

HPG Report

# Multi-year humanitarian funding in Pakistan

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# Acronyms

<b>BISP</b>	Benazir Income Support Programme
<b>CDCP</b>	Citizens Damage Compensation Programme
<b>CHAM</b>	Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition
<b>CNIC</b>	computerised national identity card
<b>DFID</b>	UK Department for International Development
<b>DRC</b>	Democratic Republic of Congo
<b>DRR</b>	disaster risk reduction
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN
<b>FATA</b>	Federally Administered Tribal Areas
<b>HIEP</b>	Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Programme
<b>IDP</b>	internally displaced person
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>IVAP</b>	IDP Vulnerability Assessment and Profiling
<b>JFS</b>	joint family system
<b>KP</b>	Khyber Pakhtunkhwa
<b>MYHF</b>	multi-year humanitarian funding
<b>MYHP</b>	multi-year humanitarian programme
<b>NDC</b>	Natural Disaster Consortium
<b>PELP</b>	Pakistan Evidence and Learning Project
<b>PHPF</b>	Pakistan Humanitarian Pooled Fund
<b>PKR</b>	Pakistani Rupee
<b>SRTM</b>	Shuttle Radar Topography Mission
<b>SGBV</b>	sexual and gender-based violence
<b>UN-OCHA</b>	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>UNITAR</b>	United Nations Institute for Training and Research
<b>VFM</b>	value for money
<b>WASH</b>	water, sanitation and hygiene

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# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 The thematic evaluation of multi-year humanitarian finance

For many years, voices within the humanitarian world have been pointing out a central paradox of emergency aid flows. Because emergency funds are aimed at meeting pressing, even life-threatening, needs they are almost always provided for operations limited to six months to a year. However, many crises are long-lived and most humanitarian funds go to protracted crises, giving rise to a situation where money goes to a crisis in very short cycles over many years. This, it has been argued, prevents the development of longer-term strategies for addressing crisis needs, limits agencies' ability to plan for continuous presence (potentially undermining everything from staff development and the ability to understand the changing and complicated contexts in which crises unfold, to the ability to respond to the first signs of a crisis) and prevents operational agencies from responding in more cost-effective ways that would give greater value for money (VFM) for limited international aid resources.

The UK Department for International Development (DFID) engaged with this critique by piloting business cases that offered financing of up to four years for partners working in longer-term emergencies. There were rational grounds for making plausible assumptions that multi-year humanitarian funding (MYHF) would enable emergency aid to be delivered more effectively, more cost-effectively and in ways that helped address underlying causes of vulnerability. However, DFID recognised that evidence was needed to confirm how far and in which situations these assumptions held true, and to understand how best to use MYHF. It therefore commissioned Valid Evaluations through DFID's Humanitarian Innovation and Evidence Programme (HIEP) to conduct a four-year thematic evaluation, following the initial MYHF business cases in four countries: Pakistan, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Ethiopia and Sudan. Valid Evaluations was tasked with answering the following questions:

1. (a) Are vulnerable individuals and households more resilient to shocks and stresses as a result of the work of DFID-funded, and other, interventions? What lessons can be learned about how to best enhance resilience in protracted crisis?  
(b) How do investments in resilience contribute to or compromise delivery of humanitarian outcomes?
2. Has the availability of contingency funding enabled DFID and its partners to respond more quickly and effectively when conditions deteriorate?
3. To what extent does DFID multi-year and contingency funding provide better VFM than annual funding for DFID and partners?

This paper presents the learning of that thematic study from Pakistan.

## 1.2 Pakistan and its vulnerability to crisis

Pakistan is the world's sixth most populous nation with a population of 208 million in 2017. Population growth has been slowing since a peak of almost 3.5% p.a. in the 1980s and is now 2.0% p.a. Pakistan is historically and politically entwined in several interlinked conflicts: most notably, since independence with India, over Kashmir; and in Afghanistan, since its involvement in the war against Russian occupation and where the same ethnic group straddles the Pakistan–Afghanistan border. These conflicts are not unconnected to a long history of political turbulence, with seizures of power resulting in autocratic rule in 1953–1954, and in military rule from 1958–1971, 1978–1988 and 2001–2008. This history, together with Pakistan's close links to China, form the political background to its relationship with the West, which in turn form the political background for Western aid to Pakistan.

Since 2000, GDP per capita in Pakistan has been growing at around 3.5% p.a. and it is now classed as a lower-middle income country. However, stubbornly high levels of inequality mean that poverty remains

both widespread and deep. Poverty is generally higher in rural areas although inequality is higher in urban areas. Progress on the human development index has not matched the steady increase in GDP, and Pakistan's ranking has been substantially unchanged for years at 147 out of 188 countries, despite some improvements in education. Pakistan also ranks as the second worst country in the world, after Yemen, on the gender equality index.

Pakistan is exposed to several kinds of crisis, including floods, earthquakes, drought and conflict (including conflict-related displacement). Table 1 shows the frequency and different kinds of crisis that have hit Pakistan this century. As a result, the country has regularly been a major recipient of humanitarian funding, which has also been related to the many refugees from Afghanistan in Pakistan, and the number of internally displaced people (IDPs) due to conflict (in Swat Valley, Balochistan and Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA)). At the time of the inception report there were over one million IDPs in Pakistan, but as of the end of May 2018 the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN-OCHA) reported that there were under 30,000 IDP families who have not yet returned (UN-OCHA, 2018).

## 1.3 DFID portfolio in Pakistan

DFID support to Pakistan under the multi-year humanitarian business case consists of four pillars: response to natural disasters, response to displacement, a contingency fund and support for the overall functioning of the international humanitarian system. The programme consists of the following portfolio.

- Pillar I (£29 million) is the Natural Disaster Consortium (NDC): led by the International Organization for Migration (IOM), with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), UNICEF, ACTED and HANDS. The consortium responded to the 2015 monsoon floods in Sindh Province, and the flash flooding in Chitral District, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) Province.
- Pillar II (£19.6 million), supporting people in displacement and returns, has three elements: (i) the Relief Consortium (£8 million), led by the International Rescue Committee (IRC), with HelpAge and ACTED, focusing on protection monitoring, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), and livelihoods training; (ii) the Joint UN programme for returns (£10 million over

**Table 1: Shocks experienced in Pakistan in the 21st century**

Year	Location	Crisis
1998–2002	Balochistan, Sindh	Drought
2001–2017	FATA	Conflict
2003	Sindh	Floods
2005	Kashmir	Earthquake (7.6)
2007	Sindh, KP	Floods
2007	Balochistan	Cyclone
2008–2009	Swat (KP)	Conflict
2009–2010	Punjab	Drought
2010	Widespread, national	Floods
2011	Sindh	Floods
2012	KP, Punjab	Floods
2013	Balochistan	Earthquake (7.7)
2013	Sindh	Floods
2013–2018	KP/FATA	IDPs/conflict
2014–2017	Parts of Sindh	Drought
2015	Sindh	Floods
2015	Badakhshan	Earthquake (7.5)
2016	Kashmir	Floods
2017	FATA	Floods
2017	Balochistan	Floods

two years), led by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), with FAO, the World Food Programme (WFP) and UNICEF, supporting the rehabilitation of basic infrastructure and livelihoods for returnees displaced by conflict; (iii) Vulnerability Assessment Profiling of IDPs (IVAP) (£1.6 million), managed by IRC.

- Pillar III – Contingency/standby (up to £20 million), held by WFP. It has been used for response and recovery support in Chitral, KP Province (earthquake and flash floods) and for rations for returnees.

- Pillar IV (£9.6 million) includes support to UN-OCHA, with support to the Pakistan Humanitarian Pooled Fund (PHPF) that has also been used for emergency support for returnees to FATA. (It also included support earmarked for the Pakistan Evidence and Learning Project (PELP, £4 million), which had to be closed, primarily due to absence of United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) accreditation from the Government of Pakistan.

DFID also has a separate business case for supporting resilience.

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## 2 Methodology

The central question assessed in this report is about the potential contribution of MYHF to go beyond response to immediate needs and help build longer-term resilience, which in theory would decrease future needs for humanitarian response in Pakistan.

Rather than answering this question by assessing the actual impact of projects financed through MYHF,<sup>1</sup> the research set out to understand the factors that shape the vulnerability and resilience of different people. A study of these factors, outlined in section 3 of this paper, was combined with analysis of the interventions planned for the multi-year humanitarian programming (MYHP) with other humanitarian aid programmes in the areas to assess how far interventions funded through the humanitarian system can address the factors that shape vulnerability and resilience. It also looked at how far a multi-year dimension to such funding can make a difference in the degree to which such programming is an effective or appropriate vehicle for building resilience. This analysis is presented in sections 4 and 5 of this paper.

Inevitably, the scope of this analysis is limited to the specific geographic areas investigated. Because the study began before the MYHP had become operational, it was not possible to choose the areas receiving MYHF-funded projects. Valid Evaluations selected two areas where much DFID MYHF aid was likely to be used, and which offered the greatest possible degree of diversity between them – both in the overall situation of the populations living there, and in the nature of the crises that have affected them recently. These were in rural Northern Sindh, where there is high exposure to flooding and flood-induced displacement; and in Peshawar District, in KP Province on the border with FATA, which had been home to many Afghan refugees and then to over a million IDPs from FATA, many of whom are now returning home.

The districts studied in Sindh are typical of much of the province. The Indus river is central to inhabitants’

lives, providing water for irrigated wheat and sugarcane and, for some, fishing opportunities, while posing an ever-present threat of destructive flooding. Much of the area is dominated by a small number of landowners, and the preponderance of farmers who have either very small holdings or who are landless explains why the Benazir Income Support Programme (BISP) poverty profile (BISP, 2014) shows that Sindh was the province<sup>2</sup> with the highest prevalence of poverty nationally, at 45%, reaching 52% in the rural area studied. However, the province is more developed than some others; economic poverty is wide, but multi-dimensional indicators of poverty are lower than in KP and Balochistan.

The study area in Peshawar District (KP Province) was of villages located 5–15km from Peshawar city (which has a population of over one million). Villages here are large, with populations ranging from 4,000–25,000. Agriculture plays a significant role, although a number of other economic activities linked to the urban economy are increasingly important, including brick manufacture, formal employment, skilled labour and small business. IDPs from FATA came to the villages mainly in 2012–2013, often replacing returning Afghan refugees, living largely in the same way as the poorer members of their host community.

Since the purpose of this study is to learn broad lessons about the use of MYHF, rather than to fully analyse specific measures needed to build resilience in Pakistan, there is no reason to believe that the restricted geographic scope limits the relevance of any learning achieved.

The study consisted of two rounds of interviewing in both Peshawar and Sindh (the second round focusing on specific issues that had arisen in the first round). In Peshawar, the research was only conducted with IDPs and examined how the roles of women and girls had changed as a result of displacement (Levine

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1 The inception report for this study (Gray et al., 2015), discusses the methodology in greater detail, including the rationale for the approach and research methods used.

2 The prevalence was higher in FATA, though FATA was not a province of Pakistan or governed in the same way as the rest of the country at the time.

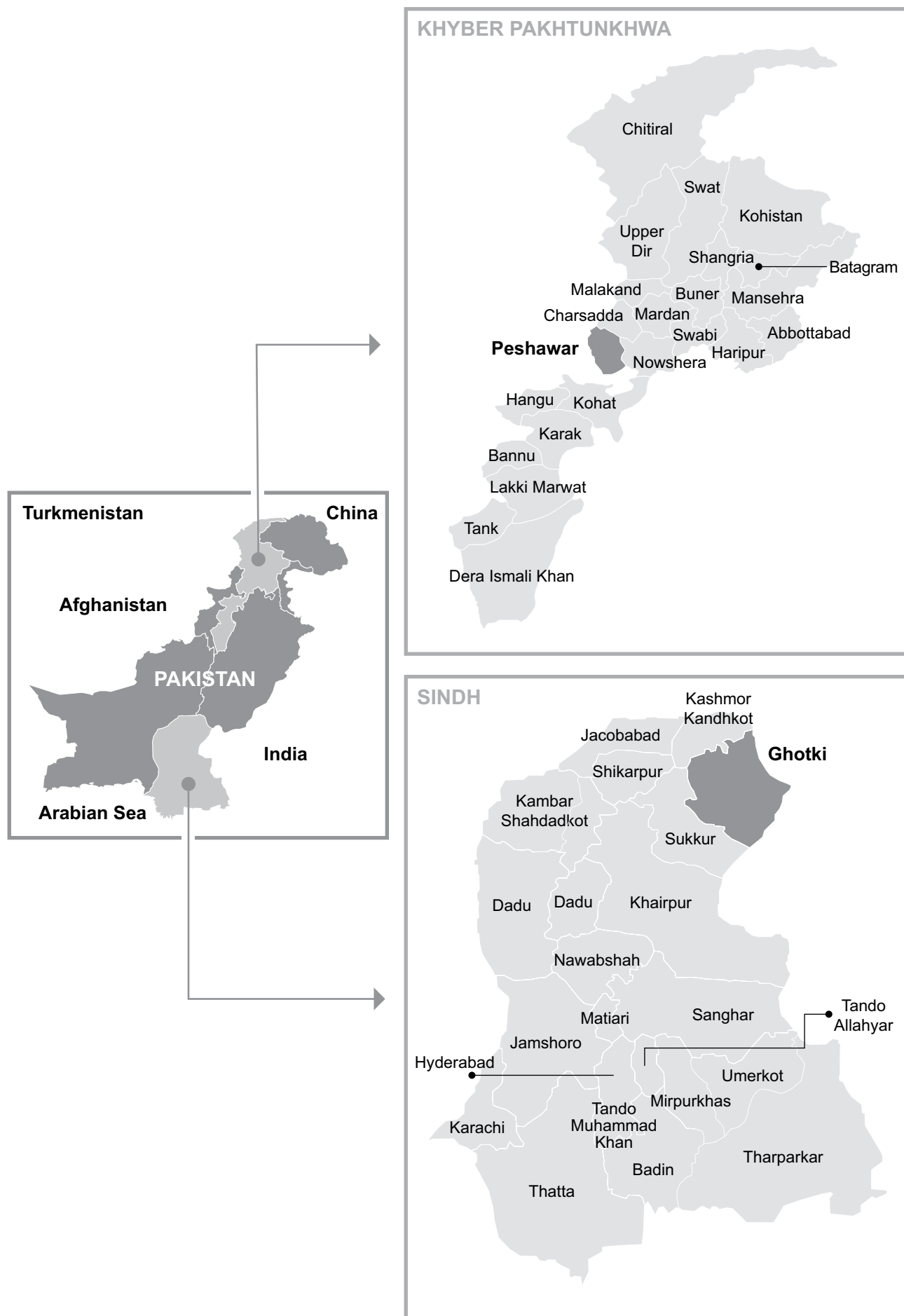
et al., 2019). In Sindh, research was conducted in Ghotki district and focused mostly on the varying nature of flooding in different parts of the district. It included follow-up interviews in some villages where research had taken place in round one and interviews in villages not covered previously. This meant areas within the riverine area itself (i.e. on the river side of the protection dykes), whose significance became clear during the course of the research, could be included. Table 2 shows the number of interviews carried out in each round in each province.

