CITIZENS' ATTITUDES, NORMS AND VOICE IN PAKISTAN: QUALITATIVE IMPACT EVALUATION OF CONFLICT AND FRAGILITY

RESULTS OF THE STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP OF OXFAM NOVIB AND SOMO WITH THE MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS IN THE NETHERLANDS

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OBJECTIVES OF REPORT AND EVALUATION QUESTIONS

This report presents the findings of the qualitative impact evaluation on the outcome areas citizens' voice, and shifted norms and attitudes for the Conflict and Fragility (C&F) project in Pakistan. This project is implemented as part of the Strategic Partnership (SP) 'Towards a World Wide Influencing Network' of Oxfam Novib, SOMO and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This qualitative impact evaluation report links the endline findings of the qualitative interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) conducted in November 2019 to the quantitative baseline findings in order to assess the perceived contribution of the C&F project to increased citizens' voice, and shifted norms and attitudes. Increased citizens' voice, and shifted norms and attitudes is one of the outcomes of the C&F project in Pakistan, hence this evaluation does not cover the impact of the full project. It aims specifically to answer the following questions:

> **Main evaluation question:**
>
> **1. In what ways were women and men enabled by the project to raise their voice on the formal water governance, land ownership, and related peacebuilding and policy processes in Sindh province?**
>
> **2. How have norms and attitudes of citizens (men and women), including people living in poverty and injustice, towards inclusion in water governance, land ownership, and related peacebuilding and policy processes as fundamental rights for men and women changed as a result of the project's interventions?**
>
> **3. How has knowledge and awareness of citizens (men and women), including people living in poverty and injustice, on their rights in water governance, land ownership, and related peacebuilding and policy processes changed as a result of the project's interventions?**

A total of 36 in-depth interviews and seven FGDs were conducted to answer these questions. The interviews consisted of 25 interviews with 'champions' across three districts (Hyderabad, Tando Muhammad Khan (TMK) and Badin), eight members of Water Course Associations (WCA) or Farmers' Organizations (FO), and four respondents from Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (SIDA), Canal Level Alliance (CLA) and the media. One all-male and one all-female FGD was conducted in each of the districts, and one mixed gender FGD was additionally conducted in the TMK.

THE CONFLICT AND FRAGILITY PROJECT IN PAKISTAN AND ITS ACTIVITIES

The C&F project in Pakistan is operationalized under the title 'Women and Marginalized Groups, Natural Resource Management and Peace-building: Unlocking the Potential'. The project is implemented by the Association for Water Applied Education & Renewable Energy (AWARE) and Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO). The project aims to make conflict resolution processes around water conflict more participatory – especially for women and marginalized groups.

Through awareness raising and capacity building AWARE and SPO support women and marginalized groups to meaningfully participate in water governance, and in particular conflict resolution. The project worked together with duty bearers, like: FOs, CLA, District Level Alliance (DLA), and SIDA.

The C&F project in Pakistan worked on increasing citizens' voice and shifting norms and attitudes of community members through several intervention strategies. First of all, a rigorous social mobilization process was carried out to raise awareness on water rights, governance and peace building with different actors in the community. Herein, the emphasis was mainly on promoting female local leadership to assert water rights and claim their role in water related decision making.

Secondly, with the buy-in of important community members, the project moved to a more citizens' oriented approach, starting with awareness raising activities with the general public on water governance. Herein, they used different mediums, like village meetings and dialogues, viewing sessions of documentaries, FM radio broadcasting, and TV talk shows.

Thirdly, the project identified and targeted specific women and marginalized men as champions to speak up for their rights. These people were further trained and their capacity was strengthened on the above mentioned topics. Furthermore, they were supported to integrate in water bodies and farmers' organizations to represent their rights.

Lastly, these champions were supported in engagement with government officials, parliamentarians and other important stakeholders in water governance to formally secure their rights to participate in formal water governance, related peacebuilding and policy processes in Sindh province.

