected to various outcomes, described overleaf. The list is not intended to be exhaustive; many other activities took place across various members within each outcome domain. Overall, an estimated 1.8 million people were reached across DEC-funded programs within the first 18 months of the response.

In many cases, the figures relating to total numbers of people reached are aggregates across multiple DEC members and partners

responding in a given sector. Though efforts were made to avoid counting people twice, it is possible that some people were reached more than once, either over time, or by multiple members. Achievements listed under phase 1 took place between September 2022 and February 2023. Those listed under phase 2 took place in its first 12 months, between March 2023 and March 2024. Final reporting from agencies at the end of phase 2 was not reviewed by the team and therefore is not included in these figures.



Outcome statement: DEC-supported communities were protected against waterborne diseases through access to safe drinking water and adoption of safe and dignified hygiene practices.

The WASH outcome highlights a strong focus on preventing waterborne diseases in the aftermath of the 2022 Pakistan floods through access to safe drinking water, hygiene supplies, promotion of safe hygiene practices, and rehabilitation and solarization of critical WASH infrastructure. Most stakeholders (93% in workshops and 83% in substantiation exercises) recognised this as a significant outcome. A number of independent reviewers emphasised DEC's key role as one of the largest donors in the WASH sector and lauded its efforts to ensure communities had reliable access to clean water and functional sanitation facilities.⁶¹

Contributions to the WASH outcome included:

- ▶ **Improved access to safe water and functional sanitation facilities, meeting critical hydration and hygiene needs.** WASH-related support – such as the establishment of water filtration plants, rehabilitation of

⁶¹ Substantiation interview 5, 7, 8

water supply schemes, and distribution of household water filters and Aqua Tabs – was particularly crucial during the emergency phase when waterborne diseases were widespread, and safe water was scarce due to the extensive damage to water connections, pipes and village supply lines. Several interviewees noted that many communities had poor access to safe water and sanitation even before the floods.

- ▶ **Adoption of safe hygiene practices, reducing the risk of the spread of disease.**
DEC's infrastructure support was reinforced by community engagement and education on proper hygiene. A community perception survey during the second phase of the response showed that 89% of men and 100% of women reported positive impacts on their hygiene through the post-flood WASH engagement sessions. One DEC member charity noted that participants went on to share what they had learned with neighbouring villages, further promoting improved hygiene practices.⁶²
- ▶ **Women benefiting from the ability to manage menstruation with dignity through access to essential menstrual hygiene management supplies and education.**
Women's input to focus group discussions held at the outset of the project was used to create kits to meet the unique needs of the targeted communities. For example, females located in rural areas shared a preference for cloth sanitary pads, so they were chosen over alternative disposable options.⁶³

In numbers:

183,700 individuals with improved access to safe drinking water (phase 2)

Over 12,000 individuals benefited from the rehabilitation of water points (phase 2)

21,100 individuals given improved access to WASH facilities through the rehabilitation or construction of latrines (phase 2)

33,000 individuals with improved access to other WASH facilities (phase 2)

Over 78,300 individuals provided with hygiene and dignity kits (phase 2)

23 institutions benefited from installation of solar power pumps (phase 2)

Outcome in action: WASH support in the aftermath of the 2022 Pakistan flood⁶⁴

'Before receiving the WASH NFI kits, accessing clean water was a constant challenge,' a resident of Dera Ismail Khan, recalled. 'We often had to rely on contaminated water sources, putting our health at risk. But with the WASH NFI kits provided, we could now ensure that our family had access to safe and clean drinking water, significantly reducing the risk of waterborne diseases.'

Additionally, the hygiene kits proved to be indispensable in facilitating better hygiene practices within the household. 'The hygiene kits contained items such as soap, toothpaste, and sanitary pads, which were essential for maintaining the personal hygiene of my girls and family. These simple yet crucial items not only helped us stay clean and healthy but also instilled a sense of dignity and self-care, especially during challenging times.'

⁶² DEC member charities program report (internal)

⁶³ DEC member charities program report (internal)

⁶⁴ DEC member agency case study included in the programme report (internal).

Overall outcome statement: DEC-affected communities accessed essential services for their physical and mental health in the aftermath of the floods.

DEC-supported health interventions in the aftermath of the Pakistan floods were essential in ensuring that flood-affected communities had access to physical health and psychosocial support services. DEC's contribution to this outcome included establishing mobile health units, improving the management of rural health centres, conducting community awareness sessions on health issues and counselling sessions, and referrals to psychiatrists.

Contributors to the health outcome include:

► **Reliable access to functioning health facilities and medical care when needed.**

The introduction of mobile health units brought much-needed medical services directly to the doorsteps of affected communities, significantly improving their access to care. For many, this was a critical improvement, because accessing healthcare facilities in rural areas is often difficult.⁶⁵ Women, especially those who were pregnant or breastfeeding, particularly found health services provided within villages to be very helpful.⁵³

► **Provision of medicines to combat post-flood related health problems** like dust-related ailments, rust infections, and a notable number of appendicitis cases. The high-quality medications, often from multinational companies, were praised by recipients who were unaccustomed to receiving such care, particularly given the government's limited capacity to provide similar treatments. Some

DEC member charities reported improvements in nutritional status, and some communities reported accruing some savings due to having access to free medicines.⁶⁶

► **Increased trust in local healthcare facilities.**

Reliable access to healthcare contributed to increased trust, but also led to heightened expectations that, when unmet, resulted in some disappointment.⁶⁷ For instance, when certain services or treatments were not available at the facility, patients expressed frustration.⁶⁸ Another agency reported that after supporting a health facility with equipment including the installation of a solar panel, they observed that many more patients visited increasing the case load, which led to a shortage of medicine and greater government expenditure.⁶⁹

► **Meeting the health needs of children.**

Medical camps in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa schools were set up to diagnose and treat vision, heart and other health problems. A member charity representative noted that these camps were crucial in detecting health concerns that might have otherwise gone unnoticed by teachers or parents.⁷⁰

► **Rural health centres benefited from structural improvements.**

Some DEC member charities reported allocating their resources to provide rural health units with necessary supplies and employ health staff so communities could access maternal, newborn and child health services. Moreover, they advocated to government health agencies to increase funding and support to rural health units, including employing doctors.⁷¹

► **Provision of mental health and psychosocial support, reducing the floods' impact on mental health.**

Flood-affected communities

65 Key informant interview 14

66 Key informant interview 3

67 Key informant interview 5

68 Key informant interview 9

69 Key informant interview 5

70 Key informant interview 12

71 Key informant interviews 2 & 5

reported that interventions like individual and group counselling, music therapy and community engagement activities contributed to rebuilding their sense of hope after the flooding. This support also enabled them to reconnect with their communities and regain their emotional wellbeing.