Interviews allowed respondents to speak about the difficulties they had faced in recent years and how they coped with them. Interviewees were not directed to talk about any specific shock (e.g. floods in Sindh). Since the aim of this exploratory research was to understand the different factors shaping vulnerability and resilience, and not to attempt to confirm any pre-identified hypotheses, the research team aimed for the highest possible diversity among interviewees and did not attempt to find a representative sample either through random or purposive selection.

**Table 2: Interviews conducted during primary field research**

Activity description	Round 1		Round 2	Role of women
	KPK	Sindh	Sindh	KPK
Focus group discussions	14	14	7	63
Individual interviews	99	111	60	98

Figure 1: Districts studied for primary research



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# 3 Findings

The formative report for this evaluation (Valid Evaluations, 2016) discusses the socio-economic situation in both study areas in detail, as well as the main shocks and stresses that people experienced. This did not change significantly from one round of interviewing to the next and the study areas did not experience any great covariate shocks during the period of enquiry. This section summarises findings on shocks and poverty in Sindh and Peshawar from the formative report and subsequent interviews, and analyses the vulnerability these conditions create, both for households and wider communities, as well as looking at some of the underlying causes. Sections 4 and 5 look at DFID MYHP and whether, in the light of the underlying causes of vulnerability, this can be a useful tool for helping build resilience.

## 3.1 Shocks

### 3.1.1 Flooding in Sindh

- Flooding affected everyone in Sindh and is a recurrent part of life and the agricultural cycle.
- The floods in 2010 were almost universally described as being the worst. People were unprepared and stayed in displacement for three months or more. Most lost everything.
- The 2015 floods were also serious but not on the same scale. People were also better informed and prepared.
- When displacement occurred, it was typically on bunds and most people relied on relief from the government and NGOs. Some found work in towns and stayed with relatives.
- Reconstruction costs are high and not covered by relief. This has led to further debt.
- Management of flooding cannot be undertaken at a local level, although good mitigation measures will help significantly. Watershed management for the Indus basin is a macro-level issue.
- Early warning and preparedness cannot prevent losses from floods, but they can reduce the impact of flooding on poor households.
- Livelihood considerations do not stop during a flood emergency. The ability to work during

displacement makes a significant difference to how quickly people re-establish themselves on return.

### 3.1.2 Conflict displacement (and return) in Peshawar District

- Most of those displaced had been in Peshawar for between four and six years.
- Issues include poor housing, lack of civil documentation, sanitation and unemployment.
- Access to services such as healthcare and education were better in the city than in people's home villages.
- Return was complicated by lost assets and inadequate compensation.
- Pull factors for staying in Peshawar included employment, services and security.

### 3.1.3 Health and drug addiction

- Illness and disease were the biggest problems faced by almost all households. This was particularly problematic as it also led to lost income.
- Typical costs of a single incidence of sickness or childbirth were 5,000–7,000 Pakistani rupees (PKR) (\$50–70), or a month's household income for the poorest.
- Hepatitis, especially hepatitis C, was frequently mentioned (as was cancer). Pakistan has the second highest prevalence of hepatitis C in the world (Moin et al., 2018) and sources attribute this to poor hygiene, especially of needles, in health facilities.
- Access to healthcare is variable. Most villages reported some form of health service locally, but getting good care appears to be more difficult. In Sindh, villagers complained that the government-supported primary healthcare facilities lacked basic skilled personnel.
- The scale of drug addiction was striking from interviews in Peshawar. Drug use is also very prevalent, though to a lesser extent, in Sindh. Roughly half of interviewees in Peshawar spoke (unprompted) about drug issues among the male members of family (there was no mention of women being addicted). Most appear to be heroin users, although cannabis use is also widespread.

## 3.2 Socio-economic status and poverty

### 3.2.1 Power, inequality and caste

- Most villages were composed of several castes and caste identity and hierarchy is extremely important.
- In both study areas, people's opportunities to shape and develop their own lives are hugely constrained by societal structures and factors connected to their birth.
- Land ownership is concentrated in the hands of very few families. The impact of this inequality was evident in almost every single interview.
- Most people had little land for themselves and almost everyone living in villages was tied into sharecropping arrangements with rich landlords. The terms for this were such that an escape from poverty or near-poverty was extremely difficult. Typically, farmers were responsible for the costs of inputs, for which they depend on credit<sup>3</sup> each year; they would then receive half of the harvest.
- In most villages in Sindh, farmers complained that they lost a further 10–15% of the value of their crop because they were receiving less than the government minimum price for either sugar or wheat.
- These feudal-type arrangements are well known in Sindh and were often similar in Peshawar, where a minority owned some agricultural land (even then the holdings were too small for subsistence, at around 0.5 hectare). In Peshawar, it was more common to find land being rented for cash, at around PKR 15,000/acre per year (\$150).

### 3.2.2 Poverty, debt and migration

- A World Bank study in 2013 suggested that poverty in Pakistan differs from other contexts because of the range of crises poor households faced. This makes poverty dynamic, with nearly as many people falling into poverty as those escaping it (World Bank, 2013; Shepherd et al., 2014).
- In Sindh, as well as sharecropping, people engaged in casual daily labour in construction or shops. A few worked as rickshaw drivers and artisans. Typically, daily earnings across the range of activities were consistent, at around PKR 300–400 (\$3–4) per day. Typical monthly household incomes were around PKR 10,000 (\$100).
- Many households live with seasonal debt as a way of maintaining their production cycle. This can be expensive: interest rates were typically anywhere between 10–50% for a loan of 6–12 months.
- Migration for work is a common strategy among interviewee households in Sindh, particularly to Saudi Arabia, and remittances form an important part of many families' economy.
- Household incomes in Peshawar were slightly higher than in Sindh, at around \$90–120 per month. The range of employment included labouring in brick kilns, formal employment in government services (including doctors and teachers), skilled labour and trades people (carpenters, cobblers, etc.), small business, taxi driving, security guards – and even young women working as DJs for a local radio station. Those able to start small businesses managed to do somewhat better.
- Only a few IDP families received money from the social protection programme in Pakistan, BISP (PKR 4,500 a month), although it is almost certain that poverty rates, and the depth of the poverty, are greater amongst the IDP population.

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3 Informants often spoke of credit being separated from the landlord–tenant relationship and given by Hindu businessmen. This is surprising, particularly since DECH Enterprise (2015) found that landlords were the main money lenders (to around two-thirds of those with debts).

# 4 Vulnerability and resilience

Most of the frameworks used by aid agencies for analysing resilience take the shock with which a population (or system) is faced as their starting point. They then typically define the degree of resilience of the population (or system) by reference to the outcome trajectory that follows. Figure 2 is one well-known example of such a framework.

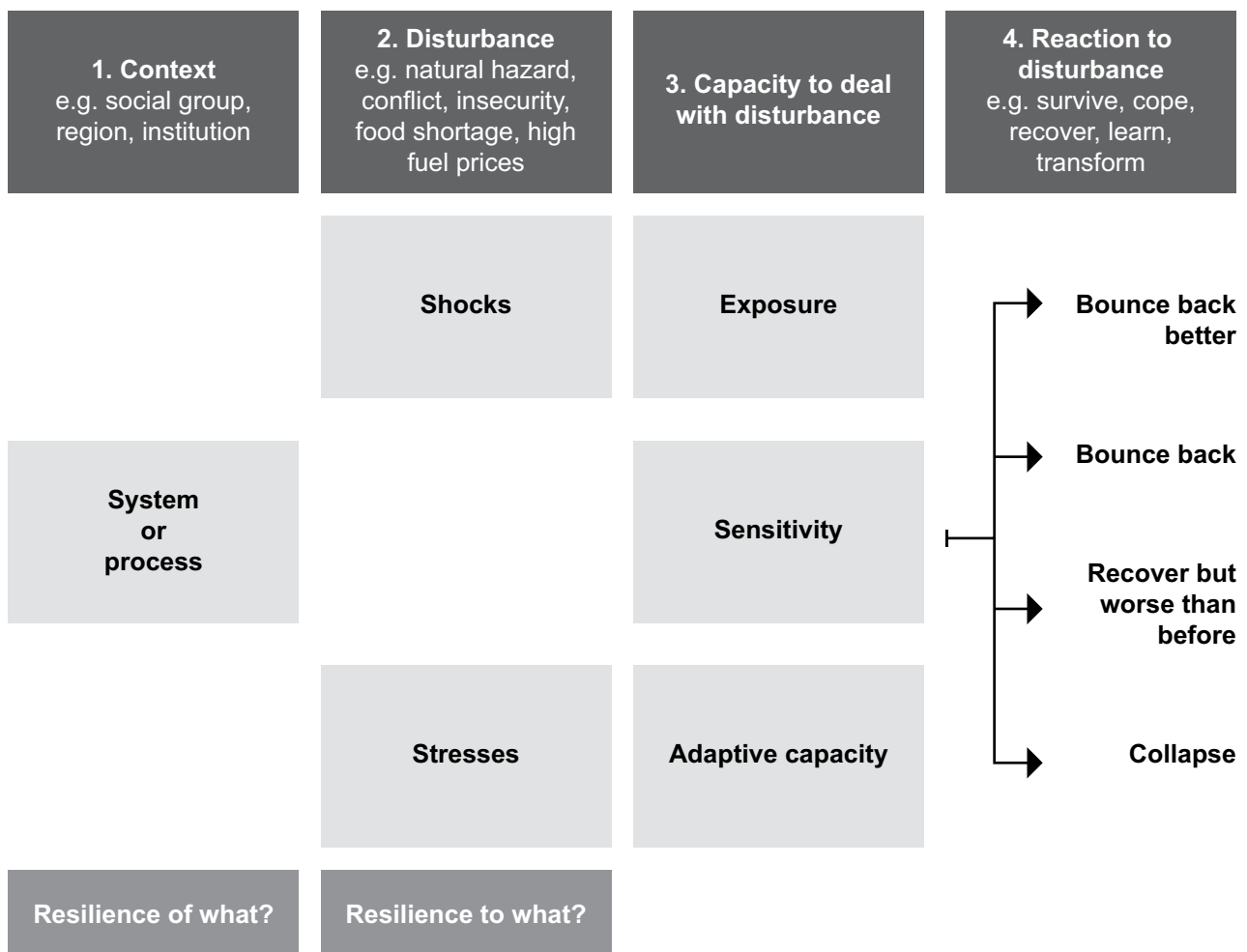
Valid Evaluation's formative report on Pakistan for this thematic evaluation followed the practice that flows naturally from such a framework (see section 2), taking analysis of the different shocks to which the population is exposed as a starting point for investigating their resilience. The analysis followed this pattern in the three other countries under study (DRC,

Sudan and Ethiopia), but further reflection on people's reports of their lives in Pakistan showed resilience and vulnerability in a different light (see Box 1).

There were three reasons for the move away from a shock-based classification of resilience:

1. Humanitarian attention is naturally drawn to the approximate causes of crises that make emergency relief necessary. However, these shocks are not necessarily the most serious problem for most people. When people in Pakistan related their experience of crises within a larger narrative of their lives, it became clear that these shocks were not discrete events shaping their lives. People

**Figure 2: A typical visualisation of resilience**



Source: adapted from DFID (2012).

often worried more about smaller or idiosyncratic shocks (or even about other factors unrelated to shocks) – their resilience was more affected by constrained opportunities, than by the shocks that dominate the humanitarian response. (This is less true in the other study countries, where covariate shocks presented a much greater threat to people, even creating the danger of mass mortality.)

2. The same hazard affected people in very different ways. The different outcomes that resulted for different people from the same shock could sometimes be better understood by focusing on the other factors in their lives that shaped these outcomes, rather than by concentrating on the most proximate cause of their crisis (i.e. the shock).
3. However, although it is recognised that crises are about the combination of a hazard/shock and pre-existing structural vulnerability, it has proved almost inevitable that the focus on shocks reinforces the portrayal of crisis as caused by

external events. (The language of ‘natural’ disaster and ‘disaster resilience’ only entrenches this further.)<sup>4</sup> In reality in Pakistan, people’s problems proved to be principally rooted in social and political factors.

This section adopts a looser way of describing the various difficulties people face, categorising them by whether they affect individuals, households, or communities. We then look at some of the underlying issues, recognising that the distinction between a problem and an underlying issue is rarely clear cut and not always helpful. Finally, we consider clues from people’s testimonies about where they find resilience in dealing with problems.

It is easy to see how often discussions on resilience quickly narrow down to an economic, or at least material, perspective. This tendency is exacerbated because the household is so frequently taken as a

## Box 1: Resilience and agency?

Most people in Pakistan, when faced with crisis, somehow survive. In the other countries studied as part of this evaluation, the limits of resilience were most often viewed economically and in response to shocks, and it was possible to see situations where survival was threatened. In Pakistan, acute suffering usually took different forms. People survived, but many had to engage in distress strategies, i.e. buying their immediate survival at a cost of their longer-term wellbeing – selling their land, taking on unreasonable debt or staying with their families at the price of enduring unreasonable treatment. Such behaviour is usually a sign of a lack of choice.

Lacking choice is not in itself a sign of acute problems; people are frequently forced to make unwelcome trade-offs, e.g. deciding whether to spend their limited resources on education for children or on better food or healthcare. However, people’s ability to cope with difficulty can be judged by the point at which they have to make such choices. If resilient, we do not have to choose between eating well and accessing quality healthcare; a woman is not forced to choose between pursuing a fulfilling career and social acceptability. The space within which we can act without having to make trade-offs in the face of

difficulty, our ‘choice-space’, is one way of thinking about the degree to which we are resilient. Such a way of thinking is similar to the concept of ‘agency’: in looking at people’s ability to cope with difficulty, the limits to agency can be seen where the borders of their choice-space lie.

