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### Abbreviations

<table>
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<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CFW</td>
<td>Cash for Work</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIDA</td>
<td>Canadian International Development Agency</td>
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<td>HC</td>
<td>HC</td>
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<td>HCT</td>
<td>Humanitarian Country Team</td>
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<tr>
<td>KPK</td>
<td>Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa</td>
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<tr>
<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring &amp; Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non Governmental Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>NIC</td>
<td>National Identity Card</td>
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<td>NOC</td>
<td>No Objection Certificate</td>
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<tr>
<td>PHF</td>
<td>Pakistan Humanitarian Forum</td>
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<tr>
<td>VDC</td>
<td>Village Development Committee</td>
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<td>VRC</td>
<td>Village Relief Committee</td>
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<td>WFP</td>
<td>World Food Programme</td>
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Summary

In July and August 2010, Pakistan experienced its worst flooding in living memory. Four provinces, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), Punjab, Sindh and Baluchistan were hit hard. An estimated 2000 people died and 14-18 million more were left in desperate need of assistance. The members of the Humanitarian Coalition (HC), a network of Canadian NGOs determined to unite in cases of humanitarian crises, began life-saving responses almost immediately. The HC launched a joint national appeal to raise awareness about the disaster and rally Canadians to support the disaster.

The members of the HC are currently: CARE Canada, Oxfam Canada, Oxfam-Québec, Plan Canada and Save the Children Canada. Although Plan Canada was not yet a member at the time of the Pakistan disaster, Plan was engaged in emergency response there and has therefore been included in this report.

The objective of coordination was to avoid duplication in aid activities. Important elements such as coverage, vulnerability analysis and targeting, accountability to beneficiaries and standardization of the assistance were not addressed through formal coordination. HC members appeared to be more coordinated within donor-imposed consortia in which agencies worked closely together sharing a common logical framework, objectives, delivery and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) modalities.

In order to ensure emergency response programs are as effective as possible, and to uphold the HC’s commitment to accountability and transparency, evaluations of the members’ response programs have been conducted. The first, a short-term Real Time Review, was conducted in February 2011. This was followed by a comprehensive evaluation in November 2011. This report presents the findings and recommendations of those evaluations.

This evaluation was conducted according to the HC Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) framework. Two teams with staff from the member organizations and accompanied by an impartial consultant interviewed beneficiaries, partners and HC members’ staff in KPK, the Punjab, Sindh and Islamabad. Interviews with key informants and response documentation completed the evaluation. CARE, Oxfam Great Britain, Oxfam Novib, Plan Pakistan and Save the Children participated in the evaluation.

Considering the scale of the disaster and the complex Pakistan security environment, the HC members have made tremendous efforts to respond effectively. The HC members focused on their ability to deliver assistance, the establishment of effective monitoring and evaluation systems, the attention paid to beneficiary-oriented accountability, and applying lessons learned from evaluations and feedback.
The evaluation found that HC members who worked directly on the ground or intensively with implementing partners achieved better results than the members who took a hands-off approach, allowing their response activities to be led by Pakistani partner NGOs. The latter approach was less conducive to communication and required a good mutual understanding between the HC member and its partners to operate effectively.

Because of the large and growing scale of the emergency, HC members and their partners faced significant challenges in mobilizing sufficient capacity to respond to the needs of the affected populations. All interviewees admitted that there was a substantial part of the population that remained without assistance.

The targeting criteria varied considerably. Some HC members made efforts to identify vulnerable households through community-based targeting while in other areas the whole community was considered vulnerable.

The observed impact of the aid delivered by HC members varied widely from area to area and from agency to agency. Some areas saw very good results while in other cases beneficiaries continued to receive emergency aid when they should have been transitioning to long-term rehabilitation. The rehabilitation interventions that focused on recovering and reusing livelihoods assets, building durable shelter, and that took into account the skills, knowledge and wishes of the beneficiaries, were the most successful activities.

The HC members were generally quick to respond, especially in KPK and to a lesser extent in Punjab. However, when the disaster spread to Sindh, all HC members were faced with serious capacity challenges. Faced with the enormous scale of the crisis, it took some HC members until March 2011, to reach full capacity.

**Recommendation 1**: HC members should further emphasise the use the (governmental) coordination mechanisms in order to provide a more cohesive multi-agency response. Specific areas of improvement for inter-agency coordination are vulnerability analysis and targeting, accountability to disaster affected people and coverage.

The use of Humanitarian standards and principles in program implementation was overall satisfying where HC members were either directly operational on the ground or working very closely with implementing partners. Nevertheless, HC members could do more to train partners on the meaning and application of humanitarian standards and principles and they could do more to integrate explicitly the standards and principles in the different parts of the project cycle such as assessments, project approbation and M&E. Important efficiency gains could be made if the HC members worked more closely together, as some are working with the same
local partner organizations.

In areas where displaced people were able to return relatively quickly to their homes and villages, the transition to rehabilitation appeared to have gone fairly smoothly. In areas where the people were unable to return as quickly, the transition to rehabilitation went less smoothly. In some areas, HC members were able to stick with displaced people they had assisted as those people returned home. In these cases the transition to providing rehabilitation support was much smoother, as a rapport between the organization or its partner and the population had already been established.

Many beneficiaries were still unclear about the role of humanitarian agencies. They didn’t know what these organizations stood for or why they were there. Many beneficiaries did not know why they had been selected to participate in programs. HC members need to improve the information they share with beneficiaries, right from the very start.

**Recommendation 2:** HC members should work closely together to train partners of the meaning and application of humanitarian standards and principles.

**Recommendation 3:** HC members should explicitly integrate the humanitarian standards and principles in the different parts of the project cycle such as assessments, project approbation and M&E.

In most cases, but not all, beneficiaries who were interviewed were actively involved in the implementation of the assistance efforts. Good examples were found in which beneficiaries had considerable control over how and when activities would be implemented. However, beneficiaries were not actively involved from the outset in establishing programs, such as providing their input as to what their real needs were, what assistance programs would deliver, and how the programs would end or transition to new phases. Communities need to be consulted and involved in these aspects of emergency response as well.