In numbers:

Over 560,900 individuals benefited from the rehabilitation or support provided in health centres (phase 2)

Over 14,000 people benefited from the establishment of medical camps (phase 2)

Over 452,800 individuals accessed basic health services (phase 2)

Over 200 community health workers received training (phase 2)

Outcome in action: Psychosocial support in the aftermath of the 2022 Pakistan floods⁷²

The needs assessment carried out before project implementation recognised the need for psychosocial support for couples who had suffered a lot during the floods. Dr Shahbaz, a compassionate and dedicated mental health professional, led an intervention involving various therapies, including balloon activities, music therapies, laughter therapy, individual and group counselling sessions.

'Before the psychosocial support I wouldn't talk to anyone around. I was devastated and lost hope in life, but now I sit with my community members and shares my stories. Dr. Shahbaz has supported me a lot,' a participant shared.

Food and nutrition

Overall outcome statement: DEC-supported communities and households enjoyed improved access to food and nutrition services in the aftermath of the flooding

The Pakistan floods in 2022 caused widespread devastation, severely impacting the food security and nutritional status of affected communities. Initially categorised under broader health outcomes during the first phase of the outcome harvesting process through meta-analysis, the importance of nutrition-specific interventions emerged more clearly during outcome substantiation discussions.⁷³ One participant noted that the nutrition related outcomes they observed were so critical that it warrants further examination. A key part of the DEC's humanitarian response focused on screening for malnutrition, delivering cash assistance for food, and providing treatment for those suffering from acute malnutrition.

Contributions to the food and nutrition outcome included:

- **Provision of food packs, vouchers and cash-for-food (CFF) schemes** was crucial in supporting families who had lost their livelihoods due to the flood. These interventions enabled communities to purchase food, reducing the need for detrimental coping strategies like skipping meals. For example, Save the Children initially distributed food packages combined with cash transfers to meet immediate food and nutrition needs.
- **Interventions for children identified with moderate or severe acute malnutrition (SAM)**, who were enrolled in targeted treatment programs, including the Targeted Supplementary Feeding Programme and the Outpatient Therapeutic Feeding Program. Action Against Hunger also conducted research on acute malnutrition amongst infants and mothers, which informed program improvements and contributed to better care models.

⁷² DEC member agency case study included in the programme report (internal).

⁷³ Outcome substantiation workshop; Outcome substantiation interview 2, 5, 6

- **Nutrition screening and sensitisation**, with a focus on children (as above) and pregnant and lactating women.

In numbers:

Over 250,700 individuals were screened for malnutrition, about **103,200** individuals were sensitised about nutrition requirements (with a focus on children under five and pregnant and lactating women), and **33,000** individuals received malnutrition treatment (phase 2)

Over 18,800 individuals benefited from cash assistance for food (phase 2)

Outcome in action: Nutrition support to children⁷⁴

'In Sep 2022 my son fell very ill, he lost so much weight and had weakness, I was scared and did not know what to do. One of my relatives told me about the health facility working under the [DEC-supported] Project, when I reached the health centre I was told that my child was severely malnourished, I didn't hear these types of diseases like SAM before but the Nutrition Assistant at the health facility gives awareness regarding SAM.'

The Nutrition Assistant said they can treat him, and they gave him medicines and we also started receiving RUTF. After our first visit to the health centre, the doctors asked us to come back every week for checkups and to receive more nutritious supplies. We made sure we did not miss a single week for his checkups. It has been two months now since our first visit to the health facility and I am very happy to see my son smiling and regaining his weight ... It is a father's wish to see all his children healthy, walking and running around the house.'

Livelihoods

Overall outcome statement: DEC-supported communities avoided negative coping mechanisms and benefited from restoration of livelihoods after the floods.

DEC's livelihood interventions helped rebuild income sources for affected communities through cash for work, agricultural inputs, capacity building (such as agricultural trainings provided, particularly for older individuals and small to medium-scale entrepreneurs), and provision of business grants. The substantiation process confirmed this livelihood outcome, with 100% of workshop participants and interviewees agreeing that the livelihood support had a positive impact. However, one substantiator noted that the rating is partial agreement to the DEC livelihood outcome (as in they only partially agreed to its validity) as the scale of livelihood support was somewhat limited and mostly 'small scale'.⁷⁵

Contributions to the livelihoods outcome included:

► Support to communities to rebuild livelihoods and increase their daily earnings.

In Nowshera, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, the provision of goats and small cash grants had a positive effect, increasing earnings from 700–800 rupees to around 1,200–1,300 rupees daily.⁷⁶ One DEC member charity reported that the agricultural inputs were critical in allowing people to resume farming activities,⁷⁷ whilst another noted that this support prevented farmers from sliding further into debt.⁷⁸ Some community members used the business grants to sustain their economic activities or create new income sources. For example, some people used the grant to open shops, while others bought rickshaws.⁷⁹

⁷⁴ DEC member agency case study included in the programme report (internal).

⁷⁵ Substantiation interview 1

⁷⁶ Murtaza N & Khan A (2024) Affected Persons Perception Survey Report, p. 20

⁷⁷ DEC member charities program report (internal)

⁷⁸ Key informant interview 3

⁷⁹ Murtaza N & Khan A (2024) Affected Persons Perception Survey Report, p. 8

- ▶ **Women benefited from economic empowerment.** Women who participated in DEC livelihood interventions experienced various forms of economic empowerment, as highlighted by the community perception survey. For example, one widow shared that the seeds she received allowed her to grow enough produce for her household and sell the surplus to pay off debts. Many widows used cash grants to invest in small businesses, which helped improve their economic standing. An elderly widow with a son who has intellectual disabilities used the grant to open a small shop in her home, earning enough to buy groceries and maintain her household.⁸⁰
- ▶ **Strengthened social cohesion within affected communities.** The cash-for-work programs, a key component of DEC's livelihood support, also fostered community members' collaboration on shared schemes. Some DEC member charities reported that 'encouraging people to work collectively' promoted a sense of unity.⁸¹

In numbers:

Over 1,300 individuals participated in cash-for-work schemes (phase 2)

Over 94,300 individuals assisted through livelihood restoration activities (phase 2)

Over 58,200 individuals benefited from cash assistance for livelihoods (phase 2)



Outcome in action: Livelihoods for women⁸²

'I earned the bare minimum, but I had to do something for my daughter. My earnings brought no change to the financial set-up of our home, but I wanted to keep going. Most of us in the village did not have enough resources or access to anything. We only relied on the volunteers and civil society organisations to give us relief items,' said a woman recipient of the small business grant.

She received a small business grant and used it to transform an unused storage room into a shop, selling snacks and groceries.

'I was already running a trunk shop but as soon as I got my first instalment, I utilised this room that we owned. I got it repaired and purchased supplies to initiate a complete set-up.'



Shelter

Outcome statement: DEC-supported communities were offered immediate shelter and supported to restore safe living conditions.