This study finds it useful to think about resilience as agency-in-the-face-of-difficulty for several reasons. Threats and shocks remain integral to analysis of resilience, but do not completely take over, and everyday concerns about agency are included alongside such thinking. Resilience-as-agency facilitates the integration of three perspectives: the positive side of resilience (opportunity, what people *can* do); vulnerability (the threats that diminish what they can do); and the structural constraints to people’s choices. It also allows a more holistic analysis than is possible within frameworks that treat resilience as a composite of discrete elements (e.g. resilience = assets + access to services + human capital, etc.). Starting with the concept of agency also removes a pre-determined decision about where it lies, e.g. in households or in communities, allowing it to flow freely from one level to another and across the different domains where the factors that constrain or facilitate agency lie.

4 Since Hurricane Katrina hit the USA, it has fortunately become more common to hear that ‘there is no such thing as a natural disaster’, though the use of the term ‘disaster resilience’ has proved more enduring.

unit of discussion for resilience, which is commonly defined by its shared economy. Resilience and vulnerability, though, need to be understood and analysed at several levels, from national to individual. In our analysis of resilience and MYHF in Ethiopia (Sida et al., 2019), we stressed the importance of addressing livelihoods at a meso-economic level – i.e. a local economy that is bigger than the common village-focus of humanitarian attention, encompassing both rural and urban economies, but smaller than the national economy, whose performance may be of limited relevance to people in more marginalised parts of a country. The same considerations hold true for Pakistan, but here our research pointed strongly to the importance of another neglected level, that of the individual. In this section, we take factors affecting different levels in turn, beginning at the individual level as it relates so much to viewing resilience as agency-in-crisis, which was a strong theme in many of our interviews in Pakistan.

## 4.1 Factors affecting resilience at the individual level

### 4.1.1 Gender

The most significant determinant of a person's life chances – their agency, their outcomes and thus their resilience – is whether they were born male or female. Almost everything that happens to a person is shaped by this single fact.

*My parents forced me to marry an old man of 40 when I was 12 years old. He bought me for ten thousand rupees [then around \$1,000]... [The husband] always beat me whether I had done anything wrong or not. It was a way of getting rid of his anger, you could see his face relaxing from anger as he beat me ... He didn't let me have one moment's free time. My sister-in-law also used to beat me. I couldn't understand why my husband married me if he didn't like me. After three years, he divorced me, he told me that I was not fit for him and sent me back to my parents' home.*

*Two years later, my brothers and my father forced me to get married to an old man of 60 ... I didn't want to marry again, but my family refused to listen to me – they sold me for 50 thousand rupees this time [then around \$3,000] ... Unfortunately, I gave birth to a baby girl,*

*and from that time I suffered so much, my husband became so angry that he even tried to kill me ... he used to beat me every day. He hated me and my daughter. When my daughter got sick, my husband refused to give me any money to take her to a hospital or to visit a doctor, and as a result she died of fever. My husband was happy that now he didn't have the cost of keeping an unwanted daughter. I was shocked. I just wanted to give up. I would have to spend the rest of my life with a person who was happy for my daughter's death?*  
(Widow, aged 50, Sindh).

Although not everyone suffered to this degree, these are familiar elements in the lives of women of Sindh and Peshawar: the interviewee's forced child marriage; treatment by her own family as a commodity for sale; suffering constant physical abuse from her husband and in-laws; having no opportunity for education, self-expression or any independent life; and, perhaps most frightening of all, knowing that there was no escape from such a life. This story puts into perspective every other shock that she (and other women) might face in life.<sup>5</sup>

Though such suffering is not inevitable, every girl is *vulnerable* to such a life, because she lacks the power to resist and is beholden to the will of her parents or her husband. Such absence of power or control over one's life is the very antithesis of agency and resilience.

Of the populations researched in this study, the situation was most extreme among women from Khyber Agency in FATA, who had been displaced by conflict to Peshawar District in KP (Levine et al., 2019). A complex interplay of culture, economics, politics and the specific legal status of FATA meant that, prior to displacement, many girls and women had no secure rights and no recourse to any forms of justice or protection. Law and order were in the hands of the local *jirga* (council) and a woman could only bring a case to the *jirga* through a member of her husband's family, with obvious implications if abuse was an issue.

Very young girls were promised as brides by their fathers, and those promises were fulfilled usually when the girls were 13 or 14 years old. Once married, a girl was often overseen by her mother-in-law, who managed her physically-demanding workload and often administered cruel punishments. A woman's value was as the producer of sons, whose duty, in

<sup>5</sup> It is also a story that we will return to when looking at the role of assistance in supporting resilience: any aid project can usefully test itself by asking how it would be relevant for this woman.

turn, was to guard the honour of the family by bearing arms and ensuring the good behaviour of the women. This 'good behaviour' was highly restrictive. Freedom of movement was prohibited where non-relative males were present; women could not even buy the most private things for themselves. Women IDPs from FATA implied that their treatment was worse than that of cattle.

Although the situation of women in Khyber Agency was particularly extreme, gender was also the main constraining factor to the agency and resilience of girls and women in the other research areas, that is, the resident population of Peshawar District and in the districts studied in Sindh. Most women's freedom of movement was severely restricted, which hindered their livelihood opportunities (many only had the chance to earn money by working in their own fields or sewing at home). Since most women interviewed were trying to make a living by sewing the same few items (e.g. embroidered sheets or blankets), prices were low and income rarely rose above PKR 2,000–3,000 per month (c. \$200–300).

Most girls were not allowed to attend school even for the basic years of primary education, and lack of education or basic literacy curtailed other opportunities. A combination of reasons were given for denying girls the right to go to school: the lack of availability of girls' only schools close by; prioritising schooling for boys when financial resources are limited; a lack of interest by parents in education generally; and sometimes outright hostility to the idea of girls being educated.

*Most of the people in my village think that educating a girl is against our religion, our culture, they consider it as a shame.*

*The religious leader said that there is no female education in Islam.*

*Personally, I am not in favour of female education. What will they do after studying? They will get married and go to another home to become a housewife. I think religious education is enough for them.*

*Our boys aren't that much educated, so why is there a need of education for girls?*

*The girls' schools are too far away.*

Despite the extreme levels of gender inequality, it would be wrong to paint a black and white picture: geographical areas differed, as did households and individuals, and there was also evidence of changes occurring over time. In Sindh most women have some voice in the household, even if it is unequal to their husbands, and widows inherit land there, though not everywhere in Pakistan. Differing attitudes to girls' education were clearly emerging, most strikingly between the Afridi displaced from Khyber Agency and their relatives who were resident in Peshawar district, some of whom were much more supportive of girls attending primary school.

*Nowadays, people don't mind their girls studying. Before they would have taunted her and looked down on her, education was seen as the teaching of Angreez ('the white man') ... Now everyone knows the importance of education, they also want to get qualified so they can compete in society*  
(Adolescent boy, Peshawar).

*No one wants to marry an uneducated girl*  
(Young married IDP).

*If your wife is educated, then all your coming generation will be educated*  
(Young married IDP).

*The future of our generation is dark, there is no difference left between males and females. Both go to the school, neither listen to their parents and elders ... There is no benefit in this kind of education, that means our future just following the Western culture and the next generation forget their own*  
(Old IDP from FATA).

Even within a single community, life stories of women could be very different. Some women, albeit very few, had been able to receive higher education and had a professional career. Accepted career options were restricted to those with an environment where modesty could be maintained, e.g. working as a teacher in a girls' school, as a women's doctor or in some parts of the civil service: nonetheless, an important principle has changed. Changes also affected the personal relationships between men and their wives: for many, this was based on love and mutual respect, even within a society whose norms allotted unequal roles and responsibilities to them.

*I can't describe the emotional state of a father and husband, when he is not there, physically present, at the birth of his child. We can only express our love and care through prayers. But the stress is huge – emotional stress, worry, tension. I was so worried. I couldn't sleep! I just wanted to be there at the birth. I love my wife and I was so worried for her*  
(Husband and father, Sindh).

Our research suggested that better educated men tended to be more in favour of education for their daughters, while men who had travelled in wider social circles were more likely to be accepting of women having some voice in the family.

The timeframes over which changes in gender norms and roles occur are longer than the perspectives of most humanitarian agencies, which naturally think more in terms of immediate needs and urgent responses. Because they involve complex changes over long timeframes during which many other changes occur, they are difficult to analyse using the short research projects that are most familiar in humanitarian research. Some trends were clear, though, in both Peshawar and in Sindh. Most of the adult male interviewees in this study had received little education and very few of the adult women interviewees had any education at all. However, most were sending at least some of their children to school and many were sending daughters for around five years of primary school. Pressure on local authorities to establish girls' schools seems to be increasing. More people were open to the idea that children should consent to the marriage partners chosen by their parents; some people told us that very early marriages were becoming less common. In Peshawar, we interviewed male and female adolescents, most of whom had very different aspirations from their parents' generation, including for education, regarding marriage, and the acceptability of a woman having an independent economic life.

These changes are slow and only partial. Young people were not talking about gender equality and those with a more open attitude were in the minority. Nonetheless, these trends will probably contribute the most to resilience building in Pakistan over the next decade or two; understanding how these changes can be deepened and built upon will be a critical area of investment for humanitarian and development agencies.

#### 4.1.2 Disability and sickness

Disability and chronic sickness are often recognised as factors of vulnerability by the humanitarian sector, because they affect the food security of the household. Beyond the economics of losing labour power, disability and chronic sickness also have a potentially devastating impact on individuals, where their societies exclude them from education, services and normal social and family life.

*I spend my whole day just sitting in bed. I can't see anything, so I can't do anything ... I used to be able to see, I used to play with friends and have fun ... but now my life is darkness ... When I ask my friends to come and play with me, they usually refuse ... I just sit at home all the time doing nothing ... My family usually says that I'm not capable of doing anything, and that I just disturb them, which hurts me a lot. When I get angry with them, I don't talk to anyone in the family and don't eat for a day or more ... Sometimes I want to pray to Allah, but I don't know how to pray as no one in my family taught me how to pray ... I feel angry at myself for being blind. Now I am angry all the time, whenever I go outside I ask people to leave me alone and I don't need anybody ... I don't want to live my whole life in darkness. Now my sisters do everything for me, but who will help me when they get married?*  
(13-year-old girl, Sindh).

This girl's blindness may not have been avoidable, but the impact of her blindness was not inevitable. Those who are blind, deaf or disabled in other ways are often not expected to have any individual agency, and as a result they do not. Their lives are the antithesis of resilience, because society has made it that way.

It is beyond the scope of this study to establish whether cases of disability and chronic sickness could be prevented with better access to medical services. This study relates to the social construction of disability: whether people had an excessive risk of disability or a high degree of vulnerability to disability, because their societies did not enable them to live the life they are capable of living.

#### 4.1.3 Drug addiction

The scale of drug addiction among men in Peshawar was discussed in the formative report for this evaluation. Without attempting to quantify drug use or

addiction, Valid Evaluations' own interviewing found that around half of interviewed households spoke unprompted about the addiction of at least one family member.<sup>6</sup> Most interviews spoke of cannabis use, although heroin use was also commonly mentioned.

The economic impact at household level is often mitigated by a degree of economic interdependence within the 'joint family system' (JFS). The lost labour of an adult (usually male) addict does not leave his household destitute, though it creates a burden on other adults in the wider family. The individual cost cannot be ignored: the stories of the wasted lives of addicts were not happy ones, and there were frequent testimonies of domestic violence accompanying and being caused by drug use.

Drugs in KP come partly from trade with Afghanistan, and partly from production in FATA, where hashish in particular has been a major cash crop and a source of significant wealth. Although some attempts are being made to control the production of drugs, it is unclear how this will impact drug consumption in the country.

## 4.2 Issues affecting households

Household level factors tend to affect people's material and economic life, which are largely organised around household or family economic units.

### 4.2.1 Access to land and river

A main determinant of households' material security was their access to one of the two principal productive assets: land for farming (for most) and the river for fishing. Although fishing families are a small minority, issues around control of resources are better illustrated by looking at vulnerabilities around loss of rights to access fishing (because fewer assumptions tend to be made about rights to rivers than land ownership). For this reason, river rights are discussed here.

In the past, fishing was usually a hereditary profession practised by families within a particular caste (e.g. in Sindh, the Mirani), which offered reasonable, if modest, livelihood security. The decline in the income of fishermen over recent years is due directly to their lack of political power. The river was a common resource for all those who wanted to fish and a level playing field, since everyone relied on similar

technology. Barriers to entry were low because investment costs were small, and returns were principally determined by labour. The introduction of fish farming has transformed the basis on which access to the river is claimed. It demands high investment and high returns to capital, which has attracted the interest of wealthier people. Fish farming has separated the roles of business investor and labourer, with far higher returns for the former.

*We [Mirani] have to depend on the natural fish resources in the lake and the river. We don't have the money to start our own ponds to breed fish. Nowadays powerful people have occupied the area and they don't allow us to catch fish there. They say 'this area is all ours, stay away from here'. The fish in the river is a natural resource, they come in the river by the grace of Allah. So how can they stop us catching fish in the river? ... Some of our people also work in the fish farms owned by landlords and the rich ... It's a good business, but only a few families benefit from it. Our people don't get a share in the profits*  
(Man, aged 45, Sindh).

Unlike fishing, fish farming needs exclusive access to a fixed area of the river for a certain time. Claiming such rights demands both political connections and high levels of capital: those who used to be fishing people have neither.

*We started the business in the Indus River with an agreement with district government for 150,000 Rupees. I was only able to get this contract because I have a personal relationship with a government official. It's called a tender, but the process has nothing to do with merit – I had the right connections*  
(Man, aged 40, Sindh).

The growth of fish farming relies on excluding fishing people from the waters they have always fished, reducing their catches significantly; it has also lowered the price of fish. The combination of lower prices and low catches has forced many of them to become daily labourers, moving from reasonable livelihood security to a living that is both meagre and precarious. However, viewed through a production lens (or using the definitions of food security used over a generation

<sup>6</sup> This corresponds reasonably well with an estimated prevalence rate of drug addiction in KP province of 11% of the population (Hayat et al., 2018).

ago),<sup>7</sup> the development of intensive fish farming can be thought of as a step towards greater resilience – even as it undermines the livelihood security and resilience of many of the poor.

*Now, life is really hard. I have had to abandon fishing and I just work as a [daily] labourer in different places. Our tribe have been fishing for centuries, but nowadays it's really hard for us to continue. We always used to catch fish in — Lake but now, the big landlords who have land by the lakeside stop us from fishing there by force*

(Labourer, aged 50, Sindh).

The same forces come into play regarding control over land and irrigation water in agriculture. Two-thirds of the land in Sindh is sharecropped (Shah, 2008), with the landlords usually taking half of the harvest and the tenant paying half the production costs. These costs are considerable, at around 30–50% of the gross return on the yield. This investment was typically paid for with loans on unclear and unfavourable terms and people's ability to repay debt depended on their crop yields (poorer people also tended not to have access to financial services). A detailed study of inequality in land ownership is beyond the scope of this report, but there was strong evidence in household interviews that it was a serious constraint on economic agency.