Although the HC members expressed a strong intent to meet the needs of women affected by the disaster, they faced challenges actually interacting with and providing appropriate support to women. One HC member did recognize the difficulty women experienced in accessing program information. To ensure women had access to this information, they organized specific focus group discussions with women.

Sanitation facilities were highly valued by the communities – not just for of hygiene but also for the privacy they afforded women. The exposure the women experienced in some of the temporary shelters made them feel highly uncomfortable and the latrines were the only
structures that provided sufficient privacy. HC members or partners who had taken these concerns into account had adapted the sanitation design so that the bathroom and latrine were combined and more space for dressing and washing was available.

All HC members made sincere efforts to establish systems for beneficiaries to provide complaints and feedback, unfortunately with limited success. Beneficiaries preferred to deal with complaints on a more personal level rather than through impersonal measures such as complaint boxes. The evaluation found that these mechanisms often appeared too abstract to them. Many complaints were never brought to the attention of the assistance providers but dealt with by village committees.

**Recommendation 4:** HC members must inform the disaster-affected people about humanitarian assistance, its aims, for whom it is intended and how it can be accessed. Preferably this is done in close collaboration with the various humanitarian coordination mechanisms and using various means of mass communication.

All HC members had monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems in place. One system was highly sophisticated, structured independently from the management lines and was designed to keep the management accountable for ensuring program quality and beneficiary accountability. Other M&E systems were less developed and focused on the delivery of outputs and less on program quality aspects.

All HC members have invested in learning and improving through systematic reviews like this one. The HC members have demonstrated a willingness and ability to implement improvements based on the lessons learned from reviews. However the lessons the members have applied have focused very much on the internal workings of their own agencies, with less attention paid to their collective performance in relation to the disaster. Finally, there was a significant knowledge gap concerning the HC itself. The country offices and local partner organizations had limited to no awareness of the HC. Canadian representatives from the HC members could do more to communicate the HC’s requirements to their field offices.
**Recommendation 5**: HC members should undertake joint learning exercises, enabling them to understand that they face a number of similar challenges. It also allows them to reflect on their collective response and explore ways of finding solutions for shortcomings, specifically where it concerns coverage, vulnerability analysis and targeting, assistance standards, coordination and working with government. It would potentially help to reinforce and increase efficiency of common programming features such as support to and working with partners, M&E methodologies, beneficiary accountability practices, contingency and preparedness planning, etc.
Chapter 1: Introduction

In November 2011, the HC conducted a formal evaluation of the emergency response activities of its members in Pakistan following the severe flooding that occurred in the summer of 2010. This followed on the work of a Real Time Review (RTR) that was conducted in February 2011, to measure the effectiveness of programs as they were in progress and suggest interim improvements to enhance those programs. In keeping with the HC’s commitment to accountability and transparency, this report presents the results of that evaluation process.

The HC is a network of Canadian NGOs determined to unite in cases of humanitarian crises. The HC is formed by five of Canada's leading aid organizations: CARE Canada, Oxfam Canada, Oxfam-Québec, Plan Canada and Save the Children Canada. As a joint Canadian approach to humanitarian response, the HC is a "one-stop-shop" for all Canadians during times of international humanitarian disasters. The members of the HC work together to reduce unnecessary competition, better educate the public on humanitarian needs, increase the impact of Canadian humanitarian responses and reduce administrative costs.

During humanitarian emergencies, member agencies speak to Canadians with one voice, by providing direct access to disaster and response information, coordinating spokespersons and sharing resources. When disaster strikes, each member agency brings their specific expertise to implementing humanitarian programs.

All members of the HC are committed to humanitarian responses and subscribe to the internationally agreed humanitarian standards such as the Code of Conduct of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, the Sphere Standards, and the members’ own codes of conduct. The HC and its members raised over $3.3 million Canadian for the Pakistan disaster response. The funds have been disbursed according to a pre-agreed proportion to CARE, Oxfam Canada and to Save the Children. Oxfam Canada transferred the funding to the two Oxfam affiliates that were responding in Pakistan; Oxfam Great Britain and Oxfam Novib. This evaluation also visited the responses of Plan International though it did not receive any funds from the HC, as Plan was not yet a member at the time of the response.

Following this introduction, the second chapter will present background and context on Pakistan and the flooding emergency. The third chapter will lay out the purpose and methodology of the evaluation. The fourth chapter presents the findings and recommendations per “line of enquiry” which are an integral part of the HC’s Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. Finally, the last chapter contains the conclusions and main recommendations.

The evaluation was conducted following the guidelines that are provided in the HC Monitoring and Evaluation framework and the Terms of Reference for this evaluation. These may be found in Annex I.
Chapter 2: Background and Context

In July and August 2010, Pakistan experienced its worst flooding in living memory. Four provinces, Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa (KPK), Punjab, Sindh and Baluchistan were hit hard. An estimated 2000 people died and 14-18 million more were left in desperate need of assistance. The scale of the disaster grew steadily from late July to mid August 2010. Initially only the higher areas of KPK were affected, but as the water came down to the lower-lying areas of Punjab, Baluchistan and Sindh more and more land became inundated. In the affected mountainous areas water receded quickly but in the low areas of Sindh it took several months for the water to recede.

The impact of the flooding on the livelihoods of local people, particularly rural inhabitants, was tremendous. The floods submerged an estimated 17 million acres of farmland and it is believed that as much as 40 per cent of livestock were wiped out. The 2010 summer crop was lost and in the lower lying areas of Sindh farmers were not able to plant wheat, the main winter crop. The total economic impact is estimated at 10 billion dollars.