Shelter support provided through the DEC flood response was crucial in restoring some stability for affected families. The shelter outcome had the most disagreement and uncertainty/limited awareness among those consulted. Several substantiators recognised that shelter was a relatively small component of the DEC funding, and that the government primarily led shelter reconstruction.⁸³ One also mentioned that there were delays in the provision of emergency shelter during phase 1.⁸⁴ Community perception

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Key informant interview 14; DEC member charities program report (internal); Murtaza, N & Khan, A. (2024). Affected Persons Perception Survey Report Second Round: DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal, p. 19

⁸² DEC member agency case study included in the programme report (internal).

⁸³ Substantiation interviews 1-3 & 6

⁸⁴ Substantiation interview 1

surveys similarly indicated that shelter was one of the areas with the highest unmet needs, though it was also noted that the limited amount of funding and high emergency needs meant that shelter reconstruction was not the highest priority.⁸⁵

The shelter work is not the most added value for [DEC] members – constructing houses is out of the scope of the response. We were working more lifesaving activities.⁸⁶

Contributions to the shelter outcome included:

- ▶ **Provision of multi-purpose cash grants**, which enabled households to meet their priority needs, including shelter (see example below)
- ▶ **Access to emergency shelter and shelter kits**, which were critical in avoiding debt traps for some community members⁸⁷
- ▶ **Distribution of non-food items**, which helped in meeting basic needs, but also in preparing for the harsh winter (winterisation)
- ▶ **Ensuring accessible, climate-resilient shelter design**, for example, improving access to rehabilitated facilities and making new shelters usable for persons with disabilities. Further, Islamic Relief Pakistan applied climate considerations in construction and rehabilitation, contributing to resilience against future environmental hazards.

In numbers:

Over 8,900 households were provided with temporary shelter items in the form of tents, tarpaulins, shelter tool kits (phase 1)

Over 18,700 households received kitchen, shelter or winter kits (phase 1)

Outcome in action: Shelter after the floods⁸⁸

'My home has been reconstructed by twelve people. Had I not been given the money then I would have lived outside over this charpoy [a light bedstead],' says a resident of a remote village of Khairpur Nathan Shah who received PKR25,000 in multi-purpose cash assistance. *'I have used bamboos this time for the roof which was worth PKR15000 and a special mixture of sand for 5000.'*

Education

Outcome statement: Restored access to education for DEC-supported boys and girls in the aftermath of the flooding.

The DEC's educational interventions provided access to safe and inclusive learning facilities for boys and girls. These efforts were vital in ensuring that education continued even in the face of disaster, offering children a sense of normalcy and stability. Some DEC member charities and implementing partners also repaired damaged schools. Whilst this remains a key outcome, only 66.7% of participants agreed or partially agreed that this outcome had occurred, while 20% were largely unaware of it. During interviews, DEC member charities noted that organisations like Save the Children focused heavily on education but admitted little knowledge of the extent to which this was a priority in the overall DEC response.⁸⁹ Some respondents also noted disagreement on this outcome because of the delays to restoring access to education due to

85 Murtaza et al. (2023) Real-Time Response Review Report; Murtaza N & Khan A (2024) Affected Persons Perception Survey Report

86 Substantiation interview 1

87 Murtaza, N & Khan, A. (2024). Affected Persons Perception Survey Report Second Round: DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal.

88 DEC member agency case study included in the programme report (internal).

89 Key informant interviews 4, 5, 8, 9

bureaucratic impediments such as securing government permits.⁹⁰

Contributions to this outcome included:

- ▶ **Recovery of affected education institutions through support to learning facilities and provision of teaching materials.** This included rehabilitating schools, which were later handed over to the government, along with the provision of teaching kits and learning materials.
- ▶ **Schools were also installed with solar panels to ensure sustainability,** especially in areas without grid access, creating a safe and comfortable environment for children.
- ▶ **Provision of integrated approaches in schools:** Some DEC member charities integrated child protection, nutrition and mental health and psychosocial support in their school programs (see example below). This integration was critical in creating referral pathways to necessary services and support.

In numbers:

Over 12,080 individuals benefiting from emergency early childhood development learning spaces/schools (phase 2)

Rehabilitation of **35 flood-damaged schools** (phase 2)



Outcome in action: Education after the flood⁹¹

'I learned that education is one of basic rights of children and without education our girls suffer when they grow up, therefore, I convinced my family that it is not too late and we should educate our adolescent daughter. I tried to enroll my daughter in the Primary School in our village; however, the teacher told me that she was over age. I along with other Child Protection Committee (CPC) members requested Sarhad Rural Support Programme to intervene with school administration on my behalf, after which my daughter was granted admission in school and now she goes to school happily every day. As CPC, we used this example to convince and mobilise other parents in our village to send their out-of-school children to school so that they can at least learn to read and write,' a participant from Swat District shared.



Protection

Outcome statement: DEC-supported communities accessed safe spaces and services that provided protection, support and care.

The DEC's support in protection focused on prevention, providing training to local government authorities, teachers, community representatives, and referral services. Safe spaces were established, and survivors of violence, exploitation and abuse were provided with psychological support and referrals. These efforts recognised the unique needs of flood-affected women and girls, particularly for gender-based violence (GBV) services. While data on the long-term benefits of these spaces is scarce, the

⁹⁰ Substantiation interview 1, 3 & 5.

⁹¹ DEC member agency case study included in the programme report (internal).

interventions highlighted DEC's commitment to addressing these critical challenges.

In the outcome substantiation workshop, 86.7% of participants agreed/partially agreed that this outcome had occurred, whilst 13.3% said they had little awareness of it. Interviews highlighted the difficulty in fully addressing protection issues within the limited timeframe, particularly in such a vulnerable region. Many community members were encountering discussions around child rights and protection for the first time, and while progress was made, longstanding issues like violence and exploitation require sustained efforts for meaningful change. Further, interviewees noted low numbers of incident reports during phase 1, which suggested referral and reporting pathways were not functioning well. Efforts to strengthen these were made during phase 2.

Contributions to this outcome are listed below.

- ▶ **The establishment of safe spaces for women and children**, especially those affected by trauma, provided environments for socialisation and participation in activities that supported their psychosocial wellbeing. These spaces also offered age- and gender-appropriate activities for adolescents and children, contributing to their recovery. There is also evidence of some agencies implementing specific strategies to ensure that safe spaces, for example for children, could be sustained after the closure of the DEC project (see example below).
- ▶ **Referral services for GBV survivors and child protection issues were established**, alongside capacity-building initiatives. Community activists, government departments, and staff participated in training to strengthen the protection framework and ensure inclusion and safeguarding in humanitarian actions. For example, one DEC member charity collaborated with the Child Protection and Welfare Bureau, the National Commission for Child Welfare

and Development, and the Social Welfare Department to review multi-sectoral referral pathway mechanisms for each target district. They then updated these mechanisms by engaging additional stakeholders, including the Revenue Authority, the National Database and Registration Authority, the Department of Health and Family Welfare, the Education Department, the police, and both international and national NGOs.

- ▶ **Protection committees were formed at the community level** to enhance child protection efforts. These committees were trained to handle referrals and provide resilience-building activities, while child protection training was offered to local children's clubs. The DEC's support enabled the completion of safety audits and the allocation of village-level grants for protection services.

