People in Pakistan are facing an increase in drought and floods, which results in more frequent water shortages. Particularly the food security and livelihoods of rural communities are in danger. The causes include climate change, an out-dated irrigation system in the Indus river basin, and institutions’ inability to stop water grabbing.

Oxfam’s INCLUSIVE WATER GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME helps communities take on those challenges. It supports them in obtaining the know-how, power and networks needed to create equal, sustainable, efficient and sufficient water distribution.

You can now join Oxfam in this effort!

THE REGION

Agriculture is essential to Pakistan’s food security and economy. It is the single most important source of employment and exports, accounting for two-thirds of employment and 80% of exports. Because of the country’s arid climate, irrigation is vital to agricultural production. An estimated 90% of Pakistan’s food grains and almost 100% of its vegetables, cash crops and fruits originate from areas serviced by the largest contiguous irrigation system in the world. Pakistan built this system in the Indus river basin, that is: in the 47% it owns, including the rivers Indus, Jhelum and Chenab. More than 95 percent of Pakistan’s total consumptive water use relies on the Indus river basin.
Marginalized rural communities in the basin (mainly comprised of small landholders dependent on subsistence farming) suffer from many intertwined problems: water scarcity, unequal distribution of water, food insecurity, internal migration, malnutrition, decreased agricultural production, land value drops, increased income inequality and extra pressure on women, for example. To the right are some of the main causes:

Water conflicts within and across provincial borders arise due to disagreements and overlapping rights on the use of water. Conflicts are fuelled by the demands of population growth, urbanisation, industrialisation and modern agriculture.

Governance issues such as decaying institutions and challenges in implementing laws, rules and regulations, contribute both to low water tax income and to communities’ inability to stand up for themselves.

Lack of cooperation between local water users makes it easier for government bodies to ignore them in decision-making and for large landowners to steal water from them with impunity.

Under-appreciation of women in spite of their experience and important role in managing water resources, leads to their exclusion from decision-making, water policy development and institutional arrangements.

Insufficient knowledge of water resources management keeps rural communities dependent on fragmented and failing government management, and discourages them from really taking control over their own water resources.

Aging infrastructure and the fact that regular operation and maintenance of the irrigation system are treated less and less as a political priority, make water distribution increasingly inefficient and unsustainable.

Over-intensive irrigation and upstream water diversion has led to waterlogging, salinity and severe degradation of the delta ecology. Many people depend on the environmental services of this ecology.

Increased water grabbing by large landholders benefits their production, income and political influence over water policies. It increases water stress for rural communities, reduces their income and leads to disputes.
OBJECTIVES AND APPROACH

Oxfam’s INCLUSIVE WATER GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME in Pakistan aims to secure poor people’s access to water resources, thereby reducing their poverty and realising their rights to sustainable livelihoods. In order to achieve this, the programme – through its partners – mobilises and builds the capacity of small-scale farmers and their families, structurally engaging them in advocacy, lobby and campaigning. It focuses on the objectives to the right, paying special attention to women and young people.

1. INCREASED AVAILABILITY OF WATER
In order to ensure effective use, better delivery and augmentation of water resources, the programme, among other things:
- teaches small-scale farmers how to utilise smarter water use techniques;
- introduces better technology;
- helps improve their operation and maintenance (O&M) of water resources;
- enables more and more people to participate in O&M;
- provides knowledge and skills needed for budget tracking and accountability;
- shows them how to conserve existing water resources;
- teaches them how to increase the amount of water resources.

2. IMPROVED RIGHTS TO WATER
In order to increase people’s necessary access to water and prevent water grabs, the programme, among other things:
- helps NGO’s obtain influencing and researching skills, work in partnerships, networks and platforms, and engage with government bodies and the private sector;
- mobilises (via partner NGO’s) small-scale farmers to build alliances;
- supports those alliances in engaging, resolving conflicts, and preventing conflicts with large and powerful landholders;
- enables its partners and the marginalised communities they represent to build and spread knowledge (via IT and social media) and use this knowledge in policy development.

RESOLVING CONFLICTS AND PROMOTING THE ROLE OF WOMEN IN PEACE BUILDING PROCESSES WILL BE A MAJOR COMPONENT OF OUR FUTURE WORK. THIS IS WHAT WE SPECIFICALLY AIM FOR:

PRESSURE
Civil society organisations increasingly advocate for meaningful participation of women in local water governance and related peacebuilding policy processes.

INCLUDE
Women are included in water governance and related peacebuilding policy processes.

CLAIM
With the support of civil society organisations, women have a voice in water governance related policies that affect their lives.

COMMIT
Government and water governance bodies behave gender and conflict-sensitively and are accountable to citizens.
Global Programme

Oxfam’s work in Pakistan is part of its global water governance programme, which connects regional programmes in the Indus, Mekong and Limpopo river basins. Our approach is focused on inclusive water governance, which is based on the following principles:

• **Trans-boundary Scale:** Sustainable solutions for water governance and management require an approach that goes beyond provincial and national borders.

• **Inclusive Decision-Making:** The voices of all users, representing all uses of water resources, need to be heard to ensure fair decision-making.

• **Empowerment of Women:** Women play a key role in water use, and their empowerment is critical for successful water governance.

• **Rights and Responsibilities:** Not only the rights of rural people are important, they also have their own responsibilities in water governance.

• **Power of the People:** Oxfam and its partners do not speak on behalf of local communities, but strengthen their organisations and build networks so that their voices are heard.

Results

Oxfam partners with governments and many local, national and regional civil society organisations in order to achieve results across different scales. For example:

**We Motivate Community-Led Initiatives**
Like when 3,103 small farmers improved their access to water in water-stressed areas and made their use of water more efficient.

**We Stimulate Coordination Amongst Stakeholders**
Like when communities worked with authorities to rehabilitate a tributary canal and twenty watercourses, benefitting thousands of farmers.

**We Amplify People’s Voice**
Like when more and more people from local communities started using the Right to Information law to seek information related to their water rights.

**We Build Knowledge**
Like when we generated and spread research results on water governance and water conflicts, leading to 500 formal complaints against water grabbing.
WHY WORK WITH US?

The complex water problems in the Indus basin require strong partnerships. Oxfam’s INCLUSIVE WATER GOVERNANCE PROGRAMME strengthens existing partnerships with local NGOs, academia, local media, public and private sectors. We also seek new alliances and networks to collaborate, diversify our portfolio and share knowledge and experiences with community mobilisation, integrated water resources management and policy advocacy.

Our partnership’s added value lies in:

– our rights-based approach upfront and our long experience in successful evidence-based influencing;
– our success in working with local and central governments that support our work on the ground and are open to our evidence-based approaches;
– our effective interventions for food security and climate resilience in the basin’s communities;
– our capacity to link local water issues to national, regional and global levels through our global network;
– our experience in capacity building and our large network of local partners with long-term experience in working with and building trust among local communities;
– our ability to develop a knowledge base in cooperation with international allies and facilitate interprovincial cooperation.

HOW TO WORK WITH US?

Are you interested in working with us, financially or by sharing your knowledge and networks?

Please contact:
Khalid Saifullah Khan
(Programme Coordinator Water Governance)
khalid.saifullah@oxfamnovib-pakistan.org

And visit:
www.oxfamnovib.nl/waterprogramme
https://www.facebook.com/OxfamPakistan