In addition to the direct impact on people’s lives and livelihoods, key infrastructure such as bridges, houses, roads and irrigation systems received heavy damage from the flooding. A World Food Program assessment in September 2010 estimated that 1.1 million houses were either completely destroyed or rendered uninhabitable. (Niaz Murtaza et al, DEC Real Time Evaluation Pakistan Floods 2010, March 2011 and Pakistan Flood Impact assessment, WFP. October 2010)

The ongoing political and military conflict in Pakistan is complex and difficult to navigate. Nevertheless, HC members were quick to respond - initially in KPK and subsequently in Punjab and Sindh. All areas have their specific political, social and cultural contexts and thus interaction between assistance providers, government, HC members and the population varies from area to area. The disaster affected populations differently in the various areas and HC members had to adapt to the local dynamics. In the north, rehabilitation was able to get underway before the end of 2010, while in the south people were forced out of the camps when the Pakistan Government decreed an end to the emergency in February 2011.

Chapter 3: Evaluation Purpose and Methodology

Purpose of the evaluation

This final evaluation is constructed with three primary goals:

1. To evaluate the quality, appropriateness and impact of member interventions, in line with M&E Framework guidelines and the lines of enquiry contained therein;
2. To evaluate the level of involvement of and accountability to beneficiaries, the transitions to recovery and reconstruction, and how member’s internal M&E systems address these. Financial management and cross-cutting gender issues will also be considered;

3. To confirm findings of the February 2011 RTR and evaluate to what extent lessons or recommendations from the February 2011 RTR have been taken into account and applied to programming. Specific attention will be given to lessons regarding staffing, staff training, accountability to beneficiaries, inter-agency coordination and standards.

and one secondary goal:

4. To obtain feedback which will contribute to improving the HC M&E framework, and identify opportunities for improving the value of HC M&E activities to participating organizations.

**Methodology**

Five organisations participated in the evaluation: CARE Pakistan, Save the Children Pakistan, Plan Pakistan, Oxfam Great Britain and Oxfam Novib. Of the HC members, one operated independently, three worked closely with partners and one agency followed a partner-led approach.

The evaluation took place from November 14 to November 25, 2011 and was based on the lines of inquiry of the HC’s M&E framework. Initial analysis was based on response documentation provided by the member HC members and the HC. The evaluation was conducted by seven evaluators consisting of M&E and program staff from the member agencies along with one international consultant. These were divided into two gender-balanced teams.

The teams interviewed beneficiaries, as well as staff from partner organizations and HC members in KPK, Punjab, Sindh and Islamabad. The beneficiary interviews mostly took the form of focus group discussions. Men and women were always interviewed separately except in Southern Punjab where men and women tend to sit together. The process concluded with interviews with key informants.

The teams worked with a semi-structured questionnaire that was organised along the lines of inquiry. The methodology focused on the beneficiaries; their appreciation of the delivered assistance, their involvement in the conceptualisation and delivery of the assistance as well as the clarity of communication from the assistance providers to the beneficiaries. The partner and agency interviews were mainly used for cross referencing the information obtained at community level as well as exploring agency involvement in the coordination, management structure, lessons learned and emergency preparedness.

The evaluation process in Pakistan ended with a presentation of the preliminary findings to staff from the participating HC members. Feedback from the members during this session was an integral part of the evaluation.
The major constraints encountered were slow responses from the HC members to the initial preparations for the evaluation, and a lack of knowledge about the HC among the participating field offices.

Chapter 4: Findings and Recommendations by Line of Inquiry

4.1 An effective management structure is in place for clarity, decision-making and direction

The management structures put in place by the HC member agencies did all provide for clarity and clear program direction. The structures did vary considerably depending on the mode of program delivery. One of the member agencies was fully and independently operational, some worked very closely with implementing partners or through community networks and one had opted for partner-led delivery of assistance.

The HC member that was fully operational had a clear management connection between the delivery of assistance and management decision-making and communication. This facilitated speedy communication in its activities and provided flexibility in integrating information from the field. An example of this was the following: the agency had observed that information provided during general community meetings did not reach women in the community. The agency therefore quickly adapted its approach to disseminating information in the communities, organising specific introductory Focus Group Discussions for women.

Another HC member chose to work with Pakistani partner organizations. The agency’s technical and managerial staff worked side by side with the staff of the partner organizations. This closeness between the HC member and the partners provided ample learning opportunities for the partners. Having staff working closely with partners also ensured a good flow of information between agency field offices and their head office. The downside of this approach was that the partner organizations did not feel sufficiently empowered. Despite the proximity between the HC member and its partners, some information was not communicated upwards.

One agency worked through a wide variety of Pakistani partner organizations, including community and similar networks. This approach proved effective in assuring beneficiaries that relief assistance was being shared equally. At the community level, responsibilities were well defined and understood. By organising parts of the response through such networks, the agency encountered few constraints in ensuring the sharing of information with the beneficiaries.
This evaluation found that the partner-led model that was adopted by one of the HC members appeared to be less effective. Coordination-related information did not always trickle down and the implementing partners were less apt in making changes to the delivery of assistance. In one case a partner indicated that there had been insufficient supervision and follow-up by the HC member, while in another case a partner who was used to working independently complained about overly intensive and inefficient supervision. This model has much potential for increased effectiveness, but more time should be spent on defining mutual responsibilities, and partner and HC member interaction, with an emphasis on upward communication and consideration for how the model enables partners and HC members to act cohesively within the wider humanitarian system.

The HC member field offices or representatives were generally well empowered. The operational decision-making and corresponding responsibilities were delegated to the HC member field offices. Only in some instances did HC members experience problems when partners maintained direct lines of communication with agency head offices without informing the field offices. In the first months of the response some field offices experienced problems due to a lack of clarity about budgets and targets because countrywide budgets and targets had not been defined per location. The concerned field offices did not know their specific budgets and the overall accounts did not provide sufficiently detailed information. These issues were resolved by the beginning of 2011.

**Recommendation 4.1.1**: HC members must pay sufficient attention to the quality of the communication between the level at which assistance is being delivered and the central management. Especially where assistance is delivered through partners the HC members should ensure that the partner-HC member construction is able to act cohesively in the wider humanitarian system. This requires from both the HC member and the partner a solid understanding of the humanitarian system (Nationally, provincially and at district level), their respective responsibilities, and how this influences the delivery and the quality of the assistance.