FINDINGS

Citizens' voice

Respondents reported feeling increasingly more comfortable to raise their voice, particularly during community level meetings. Several enabling factors allowed them to increase their voice – like increasing their confidence to talk publicly, getting support from others and being taken seriously by decision makers, and project activities. The interviewees thus raised their voice more often, and some reported that this led to their issues being listened to and dealt with more seriously. This was not the case for everyone, as some interviewees believed that while women now do raise their voice more than before, they don't exercise any real influence over decision making processes. While there were positive signs of women's participation in community level meetings regarding water governance, there were not yet signs that they were participating in water conflict resolution mechanisms as well. Respondents explained that conflicts are still primarily solved at the community level through informal justice systems.

Attitudes and norms

The interviewees reported a positive change in attitude towards women's participation in decision making over time. Female interviewees, for example, stated that they feel their participation in CSO meetings is appreciated by community members and often they are supported by other community members to participate and raise their voice. At the same time there seem to be prevailing social norms that hamper women's participation, leading to some community members not accepting women's participation. In particular, while women generally felt welcomed in CSO community meetings, they had difficulty gaining acceptance at more formal levels, for example within WCAs and FOs. Still, respondents (champions, regular community members, as well as WCA members and key informants) reported changes in opinion among themselves and their community members regarding women's participation within Pakistan's patriarchal context, which shows a first step towards increased acceptance for women's and marginalized groups' participation.

Knowledge and awareness

The interviewees reported gaining some knowledge on water rights, including who are the bearers of these rights, the concept of water governance in general, conflict resolution mechanisms, and specific challenges for women and marginalized groups, such as harassment and lack of education. Increased knowledge on, for example, water rights seemed to help bring about a change in awareness and attitude towards the idea that men and women enjoy the same water rights, as well as a change in favour of women's and marginalized groups' participation in water governance processes. Participation in conflict resolution is still challenging, but at least the issues of women and marginalized groups seem to be heard in the decision making processes, although often still with very limited influence over the direction and outcome of these processes. Knowledge and awareness also helped interviewees to raise their confidence, which helped women in particular in raising their voice and addressing issues they face in meetings.

LIMITATIONS

As this research used a qualitative evaluation method, the sample size is limited and thus the findings of this research are not meant to be generalized to the overall population within the three regions. This made it difficult to evaluate changes compared to the baseline evaluation. While the findings seem to suggest some changes have happened due to project activities, it should be taken into account that these cannot be fully ascribed to project activities alone since external factors have not been accounted for in the analysis. Instead, the findings should be interpreted as the experiences of the respondents, which provide insights into how social change can happen. Despite these limitations, the findings still provide information that helps us to test some of the assumptions of the project in a more general way and show indications of contribution and impact.

CONCLUSIONS AND LEARNINGS

Respondents have started feeling comfortable to raise their voice due to enabling factors such as increased knowledge and awareness, which project activities have contributed to. While their issues aren't always resolved yet, they were hopeful that initial changes might lead to more sustainable impact in the future.

While women and marginalized groups still face difficulties when participating in more formal structures, they do seem to be more involved in community level meetings when compared to the baseline findings. They also reported feeling increasingly more accepted and appreciated for their role in these meetings.

The structural barriers to women's participation in decision making processes are deeply rooted. Therefore, to create spaces for women's participation, social norms around women's participation need to change first. While some restrictive social norms still exist and can make it difficult for women to participate in formal meetings and informal justice systems, this is exactly where the project has contributed: participants noted changes in their own norms as well as in the norms of their community members.

Learnings

1. Increasing knowledge and awareness on water governance seems to work well to develop the capacity of women and marginalized groups to raise their voice. An important aspect herein is building their confidence to speak up. The knowledge base will be strengthened locally through capacity building of local water governance institutes that can continue training women and marginalized groups when the project is facing out. Furthermore, the project wants to bring its success to the attention of decision makers in government to try to sustain the efforts.

