International Organization for Migration

BUILDING BACK STRONGER
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Note: The names and identifying characteristics of beneficiaries referred to in this publication have been changed in line with IOM’s Data Protection Principles.
The primary goal of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) is to facilitate the safe, orderly, humane and dignified management of migration. In many countries this includes supporting families and individuals that have been internally displaced by natural or man-made disasters. In Pakistan, our work began with a response to the Afghan refugee crisis, and has continued through the various challenges faced by the country since, including the 2005 earthquake and flooding in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

Our work is holistic in scope: we work before, during and after disasters to prevent forced displacement where possible through resilience-building, managing movements, providing emergency relief, and supporting the recovery of returning communities.

As part of this approach to reducing vulnerability and providing assistance, IOM has implemented “One Room Shelter” programme in Pakistan, after 2011 floods, to help nearly 23,000 vulnerable families in Sindh province to rebuild safer shelters, whilst transferring knowledge and skills that will leave communities better prepared to face potential future disasters. The “One Room Shelter” programme is a strong example of IOM’s commitment to meeting the needs of displaced and returning communities affected by natural disasters in Pakistan and around the world, in partnership with governments and local organizations.

William Lacy Swing
Director General, IOM

Pakistan has faced significant destruction from monsoon flooding for three consecutive years. This flooding has caused immense damage to already fragile lives, wiping out homes, livestock, personal belongings and savings as families have struggled to meet their basic needs during the displacement.

In the context of declining levels of humanitarian and development aid, it has become even more urgent for IOM and other organisations to develop and implement innovative and cost-effective programmes to help communities get back on their feet while also enabling them to be better prepared to face future disasters.

The IOM Pakistan ‘One Room Shelter’ programme has demonstrated that locally-appropriate, safer shelter solutions which capitalize on indigenous techniques and capacities can be implemented despite funding constraints. Key to the programme’s success has been the engagement of experienced and committed Pakistani staff, local NGO partners with technical expertise, and the contribution of the flood-affected communities themselves in building their own and their neighbours’ shelters.

Mohammed Abdiker
Director, Department of Operations and Emergencies, IOM
Just one year after massive floods devastated Pakistan in 2010, heavy monsoon rains in July and August 2011 again brought havoc and destruction to many parts of the country. The worst affected areas were the southern provinces of Sindh, Balochistan and Punjab, where it was estimated that 5.4 million people were affected and 338,750 houses were estimated to have been destroyed. 400 people died in the flood waters and an additional 750 were reported injured.

Floods in 2010 were the worst in living memory. Many of those who suffered were affected again in 2011. Heavy rains broke dams and retaining walls, and caused canals and irrigation channels to overflow, inundating huge areas of land. Families that had returned home and were reconstructing their houses lost everything for the second time.
Homes collapsed as roofs caved in and foundations were undermined. Livestock drowned and crops were lost in the flood. Clothes, pots, pans, bedding and furniture were swept away or ruined by the water.
Much of Sindh and Punjab is rural, agricultural land on which landless farmers grow cotton, wheat, sugar cane and fruit trees. These areas are some of the poorest in the country, with very limited access to basic services including health, education and markets. Sindh province is home to a substantial number of minority groups and nomadic families, many of whom live in the most flood-prone areas.
When floods arrived most families took shelter on higher ground not far from their destroyed village. Many families established informal settlements along raised highways and roads, or small hills in the desert. Information was gathered through local partners and government representatives, and helped to indicate the areas most severely affected by 2011 floods (see map on page 20).
Information was cross-checked and verified, eventually enabling a ranking of the most affected Union Councils. This prioritisation helped IOM and other actors (both humanitarian and governmental) to effectively target their assistance to the most needy.
AREAS IN SINDH PROVINCE SEVERELY AFFECTED BY FLOODS IN 2010 AND 2011
The International Organization for Migration (IOM) has experience and technical expertise in meeting the needs of disaster affected populations due to the involvement with migrants and displaced persons. IOM has worked in Pakistan since 1981, supporting the Afghan population displaced to Pakistan, refugees seeking a new life abroad and Pakistani families who are displaced and in need as the result of natural or man-made disasters. IOM Pakistan has particular expertise in shelter operations, camp management and logistics support as a result of its work with these displaced groups.
After floods in 2011, IOM staff provided emergency shelter assistance to over 109,000 families, consisting of plastic sheeting and poles to construct temporary shelters, and basic household items such as kitchen sets, water containers and blankets.
While emergency assistance was provided, a longer term solution was designed and rolled out to provide families with a more durable shelter, called the ‘One Room Shelter’. Some key features of this innovative approach include:

- **Beneficiary-driven**: The design and construction of the shelter is led by the beneficiary family themselves. The family receives cash support from IOM, and is able to use it for the design, materials and construction process of their choice. This means that the family’s capacity for self-help is enhanced, and that the shelter will be acceptable and suitable for their needs.

- **Disaster resilient**: Floods occur regularly in Pakistan and are likely to increase in frequency and ferocity. Families need shelters which are more resistant to damage from flooding, and also need to learn how to repair and rebuild them themselves in the event of a future flood. IOM’s technical experts provided training and support to help families build disaster resistant shelters through techniques such as raising the plinth, reinforcing the base of the wall with a mud ‘toe’, using a low-cost mud-lime combination to plaster walls, corner bracing and constructing lighter roofs.
Performance driven cash based support: One of the risks in providing beneficiaries cash rather than material support is the need to ensure that the families build shelters, in the face of many competing urgent needs. The conditional, performance driven system established by IOM meant that cash payments were made once interim milestones in the construction process had been reached, helping to ensure that shelters were completed.

After the successful implementation of the One Room Shelter programme in response to flooding in 2010, IOM received generous funding to continue the programme in 2011 from the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the US Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA), Government of Finland, the Organization for Social Development Initiatives (OSDI) and the Mahvish & Jahangir Siddiqui Foundation (MJSF). These funds have enabled IOM and its local partners to support the construction of 22,800 shelters in Sindh province, that were completed by December 2013.
So, what’s the process of supporting a flood-affected family to build a One Room Shelter?

**Identifying the most vulnerable:** Firstly, IOM’s teams make sure that the most vulnerable families, least likely to be able to recover on their own are selected for the programme. With limited funds, help has to go where it is most needed.

The teams targeted the severely affected districts, as these areas had suffered total devastation to livelihoods, homes and market systems, making it very difficult for communities to recover on their own. IOM was careful to ensure that the programme’s efforts did not duplicate those of other humanitarian organizations, working with the Shelter Cluster – a coordination forum active down to the district level – to delineate separate areas of responsibility and follow a harmonized approach.

Within each district, IOM and local partner teams set out to find the most affected villages. In these villages, committees were formed to facilitate the beneficiary selection process. The committees were made up of local people, who knew the individuals and families in the village and their particular circumstances. The committee was given the task to select the most needy, using a criteria developed by IOM. The selection was then monitored and verified by IOM to ensure that the criteria had been properly applied.
Because of the selection criteria, many of the beneficiaries were over 60 years old, widows or disabled people, who couldn’t easily rebuild their damaged shelters. In my time working at IOM, I’ve observed many cases of these vulnerable people being supported by their neighbours and relatives.

Some outstanding examples include Mithan, who lives in Umerkot and is blind. His relatives helped him to reconstruct the shelter for his family. In Badin there is a beneficiary called Jano. He is a young man affected by polio, who lives with his mother and sister. He cannot walk because of the effects of polio, and his neighbours told us that they would help him to reconstruct his shelter.

Abdul Rehman also lives in Badin, and he and his wife are very elderly. The implementing partner asked the village committee that recommended him for inclusion in the programme that how he would be able to construct his house? The village committee assured the implementing partner that they would help Mr. Rehman to complete his shelter.