**4.2 Key support functions are adequately resourced**

Given the size and scale of the response the key support functions have performed very well. HC members and their partners saw their budgets increase by four or five times and staffing levels increased substantially. One of the HC members grew from 200 to 2000 staff.

The security management systems operated by the HC members were effective, were able to track staff movement, were well connected to external security information networks, and allowed for smooth communication.

All HC members did experience some logistical problems. Initially, access to the flooded areas
was problematic and supplies were not always of the required quality.

Human resources management did pose a number of challenges for all member agencies. The HC member that saw its staffing increase by a factor ten realised that the level of orientation that was provided to new staff joining the agency was of insufficient quality. The induction methodology was reviewed to ensure that all staff received proper orientation. All new staff joining the organisation now receive orientation tailored to the position they will occupy. This includes an introduction meeting with staff that occupy positions with whom the concerned individual will frequently interact.

Two HC members that experienced a major influx of international staff, often deployed from head offices, mentioned that many had difficulty meeting expectations and that some of them were not able to function in the Pakistan context. In Pakistan, professional interaction is often based on a solid understanding of the established hierarchy as well as a strict respect for the authority invested in each position and the individual occupying it. Not respecting these two principles may quickly result in dysfunctional relationships. It is therefore important that positions are created and defined before a post holder is appointed and that the post holder is able to perform while respecting these principles. HC members that were able to indicate for what purpose and position they were hiring short term international staff had a considerably higher success rate in making good use of this capacity.

**Recommendation 4.2.1:** One successful supply practice involved purchasing locally available materials such as bricks and delivering them directly to the beneficiaries. Beneficiaries controlled the material upon arrival and contacted the HC member or its partner when they observed quality problems. Suppliers were thus forced to deliver good quality materials.

The recruitment drive by international agencies had a negative impact on the local partners. Partners who needed to increase their staff to be able to respond also suffered from staff leaving for better-paid jobs offered by the international agencies. To counteract this tendency some of the partners retained staff by doubling their monthly salaries.

**Recommendation 4.2.2:** HC members must discuss and agree at the national level on how to limit the negative effects of partner staff being recruited by international agencies at the beginning or during a response. Such an agreement could be sought through the Pakistan Humanitarian Forum and should respect the individual liberties of an employee to seek another position.
4.3 Coordination and collaboration with other actors

The scale of the disaster provided an additional dimension to the need for coordination, as none of the HC members had the capacity to respond to the whole crisis. One of the members said: “In KPK we had the capacity to respond quickly. In Punjab it was already a stretch but we could deal with it. But when Sindh kicked in we were stretched beyond capacity.” Without exception, this was the case for all HC members. HC members had to make choices about where to intervene and they knew that they were covering only part of the needs.

Almost all stakeholders said that a large proportion of the population had not received any assistance as the total capacity that was eventually mobilized was insufficient to deal with the breadth of need. It is therefore surprising that the coordination mechanisms were not primarily seen as a tool to address the capacity gap. Efficiencies were increased by avoiding duplication of activities, but the main issue appears to have been covering the needs, especially during the return and rehabilitation phase when the people moved from camps back to their villages.

A number of coordination mechanisms were used during the response. These were:

- Government, under the umbrella of the Disaster Management Authority at district, provincial and national levels;
- The UN, led through the clusters and the HCT;
- Donors, by having HC members applying in consortia or alliances;
- With the international HC members through PHF.

In general all HC members that are part of an alliance or a consortium (DfID or ECHO funded) were, after initially having resisted the consortium idea, positive about the level of coordination and cohesiveness of response they could achieve. The consortia go beyond the level of standardising the response and require HC members to harmonize their monitoring and evaluation methodologies as well as their accountability mechanisms. Initially the HC members resisted the consortium model because it was introduced during the response and it caused considerable delays in responding to the needs.

The cluster mechanisms have been successful in ensuring that HC members responded in different geographical locations, thus reducing the possibility of duplication. In general, however, the members indicated the clusters did not go any further than avoiding duplication. Issues relating to standardising responses, analysis of vulnerability, equitability and targeting and ensuring that all needs were covered were not addressed at the cluster level. While most agencies focussed on avoiding duplication, one agency considered the cluster coordination just as an information-sharing platform where information about other agencies and possible new funding opportunities could be obtained.
Further to the 2009 crisis in Swat, the government in KPK was quick in providing cohesive coordination, though obtaining no objection certificates (NOCs) often proved to be cumbersome. In the Punjab and Sindh the provincial and district authorities lacked the experience from KPK and government coordination was of limited quality. This was reportedly due to incompetence, lack of the coordination, and few HC members participating. Members reported they had difficulty knowing who to contact within local governments. The Pakistan Humanitarian Forum (PHF) brings together a number of International NGOs and is considered to be an effective tool in representing their interests. The coordination centres on issues that concern all HC members such as visas and NOCs. The chair of the PHF is a member of the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT).

Recommendation 4.3.1: HC members should work together in developing and maintaining their humanitarian response capacities, with a specific focus on monitoring the humanitarian situation, definitions of vulnerability and targeting, coverage and coordination.

Recommendation 4.3.2: HC members should explore collectively the development of a comprehensive Disaster Management Mechanism which is fully adapted to the Pakistan context and takes into account the support and development needs of provincial and local governmental disaster management capacity.

4.4 Accurate and honest reporting
The reports that have been submitted are of good quality though they do not follow the required HC reporting requirements. The HC members were not aware of any “standardised” reporting format for the HC. A possible explanation is that members are accustomed to reporting to the national body that provided the funding. These offices then report back to the respective donors. In addition, the HC funding was at times combined with CIDA funds and was therefore recognized by the implementing HC members as “CIDA funding”.

In general, HC members were willing to share critical reports and corroborate the findings of these reports, though there was one notable exception in the case of a six-month report that focused exclusively on an agency and its beneficiaries. Though such reports form an integral part of the agency’s public relations efforts, a more critical approach to its achievements and performance is welcomed. There is no harm done when HC members look honestly at their response in relation to the overall needs and other actors.

All HC members and partners were ready to participate in the interviews and share information.
4.5 Humanitarian imperative governs decisions about targeting and coverage.