In numbers

More than 21,500 individuals received mental health and psychosocial support (phase 2)

More than 1,900 women and girls trained on GBV protection and 800 people trained on child protection, safe identification and referral (phase 2)

Creation of **20 functional safe spaces** used by **4,500 young people** (phase 2)

2,800 individuals supported via GBV referral mechanisms (phase 1)

'Because the area of intervention was one of the poorest in Pakistan and the protection [needs] were high. So coming with such support, bringing communities together, discussing issues, bringing child rights, for most communities it was something new. But in two years it would not change everything' (representative of DEC)⁹²

92 Substantiation interview 1

Outcome in action: Sustaining safe spaces for children⁹³

'We also established a child protection unit (CPU), with an emphasis on making it sustainable...the community expressed a strong desire to continue the safe spaces, so the support organizations we created requested materials from us to maintain the spaces. We provided the necessary items and arranged formal training for them. We handed over the CPU to the Child Protection and Welfare Bureau (CPWB). Although the infrastructure was in place, they lacked staff, so we provided personnel, furniture, and operational costs to keep the unit running. During the project, CPWB gradually hired their own staff, and by the time we exited, the unit was handed over to them.'



Disaster risk reduction and preparedness

Outcome statement: Some DEC-supported communities are better prepared and informed to act in advance of future disasters.

The DEC's efforts to help communities to enhance their disaster preparedness and mitigation measures included supporting planning and resources disaster management, establishment of early warning systems, and supporting communities with information through disaster response training and community engagement efforts.

In the outcome substantiation workshop, 73.3% of participants agreed that this outcome had occurred, while 6.7% disagreed and 20% had low awareness. Whilst most participants agreed that

support was provided to ensure communities can respond to disasters, some raised concerns about the ongoing vulnerability of these areas to future disasters.⁹⁴ Some highlighted that it is important to be realistic of what can be achieved on disaster risk reduction vis-a-vis the limited timeframe of DEC appeal funding. Another review found that effectiveness of DRR interventions varied, with remote and marginalised communities often receiving less support and recommended the need for continued investment in resilience-building initiatives, particularly in underserved areas.⁹⁵ The 2023 floods and heatwave exacerbated the challenges in achieving DRR outcomes, especially for communities reliant on livestock and agriculture. Nonetheless, several DEC member charities noted that the support was critical because it laid a lot of the groundwork to support disaster resilience, and their engagement and advocacy work with relevant agencies helped to prioritise and resource it (see box below).

Contributions to this outcome included:

- ▶ **Improved capacity amongst community members and structures to manage future disasters, due to training, guidance and interaction with agency staff.**⁹⁶ Men across Sindh, Balochistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa received training on livestock management, disaster response, health, hygiene and climate change.
- ▶ **Critical support to women's role in DRR:** Women in Sindh highlighted valuable training on livestock management, health, hygiene, and business, as well as behavioral change, women's rights, and child-rearing which they noted have them more confidence to respond to future shocks.⁹⁷ In Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, women recalled awareness sessions on disaster prevention and

⁹³ DEC member agency case study included in the programme report (internal).

⁹⁴ Interviews 1, 4, 8 & 11; Substantiation interviews 1 & 2

⁹⁵ ACF & DEC (2024). Effectiveness of Climate Resilience Initiatives in Sindh and Balochistan, Pakistan

⁹⁶ Key informant interviews 1, 4, 8 & 11; Substantiation interviews 1 & 2

⁹⁷ Murtaza, N & Khan, A. (2024). Affected Persons Perception Survey Report Second Round: DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal.

emergency preparedness, while in Jaffarabad, Balochistan, women were trained to handle emergencies through Village Response Teams and Mother Support Groups, and to provide mental health and psychosocial support.⁹⁸

In numbers:

Over 18,100 individuals reached via DRR initiatives (phase 2)

Over 4,700 individuals reached through the development of DRR/resilience plans (phase 2)

Outcome in action: Community-led advocacy on DRR⁹⁹

In Lasbela district in the province of Balochistan, a DEC-supported village development committee successfully advocated for and mobilised the support of a newly elected government official for the construction of protection walls to prevent flood damage (their village had been devastated by the flood of 2022 and its location necessitates the construction of such barriers). Through DEC, this village had been organising community awareness sessions and strengthened its disaster risk reduction plans. The estimated cost is PKR15,000,000 (approximately GBP43,000); the official has pledged to request these funds from the provincial authority as part of his upcoming development budget.

outcomes that DEC contributed to achieve. Whilst these systemic outcomes contribute to advancing broader humanitarian commitments and reforms, attributing them specifically to the DEC appeal is challenging, making the findings insightful but less concrete.



Climate and environment

Outcome statement: DEC member charities adopted practices that aimed to reduce or mitigate negative impacts to climate and environment, however lasting results cannot yet be validated.

This outcome reflects DEC member charities' commitment to and practice of reducing their environmental footprints by adopting sustainable practices within programs and operations, which has been driven by shifts in the sector and enabling environment within DEC to more environmentally-cognisant humanitarian response. Anecdotal evidence from members suggests that climate-induced disasters are increasingly factored into response strategies, with a greater awareness during the Pakistan floods than in previous responses.¹⁰⁰ Several members have centred climate change in their organisational frameworks, ensuring that even life-saving interventions account for environmental impacts. That said, other respondents noted a more informal or reactive approach to climate and environmental sustainability. Efforts were not always intentional or deeply structured but were carried out to the best of their ability, given the urgent needs on the ground.¹⁰¹

In interviews conducted for outcome substantiation, 80% of respondents either agreed or partially agreed on the existence of this climate and environment outcome. However, 20% of the

SYSTEMIC OUTCOMES

This section details three systemic outcomes in relation to 1) climate and environment, 2) local leadership and partnership, and 3) strengthening inclusion which emerged from this review as

98 Murtaza, N & Khan, A. (2024). Affected Persons Perception Survey Report Second Round: DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal.

99 DEC member agency case study included in the programme report (internal).

100 Aslam Z, Bell I and Claxton O (2023), Nature Based Solutions in Flood Response: A Comparative Approach to the DEC 2020 and 2022 Pakistan Floods Appeal, London School of Economics and Disasters Emergency Committee.

101 Substantiation interview 1, 3, 6, 7

interviewees were unaware of any climate-related outcomes, reflecting mixed perspectives across stakeholders. A critical clarification was made by one substantiaior, who whilst agreeing with the outcome, also identified that the sustained impacts of the efforts would need to be assessed before being proven.¹⁰²

Environmental considerations were included, but the extent of their long-term impact on community resilience against future disasters needs clearer articulation (representative of DEC).¹⁰³

Contributions to this outcome included:

- ▶ Prioritising local suppliers in procurement processes to reduce transportation and lower carbon emissions
- ▶ Distributing multipurpose rather than in-kind support
- ▶ Undertaking environmental assessments at project outset to centralise environmental considerations through delivery
- ▶ Supporting farmers to reduce dependence on commercial hybrid varieties that require large amounts of fertiliser, and to distribute fertiliser in a manner that does not pollute groundwater
- ▶ Installing solar panels, ensuring proper disposal of surplus construction materials, and building in environmental safeguards
- ▶ Establishing responsible waste disposal practices, such as adequate containment, packaging and disposal of solid wastes (e.g. used syringes, bandages, empty medicine bottles) from health facilities and medical camps
- ▶ Involving communities in waste management as part of a village clean-up campaign.