Abid Hussain Sayed
Social Mobilization and Monitoring & Evaluation, IOM
IOM One Room Shelter Programme - 2011 Sindh Floods
Providing cash: Each group of beneficiaries was provided cash directly by IOM via the community nominated Focal Point. The cash allowed them to pay for labour, or buy materials. The cash was provided in conditional performance-driven tranches: the first payment was made once the excavation was completed, the second was made when the foundation was completed to enable the construction of the walls, and so on. This conditionality helped to ensure that all shelters were completed and reduced the risk of misuse of funds.
Providing cash has a number of direct and indirect benefits over material assistance or employing contractors.

- It allows beneficiaries the choice of what to buy or hire, according to their individual needs and resources.

- It enables choice and variation in the design and materials for construction, to suit the local climate, culture and building tradition.

- It supports the beneficiary’s self-help capabilities. People in Sindh have been dealing with floods for centuries. Cash and technical assistance enhance their coping mechanisms and indigenous disaster resilience.

- It revitalises local markets and supply chains. Labour and building materials are hired and purchased locally, rather than trucking these in from the cities.
To me, it seems like the One Room Shelter programme came as an answer to the prayers of thousands of the flood affected members of various communities belonging to different castes, creeds, social and religious backgrounds. Many of us, who had the privilege of being involved in helping these poor communities, must have had that feeling from the warm welcome expressed by the communities. I felt like we were at the right place at the right time, and that they were waiting for someone to come forward to help them find a way out of the dire situation.

Unless I’m mistaken, then “from the people to the people” is considered to be the most effective and successful strategy for social progress. I, as a team member, have always been encouraged to listen to the people that we serve in the shelter programme, and to think about what changes can benefit them? I am truly convinced from my own experience with the programme that this has been a major strength.

Ghulam Sakina,
Team Leader (Social Mobilization and Monitoring & Evaluation)
IOM
Empowering local leaders: A village focal point was appointed for each group of beneficiary households. This person was nominated by the beneficiaries as someone they trusted to represent them and liaise with the local partner and IOM on their behalf. Often, this individual was a local leader – a local religious leader, teacher or businessman/woman. The village focal point had to be literate and be able to open a bank account. He or she received the cash payments on behalf of the beneficiary group, and distributed cash to each household against a receipt.

This is an important position, with responsibility for monitoring progress as well as distributing the cash. Of course, access to cash comes with a risk of abuse of power – perhaps the focal point might disappear with the families’ money. IOM guarded against this risk in several ways: (a) making sure the focal point was nominated by the beneficiaries themselves; (b) paying the focal point for his or her service once shelters were completed; (c) signing a memorandum of understanding with the focal point; and (d) operating a beneficiary complaint helpline to deal with any complaints quickly and effectively (see page 94 for more details).
Nur Khatoon is a 60 year old widow whose house and belongings were washed away by the 2011 floods. Having no family member with an income meant she could not rebuild her house. Nur was selected for IOM’s shelter programme and received financial and technical support to reconstruct her house. She explained:

My old house, made of wood and mud, collapsed completely during the torrential rains which continued for a few days. I hardly managed to salvage a few personal belongings and was forced to live on the side of the road. After a few weeks, men from other displaced families went to surrounding cities to look for work but since I had absolutely no means of earning, I decided to move back to my village. The project teams approached me after some time and registered me in their shelter programme.

I’m uneducated and didn’t know about construction or the banking system, so I was worried about how this would work out. However, I was reassured when a village committee was formed and a focal person was elected to receive the cash payments on our behalf. The village committee gave me a sense of belonging and together we have been able to solve our problems and achieve our construction milestones. We make our material purchases together and for an old person like me who cannot travel to the city to buy the materials, this has been a blessing!