2010 response
All HC members were quick to prioritise and respond to the crisis. The KPK area was the first to be flooded and because most of the HC members already had a presence in the area they could quickly mobilize. In addition, the KPK government and the cluster coordination mechanisms were still operational following the SWAT valley crisis of 2009/2010. When the flooding spread to the Punjab, HC members were again relatively fast to respond though for many of them it stretched their capacities to the limit. Some had operational partners in Punjab while others had to identify operational partners. In contrast with KPK, the Punjab government had little experience in coordinating a large-scale response. This, combined with the absence of the cluster coordination mechanism, caused some delays in having in place some form of meaningful coordination. Nevertheless, on the whole, the HC members were not displeased with their responses in the Punjab.

The flooding in Sindh overstretched the HC members. It took a considerable amount of time to mobilize capacity and to identify partners and many of the partners did eventually work in areas that were new to them. In these areas they lacked the connections with government and Pakistani civil society. Some HC members only reached their full capacity in March 2011.

2011 Response
In 2011 parts of Sindh flooded again. HC members were quick to respond and they indicated that lessons had been learned from the previous year’s response. They felt better prepared,

Recommendation 4.4.1: Canadian HC member headquarters must provide more information to their country-level colleagues about the HC and its reporting requirements. HC members can decide on how (Field office or national representation) the reports will be put together.
were more confident about their ability to respond and did have the capacity to respond quickly.

**Agency attitude towards Emergency Preparedness and Response**

All HC members consider their ability to respond to crises a strategic element of their country programs. Most of them refer to the recent disaster history of Pakistan (2005 earthquake, 2009 displacement in Swat, 2010 flooding of KPK, Sindh, Punjab and Baluchistan and 2011 flooding in Sindh) to point out the need for a solid humanitarian response capacity.

All these crises affected millions of people. Only one member stated that these are the same arguments used by the government to ensure that aid organizations like the HC members respond, and they wonder what the government is doing to deal with disasters and reduce vulnerabilities. Nevertheless it is clear the HC members are investing in emergency response capacity, are learning from the previous responses and are becoming more integrated in their emergency responses. The introduction of consortia by donors requires increased cooperation between the participating HC members. They have to standardize their responses and harmonize their operational modalities, including beneficiary accountability. Some HC members preferred an alliance over a consortium as within an alliance only logical frameworks are shared and members can more easily maintain their agency-specific identity.

**Recommendation 4.5.1:** The HC members should integrate their humanitarian response capacities and response modalities in order to be better prepared and respond cohesively during a humanitarian crisis.

**4.6 Support indigenous capacity and connectedness.**

In KPK and in parts of Punjab, the emergency situation was short-lived as water receded relatively quickly. People returned to their places of origin and started rehabilitation of farmland and homes. HC members were quick to transition to rehabilitation and, towards the end of November, 2010, the activities aimed at return and reintegration of the population and the recovery of their livelihoods.

In southern Punjab and in Sindh the emergency situation lasted much longer. However in February 2011, the government decreed that the emergency was over without having prepared for a transition. People who lived in camps were forced to move elsewhere or to return to their settlements. Some returned to their villages even before the water had receded completely. In these areas the transition from emergency response to rehabilitation did not go smoothly. In both the emergency phase and the rehabilitation phase good examples of support to indigenous capacity can be found. Plan-Pakistan supported community networks to distribute cooked food to beneficiaries. In this case, the beneficiary population was divided into groups of approximately 50 people. These groups cooked together and ensured that all people in the
Unfortunately not all HC members had taken the local situation and desires of users into account. In one area a package of ten latrines, bathrooms and washing slabs had been provided. Their design had not been adapted, their location had been decided by a partner NGO, and the laundry facilities were too far away from the nearest water source. In practice the men did not use the facilities and the women had to carry large amounts of water to do their laundry. The bathrooms provided little space for dressing.

Recommendation 4.6.1: HC members must communicate to the beneficiaries the aims of the rehabilitation phase and develop community-based strategies on how to achieve these aims. Specific emphasis should be placed on the inclusion of local knowledge, user preferences and locally available skills.

In other areas the housing materials that were provided fell short of any rehabilitation standard. The materials had been combined with plastic sheeting people had received when living in the camps. The shelter did not protect against the cold or meet expectations for privacy which are very important in the traditional culture. During consultations in these communities it was clear that housing was their highest priority.

In most areas there was a gap between the emergency period, the return of people to their places of origin and the provision of rehabilitation support. One of the main reasons behind these delays was the availability of donor funding that did not keep pace with the changing situation. As well, the level of funding available for rehabilitation was limited. Despite the efforts to invest in housing, the number of shelters that have been constructed remains far below the scale of needs.

Rehabilitation was interpreted differently by the various HC members, resulting in huge variations in the level of support people received. Some members provided some limited
support in livelihoods and shelter, while others engaged in house construction, clean-up campaigns and recovery of agriculture land. The change to rehabilitation programs was often applied across an entire area at once, rather than allowing for a transition period between the winding down of emergency services and the phasing in of rehabilitation for those able to return and pick up their livelihoods. A good practice employed by some of the HC members was to follow the people with whom they had worked in the camps back to their homes. This approach was highly appreciated by the population as they already had familiarity with the assistance providers. In other cases HC members moved into new areas and started afresh. This meant that new relationships had to be built.

**Recommendation 4.6.2:** HC members must agree on rehabilitation standards and outcomes and base these on community priorities and strategies.

**4.7 Agency and partner staff are aware of agreed standards and their application**

Awareness of agreed standards is important for most HC members and most of them invested in the provision of training to staff and partners. Only one agency had focused on agency-specific values and less on the general humanitarian standards.

Nevertheless, the approach did demonstrate the application of some standards such as the incorporation of local capacities, support to beneficiary defined strategies and beneficiary participation. Despite the focus on standards, the partners in particular had difficulties explaining what they meant for their services delivery or any other purpose that could be enhanced by the standards such as the definition of objectives or the development of their participatory methods.