## Box 2: Description of 'a typical village' in Sindh

*'[It] ... comprises of about 250–400 families, with a population of about 1,500–3,000. It is dominated by one or two families, as in Shikarpur, or by about half a dozen families, as in Thatta [District, Sindh Province]. These families together own between 3,000–10,000 acres of land. There are a handful of small farmers, with a majority of them owing less than 5 acres of land. Some of them are also engaged in small-scale businesses. Over three-fourths of the villagers are tenants working on the landlords' lands, sharing the produce on 50:50 basis; with the landlord deducting 50% of the input cost and a portion of the unwritten loan and interest owed to them ... nearly all tenant families – men, women and children – also engage in wage labour. Some women from small*

Most people owned little land, many being landless and many more owning less than two ha. This situation was compounded by the terms on which farm land is accessed, which were more favourable to landowners than to those providing labour. There were also complaints that irrigation water can be poorly received, in quantity or regularity, without good relations to those with power (see also Khan, 2017b). Poor farmers live with high levels of debt because of the investment costs for farming: since their ability to repay debts depends on their crop yields, this gives those with the power to control how irrigation is managed almost total control over the lives of tenant farmers.

### 4.2.2 Costs of marriage

Another repeated theme of struggle for poor households was the need to save money to pay the costs associated with marriage. The most important of these is either the dowry (paid in most of Pakistan by a bride's family to the groom's family), or the bride price (made in some parts of Pakistan, such as in FATA, by the groom's family to the bride's).<sup>8</sup> Marrying off a daughter was often regarded as a major life achievement. The burden was most often mentioned by women, although the financial responsibility falls on the household as a whole (i.e. largely the father). Dowry is a particular burden for widows, because their ability to earn money is so restricted.

*farmer and tenant families are engaged in making traditional bed covers, caps and dresses.*

*The village is registered with the government; however, the villagers reside in the village by virtue of the goodwill of the big landlords. Some of the tenants dwell on the landlords lands ... The state of hygiene is appalling ... The village has electricity, but does not have piped water supply, drainage or sewage disposal, or any medical facility ... Malaria, diarrhoea, hepatitis C and respiratory illnesses are frequently mentioned as diseases afflicting the villagers. Skin diseases and malnutrition, especially among women and children, is visible'*  
(Bengali, 2015: 22–23).

<sup>7</sup> In the pre-Sen world, food security was defined only by availability, not access, e.g. the 1974 World Food Summit definition of food security as 'availability at all times of adequate world food supplies of basic foodstuffs to sustain a steady expansion of food consumption and to offset fluctuations in production and prices'.

<sup>8</sup> In Pakistan when speaking English, this tends also to be called dowry. To avoid confusion, this report uses the term 'bride price', more commonly used in Africa for the payment by the groom's family to the brides.

The financial shock of marriage is not confined to paying dowry or bride price. The social obligation around the wedding ceremony can create enormous expense.

*I had 2 acres of agricultural land which I used to farm, but I had to sell it to pay for my son's wedding*

(Widow, Ghotki District).

Marriage is thus a significant expense that people have to factor into their lives over a long period (competing for resources against productive investment, education, etc.) and for the poor it can be akin to shock, pushing people into longer-term poverty. One way to avoid expense is to arrange an 'exchange marriage' (known as *watta satta* in Sindh and *adal badal* in Pashto-speaking areas) where a brother and sister are married off to a brother and sister from another family, thus avoiding the need for either side to pay bride price or dowry. Such marriages are common among the poor and have been estimated to make up over 30% of marriages in rural parts of Pakistan (Jacoby and Mansuri, 2007). However, this comes at a cost to the resilience of both brides. The wives are hostage to the behaviour of their siblings, because they are often punished by their husbands' families for any problems in the other marriage (see Levine et al., 2019).

### 4.3 Issues affecting 'communities'

Communities can be defined in different ways – as people living together geographically (e.g. a village), as people who share an identity or in terms of people's social organisation. People share common vulnerabilities as a result of their community in several ways.

#### 4.3.1 Social communities

Social organisation in both KP and Sindh has been described as tribal, though the groupings are often also called castes. Many are associated with status or profession. Vulnerability from tribal or inter-ethnic problems takes several forms. Some clans are considered to be of higher status, and people from lower status tribes or castes may suffer from discriminatory treatment, including from public servants such as teachers. The following was a typical complaint.

*In my village there is a primary school, but the teacher hardly ever turns up, sometimes he doesn't come to school even once in the week. I can't complain to any higher authority because the teacher is from \*\*\*\*\*'s caste. If I complain against them, then I would feel trouble every*

*second, because there are only two homes of my caste in this village*  
(Villager, Sindh).

Villages were usually dominated by one tribe and those from minority tribes were more vulnerable. They have a narrower social network and might find it harder to access land and if they do not share tribal kinship with the landlord, it might be more difficult to look for a tenancy. Additionally, some land in villages is designated as community land, but this could be interpreted as land belonging to the dominant tribe in the village. In many cases, people from minority castes were discriminated against in a variety of ways, and often feared for their personal safety.

*People of — community had a dispute with my son over his share of the harvest when he farmed on their lands [as sharecropping]. We were forced to stay indoors, we couldn't even step outside – these people are powerful, and they have the support of feudal bosses. To stay alive, we had no choice but to leave the village*  
(Man, c. 50, from minority group, Sindh).

People from the 'wrong' caste could face collective punishment if any member of their group offended the majority, even suffering even illegal dispossession and eviction from their homes as a result (see also Box 4 below).

*A boy from our community married with the girl of — tribe against the will of their parents ... Love marriages, especially out of caste marriages are taken very seriously ... The — tribe is dominant here. Our houses were put on fire. Even though the boy wasn't even a relative of ours, because the boy belonged to our caste, we were part of it ... We had to flee, or our girls would have been kidnapped and raped. We ran into the forest, we had to start from zero, to make huts and clear land to farm ... We were in the forest, or I can better say that we were in jail. That was the most difficult time of my life, I have no words to tell you how hard it was*  
(Man, aged 35, Sindh).

Several interviews spoke of being the victims of violence or fearing for personal safety.

*We are not safe here. Everyone in the village criticises us because of our caste. We cannot fight back with them as we are a small minority here. We do not have our own land for*

*agriculture. We keep a dog for the safety from vandalism and robberies*  
(Woman, aged 30, Sindh).

Tribalism and feudalism are often combined, with a landlord exploiting the minority status of a family, knowing that they are more vulnerable as a result. As in so many other places, the powerful can use tribalism to co-opt the poor of their own tribe against the poor of other tribes.

*One of the landlords of the — community held us forcefully, and also tortured us. This was because he had agriculture land adjacent to ours. He took over our land by force. When we asked him for our land back, he had us tortured*  
(Man from minority tribe, Sindh).

The fact that the landlord's ethnic identity in this case was spontaneously given, together with the fact that the victim was from a minority tribe, suggest that, as in several other testimonies collected, ethnic identity played a role in creating this victim's vulnerability.

*My forefathers have lived in this village for seven generations. But, as the — caste is in the majority, their community heads are powerful and influential. They lodged fake cases against my family in the courts, and no one dared to supported me. Family members were arrested by police. The case went to the jirga, I was compelled to accept their decision against me. I had to hand over all my land to — landlords. Now, I am landless.*

It was clear from interviews that although community relations were not a problem for everyone or in every village, assumptions about inclusiveness and reaching the most vulnerable when working 'with a community' cannot be taken for granted. Apart from the frequent exclusion of women's priorities (see above), in some cases a 'community' was the main source of vulnerability for minorities.

#### 4.3.2 Economic communities

More widely, beyond any ethnic and gender identity, many people face discrimination because of their poverty. This is not simply a matter of their economic status (for which the term community might not be appropriate): poverty can give people an identity that affects their treatment by others. This is seen in almost every dimension. For example, the right connections

are often needed to get a job – it is rare for anyone poor to have these kinds of connections. Poorer areas are less likely to have schools, particularly girls' schools, therefore continuing the poverty cycle.

*What's the point in sending my children to the school? Even if I spend money for my children to go, then who will give them job afterwards? There are no jobs for the poor. Whatever they study, they will end up having to do the same as I am doing.*

When jobs do not come via connections, for example unskilled labour opportunities on road construction, interviewees complained that they were handed out when bribes are paid.

*Life is not easy, we face so many problems because of discrimination. We live in a district where there are so many industries like sugar, gas, petroleum, and flour mills, but we don't get any benefit from them. They won't even recruit us to the most menial jobs, call us ignorant and ill-mannered ... If you are poor here, you have no right to ask for a normal life.*

The infrastructure in the most flood prone areas tends to be poorer than elsewhere, so on top of the damage done by the flood waters to their houses and crops, people faced lack of access to markets and, more seriously, lack of access to healthcare. Poorer areas are less likely to have schools, particularly girls' schools. The poor are also denied access to markets on the minimum terms laid down by law. Respondents in different villages repeatedly compared the rate at which they were able to sell produce (wheat or sugarcane) with the official government price. Typically, they were selling at 10–15% discount: put starkly, the meagre income of the poor is subject to an illegal 10–15% poverty tax.

*The Government rate for wheat was PKR 1,200 in 2011, but all the villagers here sold it for PKR 1,000. We wanted to sell it at the government rate, but the government doesn't buy from the poor. Since we are all poor, we had no choice but to sell it at the only price we could get.*

The history of Pakistan teaches us that resilience has repeatedly been undermined by social disharmony, political turmoil and conflict. Although an analysis of

the longer-term consequences for social and political development are beyond the scope of this study, interviewees were keenly aware of the differences in opportunities which they enjoyed compared to the better off.

*Look at us, the people living in the katcha. We can't even give our children a primary level education, and yet people have gone to the moon.*

Although most respondents seemed to live almost permanently in debt, their access to proper financial services is very poor. Debt is often on unclear and exploitative terms from their landlords. More detailed research into this specific area would be needed to understand why they are so marginalised from financial infrastructure, but it is important to note it as a serious constraint on economic agency.

#### 4.3.3 Issues affecting geographic 'communities'

The most obvious threats affecting villages as a whole were flooding (Sindh in this study, but this affected several parts of the country), conflict and conflict-related displacement (in FATA and KP) and, more rarely, earthquakes (not specifically studied in this thematic evaluation).

##### Flooding

Flooding from the River Indus is an annual event, which is both inevitable and necessary as it brings the benefits of soil fertility to the flooded areas in the river basin. However, in 2010 exceptional flooding drew the attention of the international humanitarian community to areas across Pakistan. The 2010 floods killed around 2,000 people and displaced millions, causing devastation along the length of the River Indus, from KP in the north to Sindh in the south. The State's response to the 2010 floods were, in many areas, slow and inefficient. In Sindh, hundreds of thousands of people fled, seeking safety on the bunds or dykes, built to contain the expansion of the River Indus in flood season. Many had to pay large sums to be rescued by boats, most waited days before receiving any assistance, and many never received regular assistance at all; levels of support for return and reconstruction were small in relation to the huge losses suffered and the large debts that people had incurred to feed their families.

It is natural that aid agencies, including humanitarian and disaster risk reduction (DRR) communities, would seek to ensure both that future rainfall of a similar magnitude would not lead to similar flooding, and that if such flooding did arise, it did not lead to the

same level of damage and personal suffering. It is also natural that similar humanitarian responses would take place in Swat Valley and Sindh. However, this should not lead to a generic analysis of vulnerability to natural disaster. There was an important difference in the nature of the natural hazard striking the two worst hit Provinces, KP and Sindh. The 2010 flood was unprecedented in Swat because the hazard was unprecedented: in Sindh, it was unprecedented because it was not. The Supreme Court's Flood Inquiry Commission made this difference clear in its 2013 report, showing just how far the floods in Sindh were *not* the result of a natural disaster:

1. The KP administration had no time to respond to flash floods that swept away everything in Swat and Kabul rivers in a flash.
2. The three barrages in Sindh received below historic maximum inflows, though these lasted for longer durations (Flood Inquiry Commission 2013, emphasis added).

People who are most exposed to flooding are those who live inside (that is on the riverside of) the dykes, in what they call the *katcha* areas. Here, flooding can be an annual event, but it can sometimes cause the course of the river to change to the extent that people's land can disappear for good – perhaps to reappear several years later. Several families interviewed had been forced to move since 2010 because their original villages had disappeared completely.

Some families try to save enough money to build homes that are capable of withstanding minor floods, especially in constructing a raised cement floor. Others are trying to save enough to buy land on the other side of the dykes where they will have greater protection from the river, known as the *pukka* area. Many people express the hope that the government will build more and more dykes to bring large areas under protection from the river, but it remains to be seen whether this would make a significant difference. It is impossible to say whether that would be a sensible DRR strategy without a much more technical in-depth study, because it is known from other flood rivers that trying to restrict the width of a river, removing its ability to spread out when water levels rise, may simply create far greater flood problems in the longer term. Additionally, danger may come from false security, as was diagnosed in 2010 by Hashmi et al. (2012):

*Although flood protection by embankments have been provided along almost the entire length in the Sindh Province and at many*

*locations in the upper areas, the bund breaches can still occur. Such breaches often cause greater damage than would have occurred without the bunds because of their unexpected nature and intensification of land use following the provision of flood protection.*

In some parts of the world, people choose to live with great exposure to flooding because of the economic benefits it brings – more fertile soil, the possibility of irrigation and dry season cropping and the ability to fish. Interviewees did not indicate that this is the case for those in Ghotki and Shikrapur Districts who are living in the *katcha* areas – they do so because they have no other land. However, powerful landlords have reportedly started to cultivate large areas in *katcha* areas, because the silt brought by repeated flooding has made those lands fertile and profitable (Khan, 2017a). Those landlords do not live in the *katcha* areas themselves. They maintain their own private lands in the *pukka* area and the pass off part of the risk of flooding to the tenants and sharecroppers who invest their labour and investment capital in farming the *katcha* areas.

People were unprepared for the severity of the 2010 floods as they were so used to annual flooding and had not experienced a major flood since 1992 – many believed that the days of flood disasters were over. Most interviewees in Sindh spoke of not being warned of the impending flood and hence not having taken sufficient preparations, while others admitted to hearing the warnings on the radio, but had paid little attention. The warnings had not made it clear that the floods were to be so much worse than usual. With greater warning, people would have found their way to safety before the waters arrived and would have been able to save at least some of their assets. This was seen clearly in 2015. Some of our interviewees in Sindh said that the 2015 floods had been as serious for them as those of 2010, but most said that

although the water level in 2015 was very high, the impact of the floods was lower because they had had better early warning. It may also be that they had paid better attention to early warning, and as a result, they were much better prepared.