Technical trainings were conducted in my village and I participated and learnt how to construct my shelter. What has been particularly helpful is knowing how to use lime and bamboo for the construction of stronger shelters. Before, our houses were vulnerable to flood damage due to weak walls made without lime.
Meer Muhammed is the Focal Point for Umar Khaskheli village in District Badin.

He explained:

At the start of the project, we all were uncertain regarding the One Room Shelter construction process. It seemed very difficult to us. But with the help of technical trainings and IOM’s supervision and mentoring finally we were able to understand and construct our shelters as per the specified disaster risk reduction techniques. These techniques were never practiced before in any house in our village. Normally we build mud shelters which hardly survive two rainy seasons. We’ve been told that this new shelter can sustain for more than 15 years if it’s well plastered with lime once every year. Right now all my family members including my neighbours convey their thanks to IOM for supporting us to rebuild our shelters and for freedom of not to worry during rainfall.
Sindh province has harsh weather conditions ranging from extremely heavy monsoon rains and flooding, cyclones and fierce coastal winds, drought and temperatures approaching 50 degrees Celsius in summer. Indigenous building techniques have evolved accordingly, favouring mud construction to guard against the intense sunshine, conical roofs in cyclone areas and raised plinths to guard against low level flooding. Unfortunately these techniques are not followed everywhere, and in some areas they have been almost forgotten.
One of IOM’s key local partners, The Heritage Foundation, has been researching and teaching indigenous Sindhi construction techniques for many years. Heritage surveys the various techniques in use, noting the variations according to the specific climate and materials available. Then, technical experts develop recommendations to improve the techniques, and these are taught to groups of people in the villages as part of a comprehensive training programme.
Over the course of the shelter programme, master trainers and technical experts conducted more than 11,600 trainings for over 273,600 people. 30% of the people trained were women. 211,000 of those trained were also receiving cash support as part of the programme. The remaining 62,600 were other people from the villages, joining in to learn how to build better.

In each village, IOM and its local partners provided at least four trainings, scheduled to coincide with the different phases of construction and the cash transfer process. The first training helped people decide what type of house to build, and materials they would need for each. The second training taught people how to choose a good location, outline the house layout, make the foundation and the plinth (the raised platform the house sits on) and prepare the mud-lime plaster used for water-proofing the shelter. Once the group had built their foundations and plinths, the third training taught them how to construct the walls. Once all walls were built, the final training focused on placement of the ring beam and constructing the roof.
The One Room Shelter programme has brought behaviour change in the flood-affected communities. It has effectively ensured the acceptance of a set of recommendations on how to build back better. The programme created an environment of listening and learning for local communities.

Zulfiqar Dayoo
Social Mobilizer, IOM
In my opinion, the technical trainings have impacted women more than men. I’ve observed in general that women in the target communities are more concerned with the quality of the shelters than men. However, the whole task is collective hard work of both.

Abdul Hayee
Technical Assistant, IOM
At the same time, the local partners and Heritage Foundation held sixty intensive trainings for the village focal points, specifically on the construction techniques. This meant that the focal points could be an information resource to help those reconstructing.
For the shelter programme, aside from our selected beneficiary households, the rest of the community also participated in the technical training sessions. They asked all the questions that came to mind. I witnessed in many villages that non-beneficiary households from the villages also tried to implement the same technical guidelines and recommendations by themselves in their new or already built shelters. To me, this shows that the community will be more aware and prepared in the event of a future disaster, as a result of the One Room Shelter programme.

