

Pakistan Telebriefing
The Floods in Pakistan and the Role of Human Rights Funders
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MOEED

First proposition: Pakistan is not unique in terms of its disaster relief requirements than other countries. The only difference is that because it's been under the political microscope, the humanitarian situation has been politicized but it is foremost a humanitarian disaster

Background:

- Owing to the rampant corruptions and government inefficiency as well as high levels of skepticism towards government response, Pakistan is still a developing country, and no different than other countries
- Pakistan has one of the world's largest private philanthropy sectors in the world – and therefore an alternative route, because the government will welcome private attention and not obstruct it.
- The government is already stressed with having to deal with terrorism so its capacity is diverted toward anti-terrorism. Furthermore the pressure from western governments to stay focused on terrorism related issues means that the country must rely on private help

Human Rights issues in Pakistan:

1. Inequality of access to relief: Due a lot to vested interests and capacity constraints, but not new; Unequal impact of floods on people– to poor living in low-lying areas, the burden on relief is even higher. This has also partly to do with the culture of subservience, especially to landlord which is predominant in the southern Punjab area
2. Forced relocation from ambivalent land laws: Most don't want to leave their homes, so the government has a hard time to move to camps because property rights not well defined – landgrabbing is common problem, so if you leave, you can lose what you've held on to – which leads to the question: if people didn't leave, could impact have been less, and if do want to leave, when is the best time voluntarily
3. Livelihood due to livestock/agriculture losses – land demarcation not computerized, so records swept away
4. Extremism: Recruitment can happen by militants of children, but this is not nearly as big a problem as western media portrays; most Islamic charities are NOT affiliated with terrorist organizations. In earthquake, higher case because more orphans (77K+ deaths) – and government will not allow adoptions
5. Gender-based violence and discrimination: cultural sensitivity make co-existing in camps very difficult (restrooms, appearing in public in wet saris, etc) so another reason why people don't want to go to camps and desire to go back sooner.

Solutions/recommendations:

- look at it solely as humanitarian issue versus political issue
- Pakistan not an easy bureaucracy to crack, but civil society is vibrant, can circumvent government machinery by working with reputed NGOs
- Cultural sensitiveness: many human rights concepts not accepted by people on ground
- Consequences of land and livestock losses to be kept in mind in recovery phase – keep in mind existing power structures vis-a-vis human rights implementation
- Local organizations to coordinate better among themselves because international efforts are already disorganized to avoid redundancy
- Team up with HR bodies in Pakistan to lobby their government to adopt and enforce HR principles and mechanisms
- Much of the failure of an enthusiastic response has to do with Pak's image; can be an opportunity to showcase the positive

KATE

What it means to implement an HR lens to humanitarian response based on Brookings doc:

- a. immediate intervention
- b. intermediate intervention
- c. environmental intervention

AJWS uses this framework to determine its strategy:

Add to comment regarding the government's ineptitude and this has spread to perception of local population. So we as HR funders need to be clear about our neutral response

Who is AJWS supporting:

1. Pregnant women
2. Groups working with afghan refugees
3. Minorities in Pakistan (Jews and Christians)

Immediate relief – to be more responsive to women (e.g. segregated restrooms, more covered tents)

What kind of organizations we are funding: grassroots so this means smaller organizations

E.g. small women's organization in remote area

A national women's org, a bit of a departure for us....

Local governance; now in camps, using model of collective decision-making

For the longer-term (3rd stage)

1. Land rights and livelihoods, so work with groups that help communities to retain or restore land titles (to leave land = to lose land); daily wage laborers and agriculture
2. Protection and security, especially for women, and especially in rural areas; another area is trafficking, especially of those families have been separated – work to reunite them

Challenges of working in Pakistan:

- Been there since 2005;

1. We are a human rights funder, so by definition, our label presents a challenge to our presence
2. A Jewish and American funder, in our name so we can't avoid it when trying to implement – so are mindful of security in how we engage with our grantees
3. Can't really visit with grantees and communities without thinking of implications on communities hosting us (Zionist conspiracy)
4. Domestically: on our blog, questions about AJWS rationale for working there... trying to open people's minds here

Because of AJWS identity and the conversations we need to have here and in Pakistan, it's been an opportunity for us to make progress and engage in useful dialogue and have a role in humanitarian response

ANASUYA

GFW response has been different than AJWS: better response than we had in Haiti

Not being a relief organization, we take activating a crisis fund quite seriously in responding to our grantees

Our response was a bit slow (by Aug 10/11) but

Gender dimensions are important – while not unique, gender based violence is a problem (disagree with Moeed).

Grantee partners reporting:

- Access to relief by women more difficult
- Grave danger that many women and children missing – presumed to be kidnapped (trafficking)
- Women's human rights violations in camps (sex favors in exchange for relief) -
- Women NOT involved in camp decisions
- Medical / sanitation
- Militancy: yes a disproportionate amt of attention, but must recognize that mobilization is happening and that impacts women's rights
- Bring in women's voices in longer-term policy changes, especially regarding livestock and livelihoods, 50-60% farming done by women

Working with Shirkat Gah, Women's Health line and Afghan institute of women in Peshawar

Work with both large and small groups – so both grassroots communication. Organizations that can reach one-on-one; as well as big organizations dealing with advocacy and policy change – So longterm relationships helpful for not only long-term work we're doing but also this immediate relief.

Question:

Is there a classification of gender based violence by force (e.g. rape)?

Answer:

Anasuya: Yes, along the lines of gender violence continuum; marital rape. A group is trying to set up response mechanisms

Shirkate Gah set up food coupons to address food access issue

Question: What is going right with the relief efforts?

Moeed: We were there in early stages: contrary to reports, army has reached all affected areas; some confidence that some things are working out. The Pakistani State recognizes its limitations, and won't obstruct arrival of assistance, may take more credit than should, but a price worth paying

Anasuya: Pakistan civil society very strong and responsive and already gearing up for longer term policy work

Question: What are the strategies for human rights lens in recovery/reconstruction

AJWS: In second phase, look at trafficking, e.g.

Third phase, attend to livelihood, especially for women; income-generation as immediate need at village level; property reform

GFW: Also add housing and sustainable reconstruction; trafficking for sex workers and labor; GFW will hold a convening possibly six months down the line to hear voices and needs;

GFW will increase its funding

Moeed: Incorporate lobbying at government to bring in HR in recovery, relief and reconstruction

Property reform – a first priority can be computerizing records

Coordination of relief organizations; Pakistan is a disaster-prone country, so must be ready for future

Nikhil:

1. Regarding the role of state, because of scale of the disaster, circumventing the state is deluding ourselves; we need to be realistic re: the impact civil society can have given scale

2. Funding for advocacy: American orgs and citizens can advocate that international donors give grants versus loans

Kate and Moeed: \$50 m of 200 m that US is giving, who is it from ??

Organization is toward advocacy, so reallocation starting, but paper figures more impressive than reality

Anasuya: Haiti – there was debt cancellation there, but not in the cards for Pakistan