Outcome in action: The role of DEC in driving greener practices through the Climate and Environment Charter

Some member charities emphasised that the DEC Secretariat can encourage and influence climate and environmental practices across its membership. While DEC does not offer direct technical support, it creates a learning environment for members, facilitating knowledge exchange and discussions at multiple levels.¹⁰⁴ The DEC has made being a signatory to the Climate and Environment Charter a core requirement for members, aiming to maintain it as a priority for meetings and online platforms. Though the Secretariat supports learning, it does not undertake formal coordination of climate and environmental efforts.



Local leadership and partnership

Outcome statement: The capacity of some local and national partners of DEC member charities was strengthened.

The DEC response to the Pakistan floods demonstrated strong commitment to local leadership. Interviews noted that in the initial phase of the response, the strength of Pakistan's civil society was acknowledged for its ability to respond to disasters at scale, with DEC funding providing critical support to ensure its capacity was protected and amplified. 93.3% of respondents agreed or partially agreed with this outcome. Only 6.7% of respondents were unaware or could not comment on the DEC's contribution, but provided several suggestions to strengthen the focus on local leadership within DEC response (see Outcome in Action, below).

Several DEC member charities reported on how they were working with local partners and

¹⁰² Substantiation interview 8

¹⁰³ Key informant interview 3

¹⁰⁴ Key informant interview 2

their approaches to organisational capacity strengthening. Some member charities reported that organisational strengthening opportunities were identified through mapping exercises and self-assessments. However, no DEC member charities reported that the capacity assessments were bi-directional (allowing local partners to assess the capacity of member charities), which was also raised during substantiation. Several DEC member charities also emphasized the value of equitable partnerships, with collaboration and joint decision-making based on shared principles, allowing for more effective responses, especially during the transition to recovery phase.¹⁰⁵

The focus on local capacity-building and leadership is a step in the right direction towards more localized and sustainable humanitarian responses. By engaging local partners, DEC programs fostered ownership and community resilience, which is essential for long-term recovery and disaster preparedness.¹⁰⁶

Contributions to this outcome included:

- ▶ Provision of training in project management (including monitoring, evaluation and learning; financial management; human resource management; logistics; and procurement); epidemic preparedness and response; safeguarding; and the CHS
- ▶ Supporting implementing partners to improve their systems for handling complaints, community feedback, and concerns relating to prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. This approach not only ensured that local organisations could more effectively engage with international donors, but allowed them to independently manage future funding and response activities.¹⁰⁷
- ▶ Working with partners on a self-assessment process to identify institutional strengthening and capacity building plans
- ▶ Establishment of mechanisms to enhance the sustainability of interventions into the future. For example, Oxfam's partners established the Climate and Humanitarian Network for Growth and Engagement *CHANGE), providing a pivotal role offering strategic guidance to optimize sustainability after the end of the DEC project.



Outcome in action: Opportunities to strengthen approaches to partnerships

While significant steps were taken to strengthen local capacities, some stakeholders felt that resources and procurement processes were overly reliant on intermediaries, limiting direct access for local actors. There were also calls for a greater focus on formal capacity-building initiatives, with training for local partners primarily happening through hands-on field experience rather than structured programs. Hence, some interviewees expressed a need for more systematic efforts to strengthen local capacities to support meaningful and transformational partnerships.¹⁰⁸

In-depth case studies of partnership approaches in this appeal can be found here: Humanitarian Advisory Group, GLOW Consultants, KAE Consulting and NSDAtion Consultancy Services. [Toward transformation: Progressing partnerships within DEC \(DEC commissioned\)](#)

¹⁰⁵ DEC member charities program reports (internal); Key informant interviews 3 & 15; Substantiation interviews 1, 5 & 6

¹⁰⁶ Substantiation interview 8

¹⁰⁷ Key informant interview 15

¹⁰⁸ Key informant interview 3; Substantiation interview 2



Strengthening inclusion

Outcome statement: The broader humanitarian sector (including the Government of Pakistan, humanitarian agencies and DEC member charities) recognised the importance of identifying and meeting the needs of all disaster-affected groups as a result of targeted advocacy by some DEC members.

In the DEC's Pakistan flood response, inclusion emerged as a key outcome, with 100% of participants in the outcome substantiation workshop and interviews either agreeing or partially agreeing that DEC's interventions reflected a strong commitment to inclusivity. This commitment was visible across various sectors, with a specific focus on older people, women, minorities and other vulnerable groups. This review found that DEC member charities successfully advocated to government and humanitarian agencies to recognise and respond to the specific needs of groups such as the elderly, people with disabilities, children and women. This outcome highlights the importance of advocacy in ensuring that humanitarian responses meet the needs of vulnerable populations.

Some DEC member charities noted that from the outset, inclusive practices were integrated in their programming, grounded in the 'do no harm' principle and ensuring that community members of all backgrounds—such as women, children, elderly individuals, and people with disabilities—were considered. Several examples were noted in the interviews; for instance, latrines were constructed with consideration of access for people with disabilities, highlighting a tailored approach to inclusion in practical interventions.

Specific contributions to this outcome included:

- ▶ Advocating for inclusion of people with disabilities and women on district disaster management committees, in the Pakistan

Humanitarian Forum, and humanitarian sector working groups

- ▶ Advocating for the representation of women on local committees, particularly in highly conservative provinces
- ▶ Promoting gender sensitivity among service providers
- ▶ Providing tailored support to people with disabilities, such as access to assistive technologies.



Outcome in action: Strengthening inclusion across the board

Across the DEC, there is room for improvement in fully targeting the most marginalised and vulnerable members of the community. Some strategies around inclusion appeared somewhat standardised across members, and more could have been done to interrogate whether the most vulnerable – such as those with special needs – were being effectively reached. The cultural complexities of discussing gender, disability, and other vulnerabilities posed challenges, and while DEC members had their own criteria and indicators, a more collective approach across members could have ensured broader coverage. While the inclusion of gender considerations in livelihood interventions was robust, gaps were noted in emergency response activities, where specialised assessments for people with disabilities or cultural minorities were less prominent.