The lesson appears to have been learned, at least until the memory of 2010 fades. The floods in parts of Sindh were also bad because of the failure of dykes, causing huge flooding in the normally protected *pukka* areas. There is some controversy about the reasons for breaches in some of the bunds in Sindh, with many believing that negligence in the maintenance of the structures played a part. The Supreme Court commission also received testimonies that at least some of the breaches were deliberately created – in some cases because landlords were allegedly trying to relieve flooding on their own land and, in other cases, they were done at the instigation of Federal Ministers ‘to settle old political scores’ and by security agencies (Flood Inquiry Commission, 2013). This is yet one more example of the political roots of vulnerability to natural shocks.

The changing nature of flooding leads to very different patterns of flood displacement. In most years, those who have to take refuge on the dykes do so for a short time, often for one or two weeks, until the flood waters recede, but the flooding of 2010 kept people in displacement for two–four months. If prepared, people largely survive short-term displacement without external material support (if clean water and sanitation were available); however, many went extremely hungry during the longer displacement, and far greater and more urgent levels of assistance to households were badly needed.

### **Conflict-led displacement**

Pakistan has suffered degrees of internal and external conflict for many years. Additionally, it has been

## **Box 3: There’s no such thing as a natural disaster**

*‘Although excessive rainfall between July and September 2010 has been cited as the major causative factor for this disaster, the human interventions in the river system over the years made this disaster a catastrophe ... The river has now been constrained by embankments on both sides, and several barrages have been constructed along the river. As a result, the river has been aggrading rapidly during the last few decades due to its exceptionally high sediment load particularly in reaches upstream of the*

*barrages. This in turn has caused significant increase in cross-valley gradient, leading to breaches upstream of the barrages and inundation of large areas. Our flow accumulation analysis using Shuttle Radar Topography Mission (SRTM) data not only supports this interpretation but also points out that there are several reaches along the Indus River, which are still vulnerable to such breaches and flooding ... such events can occur at relatively low discharges’* (Gaurav et al., 2011: 1815).

home to large numbers of conflict-displaced refugees from Afghanistan since the Soviet war in the 1970s (most have since returned, though as of 2017, over one million Afghans remained living in Pakistan). Conflict-led displacement has occurred in several parts of the country and this study examined it in Peshawar District with IDPs from FATA. The study examines the nature of vulnerability that such displacement causes to see to what degree MYHF would be a useful resilience-building response.

IDPs from FATA arrived in Peshawar in different ways. Some areas, e.g. Bara Tehsil, suffered a gradual escalation of conflict and people there progressively felt forced to leave, but were largely able to leave at a time of their choosing. Others suffered sudden attack and were forced to leave at once, leaving all their personal belongings behind. The degree of trauma suffered during displacement was intense: fear of being kidnapped, fear of rape, separation from children, the difficulty of a long journey by foot, which some were physically incapable of making.

Most went immediately to relatives, who accommodated and fed them for as long as they were able. As they could, the IDPs found work and their own accommodation: only those who had no alternative went to stay in camps. IDPs outside camps were also able to register for a food aid ration, provided they had the right documentation. Beyond this, few of our interviewees indicated having received any assistance.

Displacement has generally been addressed by the international aid community through the humanitarian system: displacement is seen as creating a range of vulnerabilities, including to food insecurity and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV).<sup>9</sup> Humanitarians define the displaced by what they have lost: their homes, their land, their livelihoods, and their communities, with the corresponding social networks, support systems and social lives. When interviews with IDPs do not start from their needs, though, a very different story emerged.

For most, the period of greatest hardship was in the early stages of displacement. A significant degree of human suffering could have been averted with support for the displacement itself, e.g. the provision of free and safe transport for people for the last miles of the journey. Such assistance would have required very rapid response. Shelter and food were the first urgent needs and, for most, provision was made by their

relatives. (It is a recurrent theme of the study across all four countries that the most vulnerable people are often those who lack relatives or close contacts outside their own environments, e.g. in town or across a border.) A much quicker response with material aid (e.g. cash transfers) for IDPs or host families might have been appropriate, to assist with immediate living costs or for finding alternative accommodation in the private sector.

As displacement became protracted, the main hardship was economic. IDPs had lost their livelihoods – often based on the lucrative production of drugs – and struggled to earn enough from daily labour to keep their families. They also now faced the additional burden of high rent costs. However, most IDPs had been able to find some way to earn an income. This study did not attempt to quantify income, but from qualitative interviewing it appears that IDPs were generally poorer on average than the resident population (but not necessarily poorer than the poor among residents). In other words, longer-term anti-poverty measures are needed for all the poor in those areas, with attention to ensure the inclusion of IDPs, rather than humanitarian action only for IDPs. Not all households would ever be self-sufficient economically, especially those lacking male labour, and the IDPs had also benefited less from registration with social protection (BISP) than the host population. However, this falls short of identifying IDPs as necessarily being a target group for material humanitarian or emergency assistance after a period of protracted displacement.

Viewing the displaced as ‘vulnerable’ may be the aid industry default, but it is only a partial representation. Although opportunities for earning a living in displacement have been limited, there was little sign of most IDPs being reliant on assistance – most of them were not receiving any. There can be little doubt that most IDPs from Khyber Agency were *less* exposed to exploitation, abuse and violence than they had been at home. Displacement brought them to a less violent society: several IDP informants spoke of the deaths of their parents and grandparents from violence in feuds, which usually ended (at least temporarily) with displacement. Changes to healthcare were also apparent as healthcare became easier to access in displacement than it was at home – this vulnerability to disease was lost. The lives of women and girls were transformed, partly because of changes in their domestic lives (see Levine et al.) and also because displacement brought them within much

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9 This paper will later argue that vulnerability can be analysed more clearly if it is analysed in terms of ‘vulnerability from’ rather than ‘vulnerability to’, but here we employ the common usage.

closer reach of basic services, including healthcare, utilities and means of communication. They were also liberated by supplies of gas, electricity and piped water from the arduous work of collecting water and firewood. Overall, although the household economy was almost certainly worse off for most, it is less certain that displacement resulted in most people having less agency.

#### Loss of household labour

Two problems that cause loss of household labour have already been discussed above: disability or chronic illness and drug addiction. Excessive drug use also represents a significant economic drain on the household (cf. the huge proportion of household income spent on *khat* in Ethiopia, Sida et al., 2019.) Within the JFS, disability/chronic ill-health or addiction may result in the loss of 20–30% of the extended family's income. Where families lived in small units, this placed an additional burden on the wife. This additional economic responsibility was particularly difficult for women, because of the frequently strict constraints on their mobility and the work they were allowed to do. It was very rare to find women who had been able to take on professional jobs or earn an income comparable to that of men. A woman's future could depend on the willingness of her sons to remain in the JFS after their marriage – a fact that reveals all too clearly the rationality of parents who prioritised the education of their sons over that of the daughters.

## 4.4 Four underlying issues

Breaking down the factors that shape resilience and vulnerability, it becomes clear why the large (covariate) shocks, which are at the forefront of humanitarian attention, do not clearly stand out in interviewees' stories. The shocks certainly shape how people live, but even when we take the shock as a starting point, people do not necessarily feel that it was the most pressing or important feature of their lives. The underlying factors behind their exposure and vulnerability to those shocks are, to a great extent, the same as those that shape their other vulnerabilities and the limits to their agency as a whole: gender, neo-feudal inequality, governance and conflict.

These factors are far more political than economic. For example, people's access to assets depended less

on their ability to accumulate wealth than on the prevailing gender norms in the study areas and the neo-feudal political system of power, which entrenches the inequality in access to land. Governments in Pakistan have discussed the latter problem almost since independence (the former continues to get much less attention). Reforms have been suggested<sup>10</sup> but implementation has been weak – a political, and not an economic, explanation. The ongoing de facto privatisation of the River Indus and the *katcha* lands along also illustrate this point about power being at work rather than the law (Khan, 2017b).

Although limited access to quality education could be portrayed as the result of household poverty or an inevitable consequence of limited government resources, these explanations are partial at best. Access to education depends far more on gender norms and on governance. Unequal provision of state education for girls is a political decision, including on resource allocation for girls' schools. The fact that teachers are (de facto) allowed to turn up for work with irregularity and to treat their pupils and their pupils' families with contempt, are the consequence of a (de facto) decision by education departments or ministries that supervising teachers in rural areas doesn't matter.

Conflict and displacement from FATA are clearly governance issues and the government's plan to bring FATA more into the mainstream through its incorporation into KP Province is clear recognition of that. But governance also affects resilience to what are commonly termed natural disasters, such as floods. When the focus is only on household or community level DRR, the natural conclusion is to construct more protection dykes, to change more *katcha* land to *pukka*. However, as discussed above, this is not necessarily a resolution to the problem (Gaurav et al., 2011). The best solution for managing the river is linked to the government's ability to manage the dykes appropriately and ensure that land use management in the river basin takes place in accordance with the management plans it decrees. Although this study cannot answer questions relating to the river basin management (a political issue), it is clear that it greatly affects the resilience of those living close by.

Conflict was an underlying theme in people's vulnerability, far beyond situations of open armed conflict. Most attention is paid to the more extreme conflict that has taken place, particularly in FATA, parts of KP (such as previously in Swat Valley) and

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10 For example, The Sindh Government Hari Inquiry Committee of 1947–48 recommended measures including tenancy security, protection from eviction, and higher crop shares for tenant farmers. Laws reforms in 1959, 1972 and 1979 limited the size of individual landholdings, with provision for redistribution of the land to tenants (Qureshi and Qureshi, 2004; Gazdar, 2009).

parts of Balochistan. These conflicts, involving the Pakistani military, have an international dimension. By contrast, tensions and conflict between various castes or tribes in Sindh is often simmering just below the surface, and examples have been presented of people being forced from their homes or having their lands expropriated because of such conflict. In the two study districts of Ghotki and Shikarpur alone, 49 schools were closed and three destroyed between 2010 and 2012 because of tribal conflict (Yusuf and Hasan 2015). The description by Bengali (2015) of a typical village in upper Sindh captures the essential characteristics of the context in which so many people live, which often pass unseen in aid assessments.

## 4.5 Positive sources of resilience

Little has been published on the sources of resilience for the rural population of Sindh, for the peri-urban population of Peshawar or for IDPs to Peshawar. An extensive document search for published literature on resilience in Sindh, for example, did not find a single study of people's personal resilience and only threw up references to aid projects. These project-related documents only contained an analysis of resilience in Sindh in standard aid terms, i.e. predetermining the sources of resilience by aid frameworks, rather than deriving them from any empirical study of life in Sindh. As a result, this study could not test or

### Box 4: Description of 'a typical village' in Sindh (continued)

*'Fear is pervasive everywhere, particularly in upper Sindh. In one village, some of the women repeatedly said: hamara zamindar zalim nahi hai ('our landlord is not a tyrant'); which was unwarranted, as no questions about landlord oppression had been asked. One woman attempted to express an opinion, but was hushed up by others. In another village, male enumerators were not allowed to go beyond the autaq [guesthouse] of the landowner and tenants were brought to the autaq to be interviewed in the presence of the landlord's men. Female enumerators were escorted to the village for interviewing women, but the landlord's male escort remained present. The female respondents glanced at the men before responding to every question. Where enumerators managed to evade the escorts and speak with the villagers directly, their responses changed; but the fear was visible. The male escort frequently slapped the children who gathered around the team, asking them to go away; perhaps, as a way of asserting his authority. In one case, when a female enumerator entered a house to talk to women away from the presence of the escort, he called his men, hanging around at some distance, to bring an axe! Men dominate every aspect of women's lives and they are not allowed to leave the village unaccompanied by a male or to use cell phones. Women vote as per instructions from their men folk, and men vote as per instructions from the landlords.*

*Personal insecurity is compounded by inter-tribal conflict. Customary law no longer holds moral legitimacy with respect to maintaining equilibrium between the tribes/castes. Traditional rivalry in upper Sindh has escalated into active conflict and land grabbing is prevalent on a large scale; with*

*government (mostly, forest) land as well as private land forcibly occupied as a matter of routine. All sardars [tribal chiefs] have at their command armed gangs, which are organized and armed enough to be referred to as tribal militias. These gangs are used to guard against occupation of their lands and of their tribesmen, stealing of crops and livestock, or kidnapping for ransom – including of women as a way of dishonouring the other side – and also used to mete out similar treatment to rival tribes. The intensity of land disputes has turned the area into a 'war zone', with land under the control of one tribe being a 'no-go' area for members of rival tribes. Normal life is paralyzed, with most of the schools and health care centres rendered dysfunctional.*

*The writ of the State is virtually non-existent. According to villagers, the sardars keep conflicts between the tribes alive, so as to maintain their dominance over their tribe by portraying themselves as their protectors. Small and medium sized landowners (zamindars), tenants/ sharecroppers (haris), and landless peasants (mazdoors) are 'obliged' to remain under the protection of their sardar and suffer their oppression in return ... Hundreds of lives have been lost in these conflicts.*

*The breakdown of the writ of the State and 'warfare' between the tribes has also opened up avenues for criminal gangs and serious crime is rampant. Crimes include highway hold-ups, armed robberies, kidnapping for ransom, kidnapping of women, and murder. Most of the criminal gangs are said to operate under the protection of one sardar/wadera [feudal landlord] or another' (Bengali, 2012: 22).*

quantify sources (or indicators) of resilience that had been previously identified and remained exploratory in nature. Findings can only be presented in broader terms, leaving more refined work to future studies. The following paragraphs set out our analysis of what the populations in the study areas depended on when faced with difficulties and how they attempted to expand their agency.

#### 4.5.1 Income from outside the village

A repeated theme from the interviews, particularly in Sindh province, was the critical role of sources of income from work outside the village. This evidences the near impossibility for most people to advance economically from efforts within the rural economy. Such income was important in two ways. Many households had one adult male working in town to help provide for the family. Although this disruption to the JFS was often felt by the older members of the family, many were dependent, at least in part, on periodic money sent by sons living and working in town. Others worked in town for shorter periods to pay off debts and rebuild their lives after the serious flood damage in 2010 (and to a lesser extent in 2015). The ability to move to town and earn money while displaced from home by the floods also helped reduce the level of debt incurred by households to meet their living expenses in displacement.