The technical sector specific standards were often well known by the partners, but were considered in absolute terms rather than elements that can be discussed with the beneficiaries. Where HC members had worked closely with partners the use of standards was better developed.

Two humanitarian principles have a specific value in Pakistan. The first one is impartiality. It is not uncommon in the Pakistan context that assistance providers are put under pressure by local power brokers to assist certain areas or to incorporate certain people in their staff. Potentially this can compromise the impartiality of the organisations. One specific case came about during the interviews where the representative of the local landlord made it very clear to the rest of the population that it was exclusively due to his efforts that the people had received assistance. Considering the fact that a high number of HC members had indeed delivered...
significant assistance in the concerned villages (considerably more than in the adjacent areas) it is not unlikely his words echoed a certain truth. Local partners tend to see these kinds of pressures as operational issues and do not systematically communicate them to the HC members.

The second humanitarian value is neutrality. The Pakistan Military took on a substantial part of the initial emergency relief effort. Agencies were invited to collaborate with the military. HC members took a principled position and did not use the services of the military. Other agencies, however, did use military services such as escorts. Some tried to mitigate the risk to their work through the collaboration with police services, rather than directly with the military, or did not allow international staff to use some of the services such as security escorts. None of the HC members worked in camps that were managed by the Pakistan military.

**Recommendation 4.7.1:** HC members must do more to integrate the humanitarian standards in their methodologies throughout the project cycle and perceive their achievements through the humanitarian principles. This includes training of their partners in their application; from assessment, proposal development to implementation and M&E.

### 4.8 We involve beneficiaries in key decisions and demonstrate accountability to them

**Information about the assistance providers**

In many of the affected areas the populations are not accustomed to receiving international assistance from NGOs and are not familiar with humanitarian organisations. During interviews the beneficiaries often said that they did not what to expect. The humanitarian community, including the HC members, had not made any effort to inform the wider public about their existence, their roles and what people affected by the crisis could expect from them.

The HC members made their decisions internally about where to work and in what sectors to intervene. Beneficiaries were only subsequently informed during assessments or at the start of an intervention.

In addition, the HC members seem to interpret accountability to beneficiaries as applying only within the proposed activities, but not necessarily to the decision-making about the activities themselves. On a number of occasions the interview team ran into situations where people would have preferred a different form of assistance but were unable to make this known to the
In one case the benefiting communities more or less forced the agency to adapt the design and provide the required means after they felt that decision-making between an agency headquarters and a field office took too much time. The agency did indeed provide the means and the works were completed as intended by the beneficiaries.

The district, provincial, national or cluster coordination mechanisms do not seem to have paid attention to beneficiary accountability. While in many of these coordination mechanisms the participating NGOs, UN Agencies and/or authorities tended to keep each other accountable, their common objective was to provide assistance to beneficiaries or, formulated differently, to ensure those affected had access to assistance. The collective awareness of this responsibility was insufficiently ingrained in the coordination culture. Insufficient attention was paid to informing the affected people about available assistance, about the organizations providing it, and the mechanisms to access either assistance or assistance providers.

**Recommendation 4.8.1:** HC members must invest more in providing public information about their roles and objectives. It is important for the population to know why humanitarian agencies are around, how they operate and how they are linked to the overall assistance efforts.

**Decision-making**

Involvement of beneficiaries in key decision-making has been one of the major challenges for the agencies. In some cases agencies and partners managed to ensure that the beneficiaries had a major stake in the implementation of the programs. Good examples can be found in the shelter program where the beneficiaries had the freedom to adapt a basic design according to their wishes.

Despite a few good examples of beneficiary participation in decision-making, unfortunately in most cases beneficiaries were not involved in key decisions surrounding the interventions. Assessments were carried out by agency staff and the decision-making following these assessments was done internally by the HC members. At times even local partners were not involved. One HC member said, “We first secure the funding and subsequently we look for the implementing partners.” This resulted in a number of cases in a “chain of imposition”. Depending on the quality of the relationships between the partner, beneficiaries and the concerned HC agency, such “imposition” could be managed in such a way that indeed the assistance was adapted to beneficiary wishes. However...
in a number of cases it was obvious that a “package” had been delivered without further involvement of the beneficiaries.

Exit strategies were often based on completion of the pre-set assistance outcomes. In most cases the process of “disengagement” worked well. In general, village committees that had been created during the interventions ceased to exist after the disengagement of programs, though in one area the committees had made contact with each other and they had pursued their activities with a collective request for the government to provide electricity and other services to their villages.

Apart from activities that specifically focussed on women, women in general were not well informed about aid interventions. With few exceptions, all women referred to their male counterparts when relationships with the assistance providers were discussed. Only one agency had recognised that women indeed had difficulties in accessing information. They had instigated a system of focus group discussions with the women to ensure they had access to the key project information and that they could exchange ideas and observations. Even in the cases where women were part of the Village Relief Committees or Village Development Committees decisions were made and communicated by the male members of these committees.

These observations demonstrate the enormity of the challenge of engaging women in programming in Pakistan. All HC members and partners have a keen awareness of the precarious position of women in the society and are confronted with this in many ways, both within their organisations as well as in their external relationships.

**Recommendation 4.8.2:** HC members must ensure that the beneficiaries are involved in major decision-making such as assessments, exit strategies and design changes. Most of these decisions are process related and can be anticipated well in advance. Specific attention should be paid to the involvement of women.

**Complaint mechanisms**
All HC members and partners used complaint mechanisms and obviously allocated substantial efforts to informing people about emergency and rehabilitation activities. Often information was made available in multiple ways (verbal as well as via posters, text as well as images, etc) so that people could understand what assistance they were entitled to. One agency encouraged beneficiaries to check their kits before leaving the distribution area. Some HC members ensured that telephone lines were toll free and staffed seven days a week, though from the interviews it was clear that, despite best efforts, some of the telephone lines were not always staffed. Another system that was used by almost all HC members was complaint boxes.
All HC members did see the complaint mechanisms as an important achievement and an enrichment of the way they delivered assistance. All members gave importance to these mechanisms as it underlined their availability for the beneficiaries and their readiness to correct mistakes.