Syed Bilal Hassan
Senior Program Engineer, IOM
IOM and The Heritage Foundation also held trainings for staff from IOM’s 25 local partners. Four ‘Training of Trainers’ were held, which certified 158 individuals as trainers in disaster-resilient, vernacular and sustainable construction methodologies. Four ‘technical refreshment’ trainings were also held for technical staff from IOM and the partners, to allow discussion of specific technical issues being faced in the field, how to address them and train others effectively. This capacity building aimed to achieve high quality construction within the One Room Shelter programme, and also build a resource of construction knowledge in Sindh province should another disaster occur.
A key aspect of the shelter programme was that beneficiaries would reconstruct their shelters themselves. Men and women learnt how to rebuild their houses through technical trainings and support from the focal point and IOM’s local partners, and will know how to do so again if another disaster hits. The beneficiaries’ contribution of unskilled labour meant that the cost per shelter was significantly lower, meaning that IOM could reach more families with the funds available.
Marvi is a farmer in Badin district in Sindh. Her husband is disabled and they have three young children under the age of six. The 2011 floods washed away their belongings and house. After the floods, her husband was in an accident, losing one of his legs. Marvi was selected as a shelter programme beneficiary. She received cash and technical support to reconstruct her house and explained the experience:

Consecutive years of flooding destroyed my house twice, once in 2010 and again by the 2011 floods. Being small scale farmers, we knew little about construction practices and with the disability my husband faced, our chances of having a proper shelter again were very limited.

Once we were registered on the programme, my husband and I attended the technical trainings. These introduced us to disaster resilient construction practices and the preparation of construction material. We were able to work together and rebuild our house. My husband took the responsibility of making bricks and preparing the lime/mud mixture. I built the walls myself.
The importance of drawing inspiration from heritage and tradition and the use of sustainable materials have been priority considerations for The Heritage Foundation ever since it began its humanitarian assistance program after the 2005 earthquake. The challenge is to design low cost structures that are compliant with ‘disaster risk reduction’, while taking into consideration the increasing poverty levels of the marginalized communities who always have to contend with meager resources. At the same time the question is how to avoid spawning a culture of dependency - providing sustenance without making them into suppliants? How to devise ways to encourage participation of households, particularly women? And above all how to design structures that are appropriate in the cultural, social and environmental context of the populations being served.

While carrying out research after the 2011 floods in Lower Sindh, it became clear that most structures had collapsed due to technically unsound building practices. The use of industrialized materials such as concrete and steel, was carried out without adequate safeguards, thus contributing to the collapse of shelters.

Additionally, it is well known that industrialized materials such as cement and steel are highly energy consumptive in their production. Burnt brick relies on child labour in its production, causes excessive carbon emissions and destroys already depleted forest reserves.
Even though inappropriate for rural conditions, burnt brick, reinforced concrete beams and rolled steel joists (RSJ) have been widely promoted in response to disasters. It seems that local building traditions were not taken into consideration by those trained primarily in the use of cement and steel. The overriding preference for modern industrially produced materials is also due to the lack of knowledge and sometimes even denigration of local materials and building traditions within communities themselves – a mindset that is difficult to overcome.

IOM’s shelter program in response to 2011 Floods, makes use of indigenous building traditions of the country coupled with carefully designed technical interventions provided by The Heritage Foundation. Due to the use of local earth and adobe, the methodology has allowed women to participate fully in home building, together with beautiful painting of wall surfaces reflecting pride and ownership.

The partnership of IOM with Heritage Foundation has provided extremely positive results. The construction of over 20,000 shelters in the aftermath of 2011 Floods, which have themselves been tested through the rains and flooding of 2012 and 2013, points toward the success of this approach. The adobe/mud walls stabilized with lime, with accessible, safe haven multiple bamboo roofs is arguably the largest low carbon footprint shelter program in the world.

Yasmeen Lari
CEO, Heritage Foundation
Sikandar’s family lives in district Mirpurkhas, Sindh and lost their home during the rainy season of 2011. With eight family members and a meagre source of income as a casual laborer, Sikandar was selected as a beneficiary of IOM’s shelter programme. His family received cash to reconstruct their shelter and attended the technical trainings which taught safer reconstruction techniques. Sikandar shared his experience of the One Room Shelter programme:

*It was a great opportunity for us to learn techniques that actually make our shelters safer. Although we were initially reluctant about changing our way of doing things, the IOM teams encouraged us to use the construction practices taught during the trainings.*