A potentially far more lucrative, though risky, source of income was finding work in the Gulf, particularly in Saudi Arabia. Saudi Arabia seems to have been the most common destination partly because many people were able to obtain visas for the Umrah pilgrimage<sup>11</sup> and then stayed to work illegally. Once one person in a village or family has established themselves in a new place, others tended to follow, exploiting their existing connections. Before displacement, there was less pressure in Khyber Agency to migrate, because of the money available from hashish production.

Several families in Peshawar spoke of migration to Saudi Arabia or Dubai, but temporary migration to the Gulf was most prevalent in Ghotki District. In four of the five study villages, more than a third of all interviewees told us stories either about their own time in Saudi Arabia or of other family members working there. Migration to the Gulf was hardly mentioned in Shikrapur District, though it is not clear why.<sup>12</sup> The cost of arranging a passage to Saudi

Arabia was high, typically \$3,000–4,000 usually financed with loans or through contributions from extended family members. If successful, income is many times higher than in Pakistan. Migrants were able to earn \$1,000 a month and, even with much higher living costs, this was enough for them to pay back their loans and to send around \$100–150 a month to their families. This level of remittance was greater than could be earned even with a permanent (low-skilled) job in town or from labouring every day (contracts were typically worth \$2–4 a day). If someone was able to stay working in the Gulf for several years, they could also return with some capital. However, work in Saudi Arabia rarely offered a long-term escape from poverty: those who had been relatively successful there often looked to return or to send other relatives. The remittances functioned almost as a safety net for a significant percentage of the population.

Migration was not without risks. Those who worked illegally faced arrest and detention prior to being deported. If caught within a few months, as many of our interviewees were, they had not earned enough to repay the loans taken on to pay for the trip. They were thus left with higher debts than before and no way out. Working conditions could also be dangerous: those involved in work accidents and left disabled received no compensation.

The resilience dividend of migration is presented here largely in economic terms, but the interlinkages between the economic and social spheres are significant. Greater economic independence at an individual level opened up possibilities to change the terms on which family members live and relate to each other. This can be particularly transformative for gender relations.

*My husband has gone to work in Saudi Arabia and now he is able to provide properly for me. This has brought a lot of changes. My husband was only young and his mother and sisters used to fill his ear against me. But once he moved away from them, his behaviour towards me changed. He is really nice to me now, and he's provided me with a separate home, away from my in-laws. Now I am living a happy life with my children*  
(IDP woman, aged 25, Peshawar).

11 The Umrah pilgrimage to Mecca can be performed at any time of the year, in contrast to the Hadj which takes place at a specific time in the lunar calendar.

12 This could be a matter of chance in the sampling. Since the research allowed interviewees to set the agenda of the interviews, it is also possible, though less likely, that migration was simply not mentioned by them.

#### 4.5.2 Extended family

The negative power of the extended family (as discussed above) should not detract from its importance for many people's survival – itself the reason why extended family living keeps its power. Few people had enough confidence in their own resilience to live separately from their families. The importance of family for resilience was seen in several ways.

##### In displacement

When whole villages in Khyber Agency were suddenly displaced, people's first refuge was their family. Most were taken in, given shelter and provided for by relatives during the first weeks of their displacement in Peshawar until they were able to become more independent living (many who could not, had to live in camps). We heard no stories of IDPs who had been refused shelter and support by their relatives. This option does not seem to have been as available to those displaced by floods in Sindh, who were mainly forced to live in makeshift camps on the bunds.

##### Joint family system

A close extended family or JFS pools the agency of its members, and inevitably some individual agency is lost as a result. Serious negative consequences can result where internal relations are exploitative, but the JFS creates a larger and stronger unit with interdependence and the ability to pool resources for a common project. They are potentially an important source of both resilience and vulnerability for different members.

There is often an economic advantage, particularly in rural areas, where families could manage a larger agricultural production unit with a larger workforce. Additionally, some degree of insurance is provided by living in an arrangement where resources are pooled among several adults, especially for older individuals or those experiencing disability, unemployment or the negative effects of a natural disaster. Beyond these, there are additional benefits specific to some communities, for example in Khyber Agency where there is a need for many arms-bearing men to live together to protect the family and their property, as well as the advantages of several families sharing a multi-storey property in the cold winter climate.

The resilience provided by the JFS was heard most clearly where it was absent. Elderly people whose sons had chosen to leave home felt a much lesser degree of security out of the JFS, as they became dependent on the goodwill of their children to visit and send money. Financing migration to Saudi Arabia was often a joint family enterprise, with the rewards also shared within

the family. Many adults were in situations where it is hard to see how they would have survived without the JFS. Apart from the old, disabled or chronically sick, this includes many drug addicts (see above).

##### Migration of family members

Relatives were not only needed to recruit the sum necessary to send one person to Saudi Arabia, but played a critical role in helping new arrivals find work. People would usually go first to stay with relatives, who were often instrumental in finding them their first jobs. Those who had relatives in town could use them to help with accommodation or to help find jobs, including during flood displacement. Quantitative analysis of a non-random sample is not possible, but there is a strong impression from the interviews that if one son had moved into town, then others were more likely to follow – presumably because of the practical help that they could receive and because they were more likely to see this as a possible life choice.

#### 4.5.3 Education

Many people across all the study sites felt that education offered the best hope of a better life. It was principally seen as a means to achieve economic resilience, but a great many respondents also spoke of its importance for having a voice in society, necessary for the ability to know and claim rights and also of its importance for human and family development.

Education is clearly a much higher priority for families now than it was a generation ago. This was true in Sindh, in Peshawar and for IDPs from Khyber Agency. Most of the adults whom we spoke to had little education themselves, but were investing in sending their sons to school. Secondary education was seen as key to achieving urban employment, and there were huge benefits to all family members of a JFS in having at least one member successfully employed in town.

Parents, particularly mothers, were increasingly concerned about their daughters also obtaining at least a primary education. A small minority explicitly linked this to hopes for a successful career for the daughter, for example as a teacher of girls or a women's doctor. For most, though, education for girls was seen more in terms of personal development.

It is difficult to know to what extent education offers a realistic pathway to greater resilience. This is partly because education is a relatively new priority and most of the adults interviewed had little if any schooling. It is also difficult to assess how useful education will be because access to education,

especially secondary school, has depended partly on the economic situation of the family – the poorest interviewees tended to have little education and those who had secondary schooling tended to be more comfortable. A few individuals clearly had successful careers because of education: the father of one interviewee from Khyber Agency even became a professor at Kabul University and a few children had professional careers after post-graduate degrees, but these were isolated stories. Perhaps the greatest difficulty in isolating the impact of education on an individual's life is that opportunities were not necessarily accessible on merit, but rather through connections and power. Education was therefore a far more reliable route to opportunity for those for whom opportunity already beckoned, rather than for the excluded majority.

#### 4.5.4 Local leaders

Although interviewees tended to stress a narrative of powerlessness, both individual and collective, there were several cases where they spoke of having made representations to political authorities to try and bring about change. If these attempts were not always successful, their willingness – and ability – to try is itself testament to a degree of agency. There were a couple of isolated examples of successful engagement, usually linked to a single individual in the community with some degree of social or political influence. This person would then be used by a wider community for channelling their representations.

*As elders of this village, we asked the authorities of the education department of Sindh many times to improve the education system in our school. We met many times with district level officials. We wrote them letters about how bad the situation was in our school. There is only one teacher in our school, and he isn't even regular. But so far, this hasn't resulted in anything. But then came the education project of JDW sugar mill, for the sugarcane growing villages that lacked proper schools ... I organised many meetings with the sugar mill administration to get two teachers for our school, but they said that they would only give teachers to villages which didn't have a government school, and we already had one. So, I threatened them, that if they don't give us a school, we would boycott their sugar mill in the next season. The trick worked! They agreed to give us two teachers for our village school. So now, for past three years the children of our village have been getting a slightly better education. At least someone is teaching them on*

*regular basis, and the sugar mill provides books to the children*  
(Village informal leader, Sindh).

#### 4.5.5 Individual/family adaptive capacity

Many of the interviews in any one location told similar stories. This is hardly surprising: opportunities are so limited that most people will be constrained to the same few livelihood paths. Occasionally, a different narrative was heard. Some involved people investing in agriculture or livestock and managing to take a step or two ahead. A few stories were of different kinds of investment, where individuals or families showed a degree of initiative, resourcefulness or entrepreneurship. However, it is striking how few of those who showed such initiative had any clear success.

*Before buying my own tractor, I was hired by a neighbour to drive his tractor, but it I wasn't earning enough for us live off, especially with prices going up all the time. So I decided to buy my own tractor, by selling my share of the family land ... But now, I am thinking to sell my tractor, because the profit is low, and there are always problems with the tractor problems. I am thinking about opening a daily needs shop because it has good value especially here in katcha*  
[interview 1].

*Now, I've sold the old tractor and bought a newer model. I had to pay PKR 200,000 in advance, and monthly instalments of PKR 12,000*  
[interview 2].

*My brother and I invested in a contract for fishing from the government ... The whole family worked day and night, but we couldn't meet our quota, so lost the contract, but the government forced us to pay ... We had to sell our land, our only source of our income ... Now I have to work as an agricultural labourer.*

*You can't make a living from fishing any more, so I decided to buy land instead. I used all my savings to buy 10 acres of land ... But then came the flood in 2010. I lost everything. I had to take a loan of PKR 40,000 from a shopkeeper at 5% interest rate [per month, = 80% APR]. It took me almost seven years to repay. For a loan of PKR 40,000, I paid more than PKR 200,000, all my savings wasted on repaying my debt.*

It is not possible to determine from the interviews which factors lead to individuals having greater

or lesser adaptive capacity. However, exposure to different experiences seemed to be most effective at stimulating adaptation, particularly when the experience is learned from those with whom the person can identify (e.g. Afridi IDPs being influenced by their Afridi relatives in Peshawar) and where there is a supportive social environment (e.g. a supportive spouse and family or a critical mass in the community exposed to the same ideas).

This individual quality – but shaped as all individual qualities are by environment, experience and social organisation – is discussed further in Valid Evaluations (2015) and Sida et al. (2019), where it is argued that ‘adaptive capacity’ deserves much greater recognition and attention.

#### **4.5.6 Investment**

Many of the models for sustainable development or resilience foresee households gradually acquiring

assets and ultimately graduating from poverty. However, from the interviews in both Peshawar and Sindh there was an almost total absence of such stories. Very few people told us of making investments in any new livelihood activities and these were almost all on a very small scale. Of the 15 interviewees who reported making investments, five were for the purchase of animals; two bought motorbikes, one had bought a rickshaw; two bought land; and the rest had small trading businesses (bringing clothes into the village or buying a cart to sell in the market). Worryingly, none of these were financed from capital accumulation from their existing economic activities; most used loans at very high interest rates. Others converted existing assets, one person liquidated his livestock holding to buy land and one woman sold the gold that her parents had given her to buy a buffalo. Every other story of investment referred to the need to find sizeable annual investment of hundreds of dollars, necessary to cultivate each season.

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# 5 DFID's first MYHP and its contribution to resilience building

At the time of the research, DFID's MYHP had not engaged in truly multi-year humanitarian programming, in the sense of funding for a protracted presence at the same project sites. One reason has been the lack of need. Table 1 showed recurring incidents of crisis from 2000 to 2015, but since then there have been no major emergencies (the floods in 2017 were not on a comparable scale to those of 2010). Assistance given by the NDC consortium for flooding and for earthquakes was short-term.

Although displacement from FATA continues, most registered IDPs have returned home. Government of Pakistan policy is that IDPs ought to return and assistance for displacement has officially ended. Most of those remaining had chosen not to register as IDPs, which puts them outside the frame of assistance and raises the question as to how far they are categorised as internal migrants rather than IDPs. MYHF has been used to provide ongoing support to the government's policy of return, though interventions have not been multi-year for any given population or location. Support for return and reconstruction has consisted of fairly standard programming: a food ration for the initial period of return; various other material in-kind aid (e.g. productive inputs); and some rehabilitation of infrastructure and basic services.

This section analyses how far interventions supported by MYHF could in principle have helped build resilience by addressing some of the underlying causes of vulnerability. It makes no attempt to assess the impacts of MYHF projects or be comprehensive in describing what they have done. Any critique included here touches only on the question of the potential of MYHF to deliver a different kind of relief and to contribute to building resilience, and not to the value of any of the interventions as emergency programmes.

## 5.1 Natural Disaster Consortium (NDC)

The NDC is explicitly trying to support resilience through measures such as the introduction of improved stoves, permaculture and flood-proof storage for harvests. Although these measures may have beneficial impacts, for example on environmental sustainability and on reducing women's workloads, they do not respond to the core constraints on resilience identified in this study. Flood-proof storage of harvests may reduce the potential impact of floods, but interviewees generally reported that the floods destroyed their crops in the fields, rather than post-harvest. Most of the poor reported selling much of their production very quickly on harvest, so that those who capable of maintaining stocks may often not be the least resilient. Permaculture, or other measures to improve farming productivity, will have the least potential impact on those with the least land.

The NDC consortium is also taking advantage of MYHF to invest in preparedness for earlier response. In the absence of any large-scale emergency during the research period, it is difficult to gauge what impact this might have. It is relevant to note, though, that preparedness has been interpreted as pre-positioning emergency stocks (for food security and livelihood support, shelter, WASH and non-food items), suggesting that MYHF is being used for traditional forms of relief (in-kind transfers), rather than for developing or experimenting with new ways of delivering relief that may also lead to improved social organisation.

During the course of the evaluation the NDC consortium responded to floods in Sindh through one of the national organisations in the partnership,

HANDS. The response was fast and well organised, capitalising on the local network and knowledge of HANDS. This showcased the utility of an existing consortium in responding in a timely fashion, especially if there was pre-existing presence. This has been demonstrated in other studies for this thematic evaluation – MYHF allows for presence and in turn facilitates much earlier response.

The emphasis on pre-positioning stocks can be interpreted together with the programme's aim of improving the timeliness of cash transfers, defined as receiving cash within three months of a disaster. Since disaster-affected people often need emergency relief within the first few days, this timeframe, together with the bulk prepositioning of relief items, suggests that the overall relief paradigm has not changed. MYHF has not brought about a focus on market-centred approaches, even in a country where cash transfers are favoured by the government for both relief and social protection (e.g. Citizens' Damage Compensation Programme (CDCP)<sup>13</sup> and BISP). Although bulk procurement and purchasing stocks at non-emergency times will tend to reduce purchase prices, the impact on people's longer-term resilience may be felt more through any impacts which such purchases have on markets. Levine (2017) and Zyck et al. (2015) showed how large-scale contracts for in-kind relief aid during the 2010 floods undermined small traders and gave business elites much greater power over the market sector, because of the way in which contracts were arranged. The impacts on those depending on the market sector are routinely captured in aid reporting or in VFM analysis. It is not clear how far such considerations had been taken on board, and whether broader considerations of resilience and power relations in the market have led to different ways of working.