In discussion with the beneficiaries it became clear that the relationship between the assistance provider and their community was the central factor determining the quality of communication. The beneficiaries referred to trust; a trust that had to be gained. On numerous occasions beneficiaries had seen NGOs show up for assessments never to return again and thus had a very cautious attitude towards NGOs and their partners. Where trust had been established and issues came up, the communities would contact a partner employee known to them.

The efficiency of complaint boxes seems doubtful. The agencies made extensive use of the boxes. During the interviews many male beneficiaries acknowledged that they had known about them. However few had used them to lodge a complaint. Beneficiaries and Village Development Committees or Village Relief Committees (VDCs or VRCs) made it clear that complaints were often solved within the community and never went beyond the community. Women were in general not aware of the complaint mechanisms in place and if they were aware they would transmit their complaints through their male counterparts.

Overall it was not proven that the complaint mechanisms put in place had any significant impact on improving the quality of the assistance nor that they allowed for potential beneficiaries to claim their entitlements.

One partner did value the complaint mechanisms in a different way. He acknowledged that so far they had not been effective but he was very much of the opinion that one had to start somewhere. For him the potential mediation function of a complaint mechanism was of secondary importance. Instead he highly valued the opportunity the mechanisms offered. People were not used to lodging formal complaints and receiving a reply but it was perceived as positive to begin to establish this culture.

Accountability needs more attention and will have to be conceptualised in a wider framework than the confines of given interventions. Enhancements are especially needed in communication to beneficiaries about the NGOs themselves, assistance levels, objectives and exit strategies, and inclusion of beneficiaries in assessments. Currently accountability is sought
within the confines of established program activities but not about the selection of activities themselves. No connection was made between beneficiary accountability and local or national level humanitarian coordination mechanisms.

**Recommendation 4.8.3**: HC members should consider the complaint mechanism in the light of the total support beneficiaries require and be sensitive to the ability of individuals to express their needs when choosing a community-based approach.

### 4.9 Our assistance is relevant and appropriate, and respects local culture(s)

Overall the assistance appears to have been relevant and appropriate, despite great variations in its quality. The way assistance was delivered did not, despite the efforts, sufficiently reach out to women. Access to women remains a major obstacle and it will require additional investigation on how to overcome the barriers and ensure the inclusion of women in decision-making.

Despite an overall positive impression of the relevance and appropriateness of the assistance there is room for improvement. Some of the issues that were raised during the interviews are listed here:

- The activities that were selected under a cash for work (CFW) scheme appeared to be inaccessible to women. In exchange for fifty per cent of the CFW value the women hired male family members to do the work for them. The women suggested that the implementing partner should have proposed activities accessible to women. Similar transfers could be observed when women had to rely on male family members’ NICs for having access to cash grants.
- Some beneficiaries admitted that they could have done without certain forms of assistance. In their view they could have catered for certain needs themselves. Nevertheless they were grateful for the assistance.
- Some communities received emergency assistance while they were in need for support in rehabilitating their livelihoods and shelter. For these communities this raised two specific problems. First of all they did not receive the assistance they were looking for and secondly the assistance was used for different purposes than intended.
- In a few cases the evaluation team did encounter inappropriate or ill designed assistance like two hand pumps in one compound, two pumps at a school; one electrical and one
One of the HC members had incorporated the main humanitarian standards in its M&E system and actively focussed on the process of assistance delivery through the lens of the standards. Management is through their M&E methodology made accountable in achieving these standards.

A last point to make here is balancing the perception of need with the ability of beneficiaries to organise the required means themselves. The beneficiaries were clear about their priority needs: shelter and livelihoods. The CFW support that helped people to regenerate village and agricultural infrastructures was generally widely appreciated. One responded said, “I was not only paid, I recovered my own land! That was the best thing about it.” After this point a more strategic question arises. Is it better to invest assistance resources in shelter or in agriculture? The responses were unanimously in favour of housing for the simple reason that they would be able to obtain resources for their livelihoods but that they would have serious problems in finding sufficient resources to pay for their houses. Living with high levels of debt is an unfortunate reality in many areas in Pakistan. However loans are purpose-bound. Loans for agriculture are much easier to obtain than loans for housing. Especially during the rehabilitation phase it is important to connect the assistance-driven investments to the opportunities the local economy offers to the beneficiaries in order to optimize the use of these funds from the beneficiary perspective.

**Recommendation 4.9.1:** HC members must assess needs taking into account the strategic use of the assistance resources from the beneficiary perspective.

### 4.10 Lessons learned and the use of lessons

Active lesson learning was important for all HC members in Pakistan. Many had active monitoring and evaluation and learning systems in place. One agency went to the extent of developing an independent monitoring and evaluation system that held managers accountable for improving their operations. The elements for improvement were made explicit in agreed follow-up plans. Other HC members had active but less sophisticated monitoring systems in place. All used the information produced by these sections to improve their responses.

All HC members have undertaken reflection and lessons learned exercises following 2010 response and those that are involved in the response to the 2011 floods indicated that they are putting lessons learned from last year’s response into practice. All were happy with the progress made and said that the 2011 response had gone much more smoothly than the previous year’s
response. The response is of course notably smaller and easier to comprehend but the HC members and partners have also substantially improved their capacities to manage and deliver a response.

However, lessons learned focused very much on the internal workings of the HC members and not necessarily on their collective performance in relation to the disaster. Many of the HC members dealt with similar issues and all of them consider their response capability an important strategic program element. Major efficiency gains could be realised when HC members start working together and look at their responses in a collective manner. Evident collective opportunities are partner training, sector alignment, beneficiary accountability and accountability mechanisms, monitoring and evaluation, private-public partnerships and working with national, provincial and district governments.

**Recommendation 4.10.1**: HC members should undertake joint learning exercises, enabling them to understand that they face a number of similar challenges. It also allows them to reflect on their collective response and explore ways of finding solutions for shortcomings, specifically where it concerns coverage, vulnerability analysis and targeting and assistance standards. It would potentially help to reinforce and increase efficiency of common programming features such as support to and working with partners, M&E methodologies, beneficiary accountability practices, contingency and preparedness planning, etc.