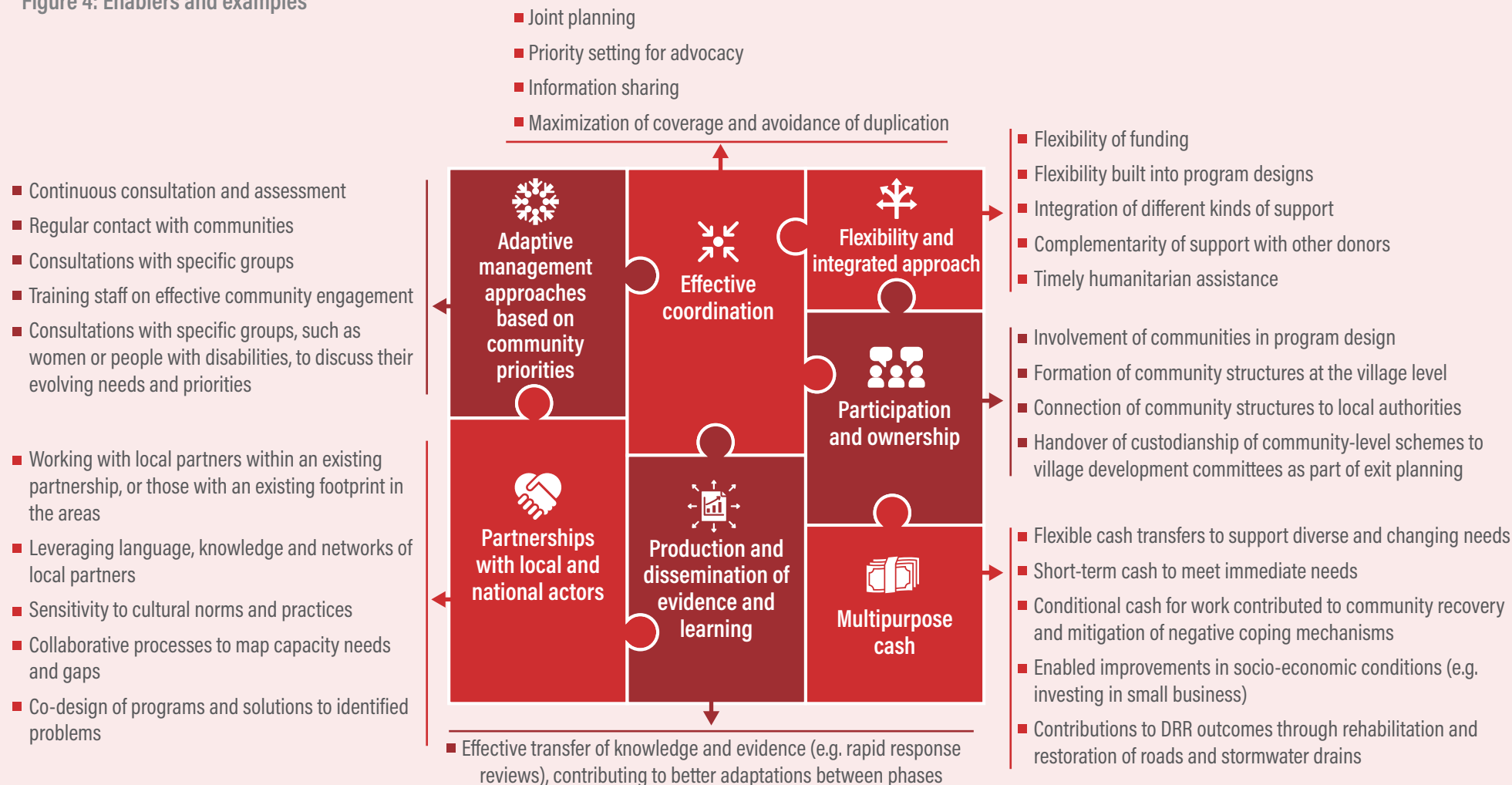
'There was some training done for all members but I'm not sure if what was done was enough to strengthen inclusion. But it was raised, including supporting better access to people with disabilities – can't say that we did this well. We had a training on dashboard on inclusivity. But we don't have structures for DEC members and we try to see how we can get through. I think this is where we can harmonized' (representative of DEC).¹⁰⁹

109 Key informant interview 1

ENABLING FACTORS

A series of factors were identified as key enablers of humanitarian and systemic outcomes during DEC's Pakistan flood response. Figure 4 below provides an overview of these enablers:

Figure 4: Enablers and examples



A note on challenges and barriers

Whilst this section has detailed enabling factors that led to the achievement of the humanitarian and systemic outcomes, there were also a series of barriers and challenges that constrained actors. Many of these challenges are explored in Section 2 above (Lessons). They are further summarized below:

- ▶ The vast scale of devastation had implications to coverage of the response
- ▶ Needing to overcome bureaucratic hurdles, access restrictions, and logistical difficulties that caused delays in provision of humanitarian support
- ▶ Inflation contributed to shifting costs of supplies, and impacting cash programming
- ▶ Barriers to inclusion of diverse and marginalised groups
- ▶ Limited coordination mechanisms within DEC and with other humanitarian actors and government agencies at the national and district levels
- ▶ Some local partners faced constraints in leading programmes and receiving appropriate support for their organisations to manage risks
- ▶ Communities had limited understanding of exit strategies
- ▶ Weak communication mechanisms across DEC that allows members and implementing partners to understand areas of focus, progress, achievements and challenges by all partners

Photo: Khaula Jamil/DEC



SECTION 4: LOOKING FORWARD

The findings of this review show how the DEC Pakistan response contributed to a series of meaningful outcomes that, whilst not uniform across all areas, had a snowball effect for affected communities. Cash assistance assisted in meeting immediate household needs, which in turn allowed families to begin rebuilding their lives with some degree of autonomy. Health and mental health services, though hard to deliver in a complex and evolving crisis, offered crucial support that helped communities regain a sense of normalcy. Livelihood programs, alongside WASH including menstrual hygiene management initiatives, helped stabilise everyday life in many districts, showing that small interventions can accumulate into broader effects when they meet the most pressing needs. There are further examples of outcomes at the system level, and critical opportunities that can be grasped to continue to harness the momentum in these areas. While progress is uneven and challenges remain, the collected evidence suggests that the DEC's efforts have contributed to changes in communities and may continue to do so into the longer term.

This section presents a series of recommendations for consideration by the DEC Secretariat and DEC member charities based on the learning and outcomes collected through this review. Whilst these recommendations are based on learning from the Pakistan context, they apply to any future appeals being launched by the DEC, in addition to initiatives that can be pursued outside an active appeal.