*The monsoon season of 2012 made us realize the value of what we had learnt in the training. We were still building our plinths when the heavy rains started. In view of past experience, we expected the rising water to destroy the foundations. However, thanks to the use of lime plaster and cow dung as a stabilizer the plinths were not damaged by the rain. This practical experience boosted our morale, encouraging us to follow the guidelines right till the end.*
Sindhi art is rich with patterns and designs that can be seen on ceramics and cloth across the province. Many of the families that received support to rebuild a shelter chose to decorate their completed shelters with colourful paints and patterns. Some even used it as a way to thank the project partners for their support.
In the beginning, we faced quite a lot of resistance from our beneficiaries against adapting to the new techniques, since they thought the models and disaster risk reduction guidelines incorporated in the program were too technical for them. But our continuous efforts, rigorous trainings and advice relevant to the specific problems made it easy for them to trust and understand. With repetition of the information, they were able to perceive what initially seemed to them complicated and finally worked hard to apply all the new learning to make their shelters stronger and safer.

When they look at their new strong shelters, they feel secure, more confident and happy, especially that now their hard-earned money will not go towards the reconstruction of their homes every year. They might have the chance now to fulfill their dreams of sending their kids to school, rehabilitate their villages, and reconstruct their religious places, and in the evening they can sit together with other fellow villagers and share their experiences.

So, the programme has affected them socially, financially and helped them in changing their mindsets - not only building back, but building back safer!

Fahad Karim Narejo
Site Engineer, IOM
IOM set up a call center to allow people to send feedback regarding the shelter programme. Sometimes these calls were requests for information or clarification; sometimes they were complaints about an aspect of the program.

The call center is run by staff speaking various languages and dialects spoken in the flood-affected areas, and calls to the center are free of charge. Call center staff have been trained regarding the shelter programme, and so requests for information can often be dealt with immediately over the phone.
Any complaints that are received are recorded and forwarded to the relevant staff member, normally the project manager. The project manager is in-charge of investigating the complaint and taking the action required.

The call center number was widely publicised in the areas where the shelter programme was being implemented. Posters were printed and displayed in the villages, and small business cards with the number were printed and handed out.

Since the shelter programme began, 272 calls relating to the 2011 shelter program have been received at the call center. 86% of the calls related to complaints and grievances while 14% were requests for information and feedback on the programme.
Two years after the 2011 floods devastated large areas of Sindh province, over 22,000 families are now living in a durable shelter constructed with support from the One Room Shelter programme. The graph above shows the progress overtime, including the delays caused by the time taken for the water to recede after the floods, people to return back to their villages, and the disruption caused by the 2012 flooding, which impacted some of the 2011 flood affected areas and delayed construction work.

22,800 ONE ROOM SHELTERS COMPLETED

Two years after the 2011 floods devastated large areas of Sindh province, over 22,000 families are now living in a durable shelter constructed with support from the One Room Shelter programme. The graph above shows the progress overtime, including the delays caused by the time taken for the water to recede after the floods, people to return back to their villages, and the disruption caused by the 2012 flooding, which impacted some of the 2011 flood affected areas and delayed construction work.
Shelter construction supported by IOM and partners in Sindh province following 2011 floods
Additionally, complimentary activities supported selected One Room Shelter beneficiary communities through installation of water pumps to enhance access to water. The hand pump design supports water conservation through channeling the run off to a tree or vegetable patch. The complimentary shelter activities were supported by DFID, Government of Poland, Government of Finland and OSDI.
In your opinion, what has been the most important achievement of the One Room Shelter programme in the aftermath of the 2011 floods?

First and foremost the fact that at least 110,000 people are living in flood resistant shelters that “we don’t need to run outside from when it starts raining” as people often say. Bizarrely, lack of confidence in existing construction has meant that many people will head outside for safety during heavy rains.