## 5.2 The RELIEF (conflict) consortium

The RELIEF consortium has aimed to combine support for returning IDPs' immediate needs (conceived of as one-off support rather than multi-year activity) with support for early recovery.

The latter is of more potential relevance to the resilience building agenda, though has also not necessarily implied multi-year programming in any one return location.

Activities have been broadly similar to those often included in conventionally funded programmes – cash for work, vocational training and small business support, and investment in WASH. Plans are based on assessments using IVAP questionnaires and the clusters and these, in line with humanitarian needs assessments generally, are designed to identify needs that can be met with relief aid, but are not tools for analysing needs or their causes.<sup>14</sup>

Although there are few signs that the RELIEF Consortium has addressed any of the underlying causes of vulnerability, this should not be read as a criticism. In the context of FATA, it is understandable, if not inevitable, that the consortium has limited itself to addressing the 'technical' symptoms of vulnerability and practical needs created by displacement. Addressing the underlying causes of vulnerability in FATA is a far more challenging than elsewhere in Pakistan and political complications arise in every direction. Operating presence in FATA requires a Government No-Objection Certificate, which proved difficult to obtain for all the consortium members; support for the Government's return policy is an inherently political process; the history of the state's relations to FATA, including its service delivery, is part of an ongoing and highly sensitive political debate; and any attempt to address power relations in FATA is a particularly difficult, if not dangerous, undertaking.

The most significant by-product of MYHF is probably the establishment by the consortium of the Age and Disability Unit. This has helped the programme to take a broader view of preparedness that includes staff training in issues such as inclusion and to undertake advocacy within the sector. It is doubtful that these would have been possible without multi-year funding and the longer-term focus on delivering urgent relief. However, the potential contribution to resilience is limited: attention is given to exclusion from assistance, rather than to combatting the exclusion faced by disabled or old people in their daily lives.

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13 Pakistan's CDCP was a rapid response cash grant to the 2010 flood victims, commonly referred to as the '*watan card*'.

14 For example, the IVAP survey includes a question on why a child is not in school. There is no way of replying that it is because the child is a girl.

## 5.3 The UN Consortium: community resilience and recovery support to FATA's returning IDPs

This consortium's activities clearly reflected the different missions of the coalition members (UNDP, FAO, WFP, UNICEF). The project addressed immediate food security through a food aid ration; it addressed malnutrition through Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM); aimed to improve education services through school rehabilitation and teacher training; and there was a range of interventions to improve income (or livelihoods), from kitchen gardening and compost promotion to livestock vaccinations, vocational training and business grants. Although MYHF is supposed to enable organisations time to learn about a context, these interventions are a fairly standard package, both in the sense that they are all

commonly found in annually-funded interventions, and in their ubiquity across different crises. Even the implementation modalities were highly generic (e.g. training about pest control using the universal farmer-field-school model).

The biggest change made by MYHF to the proposal may be that it included an aim of strengthening the capacity of the FATA secretariat and improving community organisation. These goals are critical for longer-term resilience in FATA and are less constrained when using MYHF. It is beyond the scope of this study to judge how well problems in FATA were understood or how likely the project is to make meaningful change. Current political changes regarding FATA, specifically its incorporation into KP Province and mainstream Pakistan, arguably make it less likely that short-term capacity building of the FATA secretariat will make a significant contribution to improved governance in the territory.

**Table 3: Attention paid by MYHP to factors identified by Valid Evaluations as constraining or enhancing resilience**

Factor identified in section 3	Relationship to MYHP
Gender	See below
Disability and sickness	Only exclusion from assistance addressed (age, disability) Other aspects not addressed
Drug addiction	Not mentioned or addressed
Access to land and river	Not mentioned or addressed Only productivity on existing land addressed (seeds, extension)
Dowry/bride price	Not mentioned or addressed
Tribal dominance	Not mentioned or addressed Most agencies work through existing (i.e. dominating) power structures
Discrimination against the poor, nepotism	Not mentioned or addressed
Flood	Longer-term improvement in response to flood not addressed
Conflict displacement	Longer-term improvement in response to conflict related displacement not addressed
Access to services and utilities (including financial services)	WASH infrastructure, school reconstruction and teacher training Governance issues not mentioned
<b>Sources of resilience</b>	
Income from outside the village/ remittances	Not mentioned
Extended family	Not mentioned
Education	See above. One-off infrastructure rehabilitation; one-off teacher training Longer-term change (provision, gender access, quality, supervision, etc.) not mentioned
Local leadership	Rarely discussed; unclear if addressed in FATA
Adaptive capacity (individual/family)	Not mentioned or addressed

## 5.4 Has MYHF helped address resilience?

In one sense, many of the objectives of the three consortiums are in line with addressing issues commonly associated with resilience building. These include improving food production (e.g. input provision, agricultural extension), increasing income (vocational training, business grants, etc.) and supporting the provision of basic services, especially water. They have also ostensibly addressed individual factors such as gender relations, which are not always associated with resilience but are identified as critical in this report. However, there are few signs that they have attempted to address the key issues that shape people's vulnerability and lack of agency in either Sindh or Peshawar, as illustrated in Table 3.

Power imbalances around gender relations and gender norms were identified above as the single biggest determinant of an individual's agency, and the need for humanitarian agencies to integrate gender analysis into their planning has been recognised for many years. As with the projects of larger international agencies (both UN and NGOs), DFID MYHP partners explicitly included gender in their programming and reporting, but there were few points of contact between the gender issues identified by this study as critical to an individual's agency and the focus of attention of DFID supported agencies. The partners' 'clear strategies for gender-inclusive programming' consist of attempts to include a minimum percentage of women among the beneficiaries of different activities.<sup>15</sup> This is an indicator of the agencies' desire to help women and girls with their standard programming; it is not an indicator of the relevance of the interventions to gender relations or to the lives of women and girls.

Because livelihood programming was generic, its relevance for women is largely limited to female heads of households where there are no economically active, adult males. If livelihoods are considered purely at a household level, then it appears rational that women only need help if they are living without men. Targeting female-headed households is indeed a common, if contested, aid strategy. Viewing resilience at an individual level would necessitate seeing constraints on agency in terms of how gender norms can affect married woman more than female heads of households.

Attempting to provide vocational training to an equal number of female beneficiaries, for example,

would be relevant if women's main constraint to an independent economic life was lack of technical skills. However, this study found no evidence that this was the case in Sindh, Peshawar district or FATA. Women's lives in FATA were frequently made miserable by a huge enforced workload, including supporting their in-laws' agricultural production: some women unfavourably compared their own treatment at the hands of their in-laws with the lives of cattle. Additionally, they did not have any say in how income was spent and were not allowed to go to any shops or markets to make even the most private purchases for themselves. In such a situation, it is welcome that a UN agency would support return with a dedicated gender programme: it is less easy to understand how giving women agricultural seeds would contribute to improving their lives.

It is difficult for international agencies to take on many aspects of gender relations, since so much of the exploitation and abuse of girls and women goes on within families. This should not make it invisible, though, and there should be no reason to limit the knowledge and analysis of a situation to the issues that can be affected by agency programming. Two examples suggest that this will remain a challenge for international actors unless they shift their analytical focus from the shocks to which they are responding and the needs assessments that they conduct, and towards the lives of the people affected.

- MYHP documents repeatedly warned of women becoming more vulnerable to SGBV in displacement. However, most SGBV in FATA emanated from within the family and so there are reasons to believe that it decreased for IDP women and girls (see above). This was missed because agencies focused more on their priority protection concerns, the additional SGBV resulting from a new shock (displacement), rather than on learning more about other changes in people's lives caused by displacement.
- MYHP documents reported findings that only a third of people said that child marriage was practised in their locality. This is unsurprising given that child marriage is illegal. However, if agencies had been able to invest in understanding people's lives in wider ways, this 'finding' might have been questioned – with possible implications for protection and gender programming.

Similar limitations are found in how MYHP addressed other factors related to resilience. Better services can help improve people's agency, but this will also

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15 MYHP annual review, 2016.

depend on how services are improved. Building (or rebuilding) more schools and training teachers can help, but the contribution will be limited where there are constraints to all children receiving quality education (as discussed above). Donor support for post-conflict school reconstruction is clearly a relevant a priority for overall support to return: this study is not suggesting that these funds were badly spent, but we do argue that if the objective is to improve people's overall resilience, then their contribution will be small.

It can legitimately be argued that expectations for improved resilience due to humanitarian programming are unrealistic, even with multi-year funding – though the expectation that this can happen is one deliberately raised by the humanitarian sector itself. Many of the factors shaping resilience are not amenable to action though MYHF. Longer timeframes should, however, make it possible for agencies to have access to better analysis of the specific constraints to agency in their operating areas, and to ensure that interventions are designed to be fulfilled within a two–four-year timeframe, rather than relying on generic responses. This would require a fundamental transformation in

how programmes are designed, moving away from needs assessment to problem analysis.

MYHF has not yet brought such a change, especially in places where intervention targeting is based on vulnerability as measured by IVAP surveys. The problem does not lie in the methodology of one particular assessment tool: it is a much more fundamental part of the humanitarian world view. It is revealed even in the ways in which vulnerability is described. For example, one UN partner refers repeatedly to the problem of 'vulnerability to food insecurity'. This defines the problem by the outcome or symptom – hunger and where the imperative is to feed people immediately without considering in depth why they are hungry or malnourished (as is the case for emergency aid). MYHF should offer humanitarian agencies a means to move beyond this and to identify and analyse the problems causing food insecurity. It is almost inevitable that the resulting programming will remain generic (input provision, training, etc.) and largely irrelevant to medium-term resilience, for as long as those programmes are designed to combat vulnerability to a symptom, rather than to address identified problems.

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# 6 Conclusions: MYHF and building resilience

## 6.1 Revisiting the arguments for MYHF in Pakistan: the evidence

Pakistan was a natural choice for piloting the use of MYHF. The country has been a significant beneficiary of humanitarian/emergency funds for much of the past 15 years and its high exposure and vulnerability to a variety of shocks is not likely to disappear in the short or even the medium term. It is tempting to argue that it is likely to continue to be the recipient of emergency funds for several years to come and it is surely better to avoid the inefficiencies and limited impact of short-term programming that cannot get beyond symptoms – and may even undermine resilience. This plausible logic can now be put to the test.

Various plausible mechanisms have been proposed by which a longer funding timeframe could improve the impact and VFM of humanitarian assistance and increase its longer-term contribution to resilience building.

1. MYHF can be used to address urgent needs, but more contextual analysis can enable better ways of working that can improve impact and thus VFM.
2. MYHF should enable significant cost savings over traditional single year emergency action.
3. By working with new aid paradigms, MYHF can help change the vulnerability dynamics faced by people exposed to shocks and affected by crises. This argument is that MYHF can support resilience not by mimicking resilience *development* projects but by maintaining a humanitarian identity and emergency focus, developing new paradigms for delivering aid that support social organisation or individual agency.<sup>16</sup>
4. MYHF can help address the causes of vulnerability, taking longer-term approaches that short-term emergency aid does not allow.

The evidence from the first iteration of MYHF in Pakistan is that any improvements have so far been modest.

### 6.1.1 Argument 1: better analysis and improved impact

MYHF was little different from traditional humanitarian programming using single year funding. There were few areas where a longer timeframe had brought about greater investment in contextual understanding and local problem analysis. Ways of working have remained largely unchanged.

### 6.1.2 Argument 2: cost savings

The timeframe of this evaluation was not totally contemporaneous with MYHP and little evidence could be obtained on cost-savings from MYHF from Pakistan. However, evidence from other countries in the thematic evaluation suggests that cost savings may be limited and may derive largely from savings in purchasing in-kind relief items. Greater use of cash or market-based modalities would probably limit cost savings further.

### 6.1.3 Argument 3: new paradigms

There is no evidence that there has been an attempt to use a multi-year engagement to experiment with new paradigms of aid delivery, e.g. to support community organisation and wider resilience. This is true both of Pakistan and the other three countries studied. (This does not negate the value of this idea, which remains relevant – if as yet unclear – for both recurrent and protracted crises.)

### 6.1.4 Argument 4: addressing causes of vulnerability

As discussed extensively above, the agencies' first engagement with MYHF has not led to any significant contribution to resilience-building being likely from humanitarian assistance. It is possible now to see more clearly what would be necessary for some of the

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<sup>16</sup> This argument is rarely advanced explicitly. It was most cogently put forward in relation to DFID's MYHF in Somalia (personal communication, 2014).

potential and hoped-for benefits of MYHF to be realised.

1. The timeframes and the scale of the challenge for making a contribution to resilience are beyond those of MYHF. Our analysis suggests that some progress can be made through a medium-term effort (e.g. a 10-year time horizon) but longer-term work, with a timeframe of 15 to 20 years, is needed. Although a three–four-year timescale allows humanitarian action to consider its role in supporting resilience, there is no evidence that humanitarian agencies can work on the scale needed to lead to reduced needs. For example, even a large UN return programme was only able to distribute inputs and training to under 1,000 households. It is dangerous to encourage unrealistic expectations, though the rationale that resilience building will lead to lower humanitarian costs in the future is sometimes used to justify investment in resilience building in MYHF.
2. The natural focus of current humanitarian programming is on households and communities. Valid Evaluations’ study of MYHF in across four countries suggests that more attention must be given to other levels of working, most particularly at the individual level (personal agency and adaptive capacity) and at the level of the local economy, which is much wider than that of a village or community. Unlike the other countries studied, Pakistan is a middle-income country, where inequality is a much greater factor in vulnerability and in restricting agency. This will limit the potential contribution to resilience of measures, which do not incorporate an analysis of politics, power dynamics, market functioning and gender inequality.
3. Similar conclusions emerge from an analysis of DRR, e.g. to floods. Here too the natural tendency has been to work with ‘communities’ (i.e. villages) in developing local disaster management plans. There are two risks with such a community-level approach to DRR. First, although the population of any village may share some common interests, it is also an arena of competing interests. Processes to prioritise risks are necessarily political, e.g. the landless and the large landowners may have very different DRR priorities. Second, the most serious flooding in Pakistan is not created by a local hazard but by conditions in a major river basin. DRR conceived purely at local level risks being ineffective and even maladaptive. Some actions at a village level will doubtless have a role to play in DRR, but only if they are situated within the framework of a coherent plan at river basin

level. Working at this level requires very different skillsets and approaches and a much longer timeframe even than the three–four years provided by MYHF.