Photo: Khaula Jamil/DEC



Table 1: Recommendations for DEC

 Continue to drive the shift towards holistic approaches to AAP			
Who? DEC Secretariat to enable DEC members and partners to lead	Where? Global	Why? Whilst there are good examples of members and partners establishing feedback mechanisms, evidence of elevation of AAP as a core way of working and application of the CHS is currently not strong in reporting	How? ▶ Share good practice examples of holistic approaches to AAP across members ▶ Develop and communicate a shared definition of AAP, reflective of CHS commitments ▶ Include a prompting question on CHS application in reporting templates
 Strengthen learning, exchange and visibility between DEC members during appeals			
Who? DEC Secretariat to coordinate DEC members and partners to participate	Where? Global (future activations)	Why? ▶ DEC member agencies have limited visibility of others' programs during appeals ▶ Members reported that coordination is an enabler, and there are opportunities to strengthen (though not duplicate) coordination mechanisms	How? ▶ Leverage established information-sharing platforms at the global and country level ▶ Establish informal means of information sharing, such as appeal WhatsApp groups at the country level ▶ Present appeal dashboards outlining geographic areas and priority sectors of members early in responses (for example who, what, where mapping at the DEC level)
 Leverage the power of DEC to advocate for others to meet humanitarian needs in underfunded crises			
Who? DEC Secretariat to coordinate DEC members and partners to participate	Where? Global (future activations)	Why? DEC was a significant contributor to the Pakistan flood response (the fourth highest to the 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan). The collective voice with the scale and reach of the DEC has considerable power to influence others. This could include connecting with/supporting other emergency appeal mechanisms to mobilise in critical crises	How? ▶ Coordinate a collective call for donors to fund critical gaps in crises ▶ Members and partners feed in key advocacy priorities to DEC ▶ Engage with/advocate for other emergency appeal mechanisms in crises where they haven't been activated (acknowledging existing triggers and national drivers of appeals)



Strengthen learning, sharing and communication around good practice sustainable exit strategies

Who?	Where?	Why?	How?
DEC Secretariat to coordinate	Global (future activations); whilst sharing examples from the Pakistan response	The Pakistan case presented several good practice examples of sustainable, well communicated exit strategies (see Section 2 above). These can be further socialised to strengthen and make consistent approaches to planning and communicating around program exit	▶ Capture stories/examples of good practices to share across members ▶ Members and partners to document examples of successful approaches to exiting (and how these were planned and communicated) and elevate these throughout the broader mechanism ▶ Specific appeal coordination mechanisms (see recommendation on learning, exchange and visibility above) to regularly discuss planning for exit as early as possible (towards the end of ph1) to share ideas and approaches in a timely way and promote good practice



Continue to build on recent progress within the DEC by enhancing targeted support strategies that address the specific needs of vulnerable groups. This approach should leverage the specialised expertise of member agencies.

Who?	Where?	Why?	How?
DEC Secretariat to support DEC Members to proactively engage	Global (future activations)	Whilst there were good examples of how collective advocacy to strengthen inclusion contributed to outcomes, specific approaches to inclusion across members is inconsistent. There is scope to learn from each other to strengthen how the needs of different groups (older people, women, children, people with disabilities, LGBTIQ+ are identified and barriers to their participation removed)	▶ Mobilise advice from inclusion-focused agencies to support others during future appeals. For example in ensuring needs assessment are tailored to capture needs of diverse groups, that inclusion is mainstreamed across program implementation, and engaging with different organisations such as organisations of people with disabilities and women-led organisations. ▶ Strengthen reporting templates to provide more information about specific groups and evidence of how their needs were identified and met ▶ Ensure collaboration and coordination around inclusion in appeals in order to harmonise approaches and increase opportunities for referrals across agencies

Continue to increase investments and evidence in DRR in appeals

Who?	Where?	Why?	How?
DEC Secretariat to monitor DEC members to implement	Global (future appeals)	The Pakistan floods highlighted that the investment in DRR was impactful, though not significant enough to drive change in such a difficult and under-resourced context	▶ DEC Secretariat to continue to assess the impacts of DRR interventions, and various approaches to integrating DRR in response and early recovery phases ▶ DEC members to further integrate DRR activities as early as possible/ appropriate in future appeals

Strengthen outcome definition and reporting within the DEC

Who?	Where?	Why?	How?
DEC Secretariat	Global	Reporting at the outcome level is not consistent across members	▶ Define and provide examples of outcome reporting within proposal and reporting documents, and make reporting more consistent at the outcome level

Continue to employ and learn from outcome harvesting in future appeals

Who?	Where?	Why?	How?
DEC Secretariat	Global (future appeals)	As the first use of outcome harvesting for the DEC, the exercise has been valuable. It identified a range of specific challenges for outcome harvesting at the DEC level (including lack of member visibility and inconsistent outcome reporting)	▶ Use outcome harvesting in future appeal reviews to build a more consistent evidence base of DEC-wide outcomes, and assess the impacts of efforts to strengthen outcome reporting and improve visibility across members

Apply contextualised approaches to working collectively with civil society

Who?	Where?	Why?	How?
DEC Secretariat to coordinate Members to actively engage	Global (future appeals)	The Pakistan flood response provided rich lessons about approaches to elevating a strong, engaged and active civil society	▶ Approaches in future appeals should be contextually grounded and leverage the voices of local and national actors through partnerships with members and as a collective. Refer to the recent partnership review

ANNEX I: REVIEW FRAMEWORK

Overarching area	Useful questions	Sub-questions
Understanding outcomes	1. What changes have occurred as a result of the DEC flood response in Pakistan within the context of the broader humanitarian response?	Humanitarian outcomes: ▶ What changes did the DEC flood response contribute to in the wellbeing and resilience of the population affected by the Pakistan floods? Outcomes within the humanitarian system: ▶ What changes did the DEC flood response contribute to in the practices of humanitarian actors in areas such as a) reinforcing disaster preparedness, b) fostering equitable partnership practices, c) integrating of environmental considerations and d) application of Core Humanitarian Standard?
Factors that enabled outcomes	1.a. What factors have enabled these changes to take place?	What did DEC member charities do that contributed to these outcomes?
Adaptiveness	1.b. How were the findings from Phase 1 reviews incorporated into Phase 2?	How adaptive have DEC members been in response to outcomes achieved and contextual needs? Were there any strategies or processes put in place to ensure a smooth transition at the end of the interventions?
Lessons learned and recommendations	2. What has been learned from the DEC response within the context of the broader humanitarian response and how can these lessons be taken forward?	What key lessons have been identified from the DEC response that could be applied to future humanitarian interventions? What mechanisms can be put in place to ensure that these lessons are systematically incorporated into future planning and implementation? Have there been any negative or unexpected outcomes as a result of project activities and if so, what are they and how can we learn from these outcomes?