Additionally, the shift from conventional / modern construction (such as bricks and cement-mortar) to enhancing traditional local architecture with affordable and durable alternatives. Another has been IOM’s capacity to work with 25 local NGOs to deliver this programme, an impressive achievement in itself considering the difference between such organizations.

Involving The Heritage Foundation to act as technical consultant and lead trainers has been critical to the success as it makes a lot of sense to take the advice and consultancy of those who are experts, with decades of experience in design and building.
The majority of buildings I have visited under this programme appear to be highly flood resistant, which is the foremost criteria of success. Lastly, the value for money of this housing project has been excellent. These economics are vital because donor funds are limited and it has meant we can reach far more people with a limited fund.

Does a particular beneficiary or village that you met or visited stand out in your mind?

Yes, there are many. In one village in Umerkot I remember passing a woman who was plastering the walls of her half-built house. She had built it all by herself and had clearly taken on board all the critical training. Also Ratni, who rebuit her home together with her husband using flood resistant technology and designs shown by IOM and the local implementing partner. She told me “we feel so much safer now, we are less scared of the flood. Our roof is strong! It won’t collapse and that makes us feel so much more secure”. I visited Jaffar, who lost his leg in an accident many years ago, and has ten children. They have never had a proper home before, and always lived in extremely basic mud and thatch huts, which would collapse every time it rained. Now they have built a resistant shelter using new materials and designs – this robust shelter should last for generations.
How much have beneficiaries and villages incorporated the improved construction/DRR techniques that have been taught to them through the programme?

I would say that most of the beneficiaries and communities have adopted these improved techniques, having visited dozens of villages over the last 18 months. This is because the training was not a short, one off, orientation session and poster, but a sustained support and on-going training from the partners, with oversight from Heritage Foundation which in turn was backed up and monitored by IOM.
Can we learn lessons from this programme that can inform disaster response for shelter at a policy level?

Absolutely! But ideally policy level recommendations should be informed by an external and independent source. Hence the research that DFID is undertaking with Shelter Cluster in Pakistan. There are several key recommendations for policy level advocacy including:

- Promoting environmentally sustainable construction material
- Community ownership and transfer of cash and management to the very beneficiaries
- Work with the wider civil society organisations local to the area. It is these people (and NGOs) that will remember this programme, the key messages and principles and the training standards
- Incorporate building knowledge and experience from the past that have proven to work well. Lime is the good example here. There is evidence globally of lime based structures standing thousands of years after construction
- Recognise that the construction industry – and the vast majority of the aid industry – is stuck in outdated and inappropriate thinking regarding shelter, housing, community design and energy. Reflect on the type of reconstruction that has taken place since the 2010 floods
Rabayl Mansoor from OSDI, said:

The major successes of the ORS programme include: a) accurate and transparent identification of vulnerable households affected by floods; b) provision of disaster proof accommodation that can sustain future rainfall; and c) expansive outreach in the remotest locations.

The foremost lesson for OSDI during our engagement with the programme has been how to maximize available resources in the community with a limited budget per shelter to build infrastructure that is not only acceptable to community but is also a sustainable construction. The construction of the shelters took longer than expected, but in the end the programme achieved its goals.
A shelter programme of this scale could not have been possible without extensive implementation support from local partners. IOM’s local partners helped to ensure that the support provided was appropriate and responsive to the needs of those affected. Many of the partners have been active in the flood-affected regions for several years, and the programme benefited enormously from their local knowledge and dedication to serve their communities.
Ashok is one amongst millions who lost their livelihoods and belongings in the 2011 floods. Without any formal education or skills, he had no way to construct a durable shelter. Ashok’s family was selected for the One Room Shelter programme and in addition to rebuilding their house, cash support has enabled him to start an entrepreneurial venture.

Ashok explains his situation:

After the floods, I was forced to leave my family and travel to different cities to find work. It was during this time that I learnt about solar energy. I kept finding out how the solar energy works and wanted to start my own small business as there is no electricity in our village.