4. This paper has argued that resilience is constrained by the interplay of political factors at many levels. People’s vulnerability to shocks and their limited agency in crises cannot be solved by filling a resilience deficit through transferring assets, skills or community structures (e.g. dykes, earthquake-proof houses, etc.). Agency is not a project output, but the outcome of changes that need engagement with political, institutional and socio-cultural factors. Humanitarian actors have not yet shown that they are suited to working in this way, even when given three–four-year timeframes to do so. Despite discourses around resilience and MYHF containing many references to underlying causes, those implementing humanitarian programmes remain wedded to other paradigms: the humanitarian imperative is to meet people’s needs, which is a symptom of vulnerability. The generic nature of MYHF programming is natural where interventions are designed to meet the same needs faced by people everywhere (e.g. hunger, lack of clean water, etc.), rather than to engage with the causes of those symptoms. If MYHF is to be used to support resilience building, a significant transformation will be needed in working cultures: in how interventions are designed, funded and evaluated; in how humanitarian actors work together and with others; in how different humanitarian and other interventions are designed to address complex causes of vulnerability; and with how humanitarian agencies think about their own role in crises. Longer budgeting timeframes alone cannot make such a transformation happen.

This analysis is not an argument against longer-term strategies or the need for longer-term aid engagement, which is also important for emergency or humanitarian engagement. Previous experience of international emergency aid in Pakistan has shown that, regardless of any resilience objectives, longer-term presence helps to ensure that the immediate, emergency objectives of aid can be met. This has clearly been seen in relation to aid targeting, which has proved been extremely difficult for emergency agencies when rushing into a new crisis location. Targeting in an unfamiliar society is never easy, but is more challenging in a highly hierarchical or semi-feudal society, where politics and power are unavoidably core issues in aid targeting. Shah and Shahbaz (2015) examined the emergency response

in Swat and Lower Dir Districts in KP Province in response to conflict-related displacement (2007–2009) and the flood crisis (2010). They found that external agencies, unfamiliar with the area, struggled to get information about the people most affected by crisis, let alone to reach them with assistance, even when they tried to work through local organisations.

*Many organisations were coming to the area for the first time, and they started interventions in a hurry ... When an assessment was done before distribution, project staff often visited the hujra (guest room) of an influential person and then depended on the information that person provided ... Many organisations had to work through local contacts or organisations, rather than implementing directly. Such organisations either hired local persons on a short-term (contract) basis or had to seek cooperation from local leaders ... in some cases, the same person was the focal person for many organisations, and s/he helped her/his own friends and relatives. In most cases, the focal person prepared a list of potential beneficiaries based on their own criteria (p. 18).*

Shah and Shahbaz quote extensively from people affected by the crises who were very aware of the overt politicisation of aid (pp 18–20):

*‘usually khans and influential persons used their personal relation for access to aid.’*

*‘every intervention made was through personal relations, every (focal) person tried to benefit his relatives, friends.’*

*‘If a focal person belonged to the Muslim League then he tried to benefit people in order to create a vote bank for himself ... every organisation did this.’*

*‘Some people from the People Party came and made entries, and gave money to those people who followed the party ideology and voters; similarly, a person from Jamat-e-Islami played a negative role in this.’*

Agencies working with vulnerable populations before they were hit by crises are in a better position to understand who is most affected and their needs, and how to navigate the political and power relations in the affected community. The latter could potentially help them to mitigate the elite capture of aid. It would also be a minimum condition for using emergency

relief interventions as a vehicle for advancing self-organisation and voice among the affected populations (‘the new aid paradigms’ in the second argument for MYHF above).

## 6.2 Resilience, humanitarian assistance and a multi-year presence

This evaluation concluded that multi-year engagement is highly useful, even for launching short-term relief operations. Even though many of the hoped-for benefits of MYHF have not (yet) materialised, there are also good grounds for believing that there are benefits for a multi-year framework for emergency operations. The case for using MYHF for attacking the root causes of vulnerability is less clear. Asking whether MYHF can be used to help build resilience is probably phrasing the question in an unhelpful way. A donor wanting to help build resilience for vulnerable population groups in Pakistan has different tools at its disposal, and can make resources available through a variety of mechanisms, including: standard (annual) emergency relief; multi-year emergency action; development/resilience projects at local level; supporting the voice of local or national civil society; direct budgetary support; grants and soft loans to government investment programmes; capacity building support to various government departments or agencies; direct financing to the private sector for targeted growth; and others. It is more helpful, therefore, to ask which kinds of resilience issues can best be addressed through *humanitarian* action, rather than other aid instruments; and how far these can be better addressed if such humanitarian action is multi-year.

The previous section demonstrated that humanitarian agencies did not naturally engage with the factors affecting resilience in ways that were likely to impact on individuals’ agency; addressing the underlying issues would take decades, not three–four years. Given the entrenched working culture in the humanitarian sector, there is little reason to argue that longer-term problems, including those of reconstruction and DRR, are best implemented through humanitarian programmes. Nevertheless, even if humanitarian aid is not best suited to address the root causes of vulnerability, it can be given in ways which are generally more supportive of agency-building, as the following examples illustrate.

Although most IDPs eventually found their way to self-sufficiency, humanitarian interventions could help

get them back on their feet more rapidly. Many people struggled during shorter-term displacement from floods and assistance could help prevent the erosion of livelihoods and accumulation of debt, which occurred even in periods as short as three months.

Typically, short-term budgetary horizons lead to standard relief modalities (direct transfers in-kind or in cash, direct provision of water or shelter, etc.). What might be called ‘multi-year thinking’ could, even in short-term programmes, lead to quite different ways of helping people, which could be much more supportive of their agency. For example, needs identified in this study, and possible ways of helping people, included: difficulties in accessing state support, which could be helped by assistance in registration or help in obtaining computerised national identity cards (CNICs); lack of connections for finding employment, including through short-term urban migration and accommodation, where agencies could play a brokering role or facilitate connections through social media, etc.;<sup>17</sup> and an inability to have one’s voice heard by authorities. This last problem cannot perhaps be addressed in a timeframe of weeks, but support to people’s ability to make their voices heard in crisis could have a significant potential impact on their resilience.

Although these operations would not necessarily be implemented over years, a multi-year presence would allow an agency to think in terms of taking up such a facilitation. Longer-term presence, including through local partnerships, would also be practically necessary to gain the extensive network of connections needed as well as a detailed understanding of local and national politics and the workings of the local economy. Indeed, the shorter the displacement, and the more urgent the support, the greater the need for a pre-existing presence in an area and a high degree of preparedness.

The continued provision of basic services during an emergency has less often been undertaken by aid agencies in Pakistan, because the state has been relied on to fulfil this role. This study found much evidence that the speed, coverage and reliability of aid distributed by the state needs improvement. It was beyond the scope of this study to examine the relative skillsets of various state organisations (including the army) and aid agencies, but in principle support for such improvement is an appropriate

role for humanitarian professionals. As a task, though, it is distinct from humanitarian assistance; although this may be a potential way of using MYHF, such capacity-building roles have in other places been financed through development spending. Arguably, this is the most important contribution that international partners can offer the marginalised and crisis-affected in Pakistan due to the country’s middle-income country status. (In this respect, MYHF may need to be used in a different way in Pakistan compared to the other study countries – Ethiopia, Sudan and DRC.) Given the scale of resources available to the state, poverty and vulnerability can be addressed much more effectively through changes in how resources are spent, whether through policies or in the capacities of state agencies, rather than through the flows of additional resources that amount to less than 0.02% of GDP.<sup>18</sup> Whether or not a donor felt that such institutional and political work is best financed through MYHF, it is a task demanding engagement with government institutions over several years. One specific sector that might need support is the provision of education during short-term displacement, which could have significant impact on the children’s eventual resilience.

## 6.3 Does Pakistan need multi-year emergency action?

The arguments above highlight the importance of a longer-term presence for improving the use of emergency aid, but do not imply that a longer-term *emergency* role would be beneficial. A justification for MYHF relies on the premise that a multi-year emergency presence is in any case inevitable, because crises happen so regularly. Despite Pakistan’s status as a leading recipient of humanitarian assistance over the past decade or more, this in fact is open to question.

A comparison of the four countries where this thematic study of MYHF is being conducted and shows this more clearly. Parts of Ethiopia, DRC and Sudan regularly or continuously receive emergency assistance.<sup>19</sup> Pakistan, on the other hand, has faced significant crises of different kinds over many years, but the case for a multi-year emergency response to any of them is unclear.

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17 Support for finding employment in protracted displacement is already becoming a more mainstream intervention in other countries, especially for refugees and IDPs in the Middle East.

18 Annual humanitarian assistance over the past decade has averaged at around \$500 million; GDP is over \$270 billion.

19 Whether or not emergency aid is actually the most appropriate assistance or whether this justifies MYHF will be discussed in the final report for this study.

- **Floods** are short-term crises. Although some degree of flooding is regular in some places, flooding on a scale that can be considered an emergency is very occasional and has struck in different places in different years. Multi-year engagement is needed for DRR and for wider resilience to floods, but there is no reason to believe that humanitarian channels are the appropriate way to engage with these (see below).
- **Earthquakes** are short-term crises. Because they are unpredictable and rare, they cannot be planned for through a multi-year business case. The longer-term needs posed by earthquakes are for reconstruction and, to some extent, DRR; as the Haiti experience showed all too clearly, there is no reason to believe that humanitarian channels are the most appropriate ways of addressing either.
- **Conflict-displacement** is a more likely candidate for MYHF, but in the current situation in Pakistan this is unclear. Mass internal displacement is now largely over, although many people who were forcibly displaced are choosing to continue to live in the places to which they fled. There is an increasing movement globally from thinking about protracted displacement as a humanitarian problem, to treating it instead as a development challenge.<sup>20</sup> Such an approach is particularly relevant to the displacement from FATA to KP, because most IDPs did not go to camps and had independent livelihoods in peri-urban areas. Their difficulties did not constitute a distinct emergency: they mirrored those of the poorer sections of their host communities. Support for both reconstruction and continued displacement clearly need long-term approaches, but there is little reason to think that humanitarian channels are most appropriate for the task.

## 6.4 A multi-year emergency role in Pakistan does not give multi-year presence

Pakistan's receipt of international emergency assistance over many years has been in response to distinct crises in different parts of the country. DFID's MYHF for the NDC provides for, among other things, a multi-year humanitarian response in a country that has been used to responding to different shocks. However, this kind of multi-year engagement does not give an agency the kind of long-term presence in an area that is needed to understand a local society, politics or economy. For instance, time spent in running a response to an earthquake in Balochistan

does not help an agency to understand the local politics of response to a subsequent earthquake in KP or Kashmir. Most crises in Pakistan are not in themselves protracted and even the protracted displacement crises are not necessarily best addressed with emergency mechanisms. The development–humanitarian dichotomy is particularly unhelpful and unnecessary here, because very few organisations are purely emergency or humanitarian actors. The same organisation could thus be preparing for an eventual emergency response while maintaining a longer-term *development* presence, as happened with HANDS in Sindh, an example of an organisation that is rooted in the local area and understands local culture and politics well. Using this example, it may often be more useful to think in terms of the development–humanitarian nexus rather than MYHF.

## 6.5 A case for MYHF in Pakistan?

The conclusions here are based on findings from the first attempts by a donor and its partners to work with MYHF. It would be unreasonable to have expected paradigmatic changes overnight. The findings of the study do not suggest that MYHF does not have a role to play in improving the effectiveness and VFM of humanitarian action. However, several conclusions stand out.

- Administrative changes in humanitarian financing do not in themselves make humanitarian aid more appropriate or more effective.
- If MYHF is to bring about more effective programming, it will have to be managed actively to do so. For example, more conditions on how aid funds are used may have to be included in contracts, or greater attention paid to choosing which parameters to monitor. This will entail greater administrative costs both for a donor and for recipient organisations/consortia.
- The possibilities of using a multi-year presence to develop different paradigms for delivering emergency relief that can better protect or increase resilience remain largely unexplored. There is no certainty that effective models can be found, but it is worth investing in experimentation.
- If a donor wishes to support building resilience and increased agency, they are unlikely to choose MYHF as the vehicle by which to do so.

A comparison of the findings from Pakistan with the other study countries suggests that MYHF should be used in different ways in different countries. Pakistan

<sup>20</sup> See for example UNDP et al. (2010), which became institutionalised from 2014 to 2017 as the UN's Solutions Alliance.

is a middle-income country that faces occasional extreme shocks from natural hazards in a context where much of the population lives in chronic poverty because of inequality. The responses from international partners to such a situation cannot be the same as those for DRC, for example, where there is no effective government or governance, little that can be called a functioning economy and long-standing insecurity from civil war. In Pakistan, much of what is needed are changes to policy and formal and informal governance at all levels, and improvements in the state's current capacity to deliver effective relief to its citizens. Achieving this involves a combination of work, including at policy level and with state institutions; as well as engagement directed towards affected people and communities. The latter encompasses traditional relief delivery, supporting national organisations to play a role, taking on a facilitation or mediation role for affected people (e.g. helping to connect people to government services) and taking on a mediation role between people and their government (e.g. helping people and communities raise a voice so that central government understands when rights are being violated and what is happening on the ground and its implications for its vulnerable citizens). MYHF can best be used in Pakistan if it is anchored within a longer-term effort to achieve these goals.

There can be an immediate benefit if multi-year funding can be managed so that it is used where operational organisations can show they have the combined skillsets required for short- and long-term thinking. Because DFID does not create the same bureaucratic funding divisions between humanitarian and development aid, it is well placed to use MYHF with flexibility. However, such a use of MYHF would best be seen as an intermediate stage towards a more transformative improvement in the use of aid in crisis-prone areas. MYHF can help to shift the discussion on how best to break down the long-entrenched humanitarian–development divide by blurring the distinction between the two. This is a valuable step, whose final goal will probably look quite different from the first use of MYHF. Hopefully, better opportunities will be found to combine shorter- and longer-term perspectives and operating modalities, which will benefit development progress, DRR, resilience building and the delivery of emergency relief. All of these objectives can better be achieved by anchoring emergency relief operations within using a longer-term (developmental/DRR) presence and strategy, rather than using a multi-year humanitarian presence to achieve development-like goals. The longer-term developmental/DRR presence should provide both a framework for a rapid operational response and also a strong understanding of the issues surrounding various problems.

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Cover photo: A young girl walks across a makeshift bridge over stagnant flood-water in Sindh province, Pakistan. © DFID/Magnus Wolfe-Murray