ANNEX II: LIST OF DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

INTERNAL DEC DOCUMENTS

Action Against Hunger

- Action Against Hunger, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 1 Final Narrative Report
- Action Against Hunger, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 2 Interim Narrative Report
- Action Against Hunger, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 1 Narrative Plan
- Action Against Hunger, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 1 Narrative Plan
- Action Against Hunger, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Early Recovery Needs Assessment: Pakistan Mission (28th October 2022 – 10th November, 2022)
- Action Against Hunger, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Early Recovery Needs Assessment – Sindh: Pakistan Mission (28th October 2022 – 10th November, 2022)
- Action Against Hunger, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Early Recovery Needs Assessment – Balochistan: Pakistan Mission (December 2022)

Help Age International

- Help Age International Reports, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Phase 1 Narrative Interim Report
- Help Age International Reports, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Phase 1 Final Narrative Report
- Help Age International Reports, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Phase 2 Six Month Interim Report
- Help Age International Reports, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Phase 2 Twelve Month Interim Report
- Help Age International Reports, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Phase 2 Narrative Plan

British Red Cross Reports

- British Red Cross, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Phase 1 Narrative Interim Report
- British Red Cross, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Phase 1 Final Narrative Report
- British Red Cross, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Phase 1 Feedback/Agency Response (PFA)
- British Red Cross, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Phase 2 Narrative Plan
- British Red Cross, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Phase 2 Interim Narrative Report
- British Red Cross, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Rapid Insights: Lessons from Past Evaluations Pakistan Floods (September 2022)

CAFOD

- CAFOD, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Phase 1 Interim Narrative Report
- CAFOD, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Phase 1 Narrative Report
- CAFOD, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Phase 1 Narrative Plan
- CAFOD, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Phase 1 Interim Narrative Report
- CAFOD, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Phase 2 Six Month Narrative Report
- CAFOD, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Phase 2 Twelve Month Interim Report
- CAFOD, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Phase 2 Narrative Plan
- CAFOD, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Needs Assessment in Flood Affected Areas: District Mirpur Khas & Khairpur – Sindh (September 2022)

CAFOD, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Cash for Food for the Flood-Affected Families of Sindh:
Monitoring Report (July 2023)

CARE

CARE, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Phase 1 Interim Narrative Report

CARE, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Phase 1 Final Narrative Report

CARE, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Phase 1 Narrative Plan

CARE, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Phase 2 Six Months Narrative Report

CARE, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Phase 2 Twelve Months Narrative Report

CARE, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Phase 2 Narrative Plan

CARE, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Rapid Need Assessment Flood Emergency 2022 (September 2022)

CARE, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Post Distribution Monitoring Report: Emergency Response for
Flood Affected Population in District Badin Under DEC Granted Project (February 2022)

CARE, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – CARE International in Pakistan 2022 Floods Early Recovery
Strategy (2023)

CARE, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Rapid Needs Assessment Report: Flood Emergency Pakistan
(December 2022)

CARE (2024) Terms of Reference: Project Final Evaluation for ‘Early recovery support for flood affected
families in Pakistan’.

Concern

Concern, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Phase 1 Interim Narrative Report

Concern, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Phase 1 Final Narrative Report

Concern, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Phase 1 Narrative Plan

Concern, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Phase 2 Six Month Interim Report

Concern, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Phase 2 Twelve Month Interim Report

Concern, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Phase 2 Narrative Plan

Concern, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Rapid Needs Assessment Summary Report: Concern
Worldwide in Pakistan (November 2022)

Concern, DEC Pakistan Flood Appeal – Humanitarian Assistance for Flood-Affected Populations in
District Mirpurkhas Sindh: Post Distribution Monitoring Report (March 2023)

International Rescue Committee

International Rescue Committee, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 1 Plan Narrative Report

International Rescue Committee, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 1 Final Narrative Report

International Rescue Committee, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 1 Interim Narrative Report

International Rescue Committee, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 2 Interim Narrative Report

International Rescue Committee, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 2 Plan Narrative Report

International Rescue Committee, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 2 Interim Narrative Report –
Annex 1a, PDM report – Agri-Inputs PDM and Satisfaction Survey

International Rescue Committee, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 2 Interim Narrative Report –
Annex 1b, Dignity Kits Post-Distribution Monitoring

International Rescue Committee, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 2 Interim Narrative Report –
Annex 1c, Poultry Kits Post-Distribution Monitoring

International Rescue Committee, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 2 Interim Narrative Report – Annex 1d, Business Grants Post-Distribution Monitoring

International Rescue Committee, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 2 Interim Narrative Report – Annex 1e, Water Kit Post-Distribution Monitoring

International Rescue Committee, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 2 Interim Narrative Report – Annex 1d, Patient Satisfaction Survey Report

International Rescue Committee, Multi Sector Needs Identification of Flood Affected Host and Refugee Communities in Pakistan

Islamic Relief

Islamic Relief Pakistan (2022, September). Rapid Needs Assessment: Flood Emergency – Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

Islamic Relief, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 1 Plan Narrative Report

Islamic Relief, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 1 Final Narrative Report

Islamic Relief, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 1 Interim Narrative Report

Islamic Relief, Transition or exit strategy & project sustainability

Islamic Relief, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 2 Plan Narrative Report

Islamic Relief, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 2 Interim Narrative Report

Islamic Relief, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 2 Final Narrative Report

Islamic Relief, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 2 Output Table

Islamic Relief, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Finance Report

Oxfam

Oxfam (2024). Terms of reference: Final evaluation of Oxfam's Flood Response Programme.

Oxfam, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 1 Plan Narrative Report

Oxfam, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 1 Interim Narrative Report

Oxfam, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 1 Final Narrative Report

Oxfam, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 2 Plan Narrative Report

Oxfam, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 2 Interim Narrative Report

Oxfam, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 2 Final Narrative Report

Oxfam, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 2 Output Table

Oxfam, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Finance Report

Save the Children reports

Save the Children, Multi-Sectoral Needs Assessment: Pakistan Country Office (January 2023).

Save the Children, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 1 Interim Narrative Report

Save the Children, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 1 Final Narrative Report

Save the Children, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 2 Plan Narrative Report

Save the Children, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 2 Interim Narrative Report

Save the Children, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 2 Final Narrative Report

Save the Children, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 1 Output Table

Save the Children, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 2 Output Table

Save the Children, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Finance Report

Tearfund reports

Tearfund, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 1 Plan Narrative Report
Tearfund, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 1 Interim Narrative Report
Tearfund, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 1 Final Narrative Report
Tearfund, Case study: Provision of Agriculture Inputs (April 2023)
Tearfund, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 2 Plan Narrative Report
Tearfund, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 2 Interim Narrative Report
Tearfund, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 2 Final Narrative Report
Tearfund, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 1 Output Table
Tearfund, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Phase 2 Output Table
Tearfund, DEC Pakistan Floods Appeal – Finance Report
Tearfund (2023). Pakistan Floods 2022 Evaluation Terms of Reference.

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UNOCHA (2023). 2022 Floods Response Plan Pakistan - Final Report – UNOCHA – December 2023.

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UNICED (2022). 2022 Floods Response Plan 01 Sep 2022- 28 Feb 2023 Issued Pakistan Aug 2022.

WFP Pakistan Flood Situation Report (August 2022 – December 2023) Final report – January 2024

ANNEX III ABBREVIATIONS

AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
CAFOD	Catholic Agency for Overseas Development
CFF	Cash For Food
CHS	Core Humanitarian Standard
DEC	Disasters Emergency Committee
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (UK)
GBV	Gender-Based Violence
HAG	Humanitarian Advisory Group
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PKR	Pakistani Rupee
RUTF	Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food
SAM	Severe Acute Malnutrition
UK	United Kingdom
UNOCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
WASH	Water, Sanitation and Hygiene