However, since my family was living in temporary shelters, building a house was my main priority. After receiving shelter support from IOM, I decided to channel my savings into the purchase of a solar panel. I use this panel to charge people’s cellphones, fans and lights in return for a small charge. This way I have a source of income to support my family. I’m planning to invest any extra money into buying bigger panels.
Although southern Sindh is prone to devastating flooding in the rainy season, many areas are also routinely affected by an acute shortage of water, and even drought conditions during the dry season. Women and girls are often in charge of fetching water from sources kilometers away, which can pose protection risks. With funds from DFID, the Government of Finland and the Government of Poland and OSDI, 108 hand pumps were installed in early recovery shelter programme beneficiary villages located in districts Mirpur Khas and Umerkot. These pumps have made it easier for women and girls to fetch water for daily household use including drinking, washing and cleaning.
Zafar is a 70 year old resident of Sindh’s Tharparkar desert on the border with India. His family lost everything in the 2011 floods. Belonging to a nomadic group of snake charmers, Zafar and his family had no land to return to and continued to move location many times after the floods subsided. Zafar was chosen as a beneficiary of IOM’s shelter programme. He explains the importance of this program:

Belonging to a nomadic community, I spent my life moving from one village to another. After the floods destroyed our house, we kept moving from place to place and had nowhere to return to. We were ultimately given a piece of land by the government but had no money to build a house. With cash and technical support from IOM, we are now constructing our house. A major motivating factor behind this is the ability to educate my children. Because of our nomadic lifestyle we did not send the children to school before. Now that we are settling down, our children can receive an education.
Kumar is a beneficiary from village Haji Ahmed Sand in District Badin. He told IOM field teams:

"We all are very happy to have new and strong homes. It was very difficult for us to construct such beautiful and strong homes but the timely provision of technical guidance and financial support enabled us to make a secure home for our children. Additionally, before the programme I was a farmer, but now I have learnt new skills. I have started to work as paid labourer in neighbouring villages, so your ORS programme not only provided me financial support but also made me a skilled mason. We all are thankful to IOM who selected us as the beneficiaries for this programme and helped us to have our stronger shelters."
The One Room Shelter programme has opened new doors of opportunity for local communities in construction and self-employment. Cash support has boosted the local market, and provided direct and indirect opportunities for employment to local communities.

Safia Bano
Programme Coordinator, IOM
As part of the One Room Shelter programme, beneficiary households also received a durable solar lamp. The lights allow children to study at night, household tasks to be completed, and household income generation through handicrafts and tailoring in the evening. Lights are small and can be carried around, helping to reduce women and girls’ vulnerability at night.
The people of Pakistan, and particularly the province of Sindh, have shown extraordinary resilience in the face of recurrent disasters over the last four years. Families have lost everything to a rising tide of water, fled to roadsides and schools for shelter, returned and started rebuilding. For some families, this has happened every year – an exhausting and debilitating cycle. Our hope is that the work IOM has done will help to break this cycle, making shelters that can withstand flooding in future years and allow people to rebuild their lives. We have been humbled by families’ strength and fortitude, their commitment to rebuild a better shelter, their willingness to help their older or weaker neighbours.

I have also been deeply impressed by the perseverance of our staff who go out daily into communities in hot and tiring conditions to deliver trainings, organize community meetings, provide technical support and monitor cash distributions. They have worked long, hard hours over the last few years, with a seemingly constant cycle of emergency response and early recovery support, whether in a village in Tando Muhammad Khan or in the support offices across the countries.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank the National Disaster Management Authority (NDMA) and the Provincial Disaster Management Authorities (PDMAs) for their support and assistance in ensuring that IOM could carry forward this program in a smooth and well-coordinated manner. Thank you. My congratulations goes to the One Room Shelter program team and all the support staff and implementing partners who have worked tirelessly to make the program a success so as to benefit and alleviate the suffering of those affected by the floods.

Enrico Ponziani
Chief of Mission, IOM Pakistan

AFTERWORD

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