**Chapter 5: Conclusions and Main Recommendations**

Considering the scale of the disaster and the complex Pakistan security environment, the members of the HC have made tremendous efforts to respond effectively. The members focused on their ability to deliver assistance and they also managed to set-up their monitoring and evaluation systems, paid attention to beneficiary-oriented accountability mechanisms and kept an eye on their internal lessons learned.

The HC members that worked in a fully operational mode or intensively with implementing partners achieved better results than the members who took a hands-off approach and described their response as partner-led. The targeting criteria varied considerably. Some HC members identified vulnerable households through community-based targeting while in other areas the whole community was considered vulnerable.

The observed impact of the delivered assistance varied widely from area to area and from agency to agency, with some very good results and in some cases outcomes that maintain people in post emergency situations while they have allegedly received rehabilitation assistance.
The main objective of the coordination was to avoid duplication of aid activities. Important elements such as coverage, vulnerability analysis and targeting, accountability to beneficiaries and standardization of the assistance were not addressed through formal coordination mechanisms. HC members appeared to work in a more coordinated fashion within donor-imposed consortia.

**Recommendation 1:** HC members should further emphasize the use of governmental coordination mechanisms in order to provide a more cohesive multi-agency response. Specific areas of improvement for inter-agency coordination are vulnerability analysis and targeting, accountability to disaster affected people and coverage.

The HC members were in general quick to respond, especially in KPK and to a lesser extent in Punjab. However, when the disaster spread to Sindh all HC members were faced with serious capacity challenges. Faced with the enormous scale of the crisis, it took some members until March, 2011, to reach full capacity.

The use of humanitarian standards and principles in program implementation was overall satisfying where HC members were either operational or worked very closely with their implementing partners. Nevertheless the HC members could do more to train partners on the meaning and application of the humanitarian standards and principles and they could do more to integrate explicitly the standards and principles in the different parts of the project cycle such as assessments, project approbation, and M&E. Important efficiency gains can be made if the members worked more closely together, as some are working with the same partners.

In areas where disaster affected people returned relatively quickly to their abandoned village, the transition to rehabilitation appeared to have gone fairly smoothly. In areas where the people were unable to return quickly to their villages the transition to rehabilitation went less smoothly. Key reasons for this were that the areas opened up only very gradually, the government announced a sudden end to the emergency in February 2011, and donors were slow to respond to the changing circumstances. Where agencies stuck with people to whom they had provided assistance during the emergency phase as they transitioned back to their homes, the transition went more smoothly since a rapport between the HC members or its partner and the population had already been established.

Many beneficiaries are still unclear about the role of international humanitarian NGOs like the HC members. They don't know their mandates or why they turned up. Many beneficiaries did not know why they had been selected to participate in programs. Information provision to people affected by disasters and in need of assistance has to be improved.
In most cases, but not all, beneficiaries who were interviewed were involved in the implementation of the assistance efforts. Good examples were found in which beneficiaries had considerable control over how and when activities would be implemented. However these forms of accountability were most of the time organized within an already preconceived activity. More open discussions about what assistance was required and how outcomes could best be realized had not taken place. Some interventions clearly focused on priority areas but further exploration and more openness towards the beneficiaries could have increased the strategic use of the available resources. Assistance resource flows could have been aligned with other community-based resource, such as loans for agricultural inputs, to maximize impact. Key decisions such as sectors of intervention, exit criteria and quality of assistance were taken by the HC members without further consultation with the communities.

The HC members have experienced limitations in their ability to interact with women and to provide appropriate support, this despite the high levels of willingness of the members to provide for their specific needs. Remarkably, only one agency explicitly recognized the difficulty women experienced in accessing program information. To ensure women have access to this information, they organized specific focus group discussions with women.

All HC members have made distinct efforts to put in place complaint mechanisms. However, these mechanisms had limited success in obtaining meaningful feedback. Beneficiaries expressed a preference to deal with complaints on a more personal level. The mechanisms appeared too abstract to them. In addition, substantial mediation took place in the village committees. Many complaints were never brought to the attention of the assistance providers but dealt with by these committees. Overall, accountability needs more attention and will have to be conceptualised in a framework that is wider than only the proposed intervention. Accountability approaches should encompass disaster affected people and not only beneficiaries selected for specific activities.

**Recommendation 2:** HC members should work closely together to train partners of the meaning and application of humanitarian standards and principles.

**Recommendation 3:** HC members should explicitly integrate the humanitarian standards and principles in the different parts of the project cycle such as
All HC members had monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems in place. One system was highly sophisticated, structured independently from the management lines and was designed to keep the management accountable for ensuring programme quality and beneficiary accountability. Other M&E systems were less developed and focused on the delivery of outputs and less on program quality aspects.

All HC members have invested in lessons learned through review meetings. As most HC members consider humanitarian action a main pillar of their programs in Pakistan, these exercises have a clear purpose and results are evident with lessons applied through program improvements. However, lessons learned focused very much on the internal workings of the HC members and not necessarily on their collective performance in relation to the disaster. Many of the HC members dealt with similar issues.

The country offices and partners of HC members in Pakistan are not very aware of the HC itself. The Canadian representatives could do more to communicate the HC’s requirements to their field offices, alliance members or affiliates.

**Recommendation 4:** HC members must inform the disaster affected people about humanitarian assistance, its aims, for whom it is intended and how it can be accessed. Preferably this is done in close collaboration with the various humanitarian coordination mechanisms and using various means of mass communication.

**Recommendation 5:** HC members should undertake joint learning exercises, enabling them to understand that they face a number of similar challenges. It also allows them to reflect on their collective response and explore ways of finding solutions for shortcomings, specifically where it concerns coverage, vulnerability analysis and targeting, assistance standards, coordination and working with government. It would potentially help to reinforce and increase efficiency of common programming features such as support to and working with partners, M&E methodologies, beneficiary