2. To ensure sustainability, it is important to further the process of empowerment of women and marginalized groups in water governance. This can be done through continuing to support the champions in their participation. Another way to ensure this is to target also through formal amendments so that WCAs and FOs become officially become part of decision making in water governance.

3. Conflict resolution mechanisms are not yet inclusive for women and marginalized groups. It takes more time to influence the informal justice system that is deeply rooted in Sindh societies. The indication that women's issues regarding water rights are gaining more respect is promising for a stronger role in conflict resolution in the future.

1 INTRODUCTION

This report presents the findings of the qualitative impact evaluation on the outcome areas citizens' voice, and shifted norms and attitudes for the Conflict and Fragility project in Pakistan, which is one outcome area selected out of a total of seven outcomes included in the project's monitoring and evaluation plan. This project is implemented as part of the Strategic Partnership (SP) 'Towards a World Wide Influencing Network' of Oxfam Novib, Centre for Research on Multinational Corporations (SOMO) and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This qualitative impact evaluation report links the endline findings of the qualitative interviews and Focus Group Discussions (FGD) conducted in November 2019 to the quantitative baseline findings in order to assess the perceived impact of the Conflict and Fragility project on increased citizens' voice, and shifted norms and attitudes.

1.1 STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP

Oxfam Novib and SOMO have a strategic partnership with the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, titled 'Towards a worldwide influencing network'. This programme runs from 2016 until the end of 2020 and covers three thematic areas: Right to Food (R2F); Greater Responsibility in Finance for Development (F4D); and Conflict and Fragility (C&F). The thematic programmes are operationalized through 23 projects in 16 countries and three global projects.

All thematic programmes work towards several or all of the following seven outcomes: improved policies of governments and public actors, improved policies of private sector actors, increased political will, strengthened Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), stronger and wider alliances, increased citizens' voice and shifted norms and attitudes.

The Strategic Partnership project 'Women and Marginalized Groups, Natural Resource Management and Peace-building: Unlocking the Potential' (further referred to as the C&F project) in Pakistan is working on the thematic area of C&F in particular focusing on conflicts around water distribution. The project is implemented through two local partner CSOs, Association for Water Applied Education & Renewable Energy (AWARE) and Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO). This qualitative impact evaluation focuses on the outcome area increased citizens' voice and shifted norms and attitudes. This is part of the larger MEAL approach, which collects data to monitor and evaluate all seven outcome areas. Findings presented here feed into the final evaluation of the SP-programme wherein findings of all outcome areas will be linked and validated.

1.2 PROJECT OVERVIEW C&F IN PAKISTAN

1.2.1 CONTEXT OF WATER CONFLICT IN PAKISTAN

Pakistan is experiencing an ever-growing water crisis. As population multiplies and the effects of climate-change are felt across Pakistan, the pressure on the country's natural resources such as land and water is increasing. Pakistan's water irrigation system is mainly based on canals of water distribution. The control on water distribution at the high-end areas of the canal often lead to acute water shortage at tail-end areas of the canal. In many places, this water shortage pressure is felt in the form of growing conflict. In rural areas, especially the ones at the tail of water distribution canals, disputes over water, compounded by multidimensional power and gender imbalances, are becoming increasingly common.[1]

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[1] AWARE (2007). Peace analysis on hindrances to women and marginalized groups participation in water governance and related peace issues and resolution. *Internal report, retrieved from project manager.*

Grievances over water resources contribute to instability and violent disputes when they overlap with other factors such as ethnic polarization, high levels of inequality, injustice and poor governance. These disputes over water may drive, reinforce or further exacerbate security, socio-economic and political stresses resulting in violence.

Women are important stakeholders in water resource management. They bear the responsibility of feeding livestock in addition to domestic responsibilities of water collection, cooking and washing. Policies and processes dealing with water governance often do not include women and assume that all farmers are men, resulting in the marginalization of women. Access to irrigation water is also tied to land rights and denial of women's right to own land keeps them excluded from water governance structures. Policies in Sindh are outdated and do not cater for the needs of women and other marginalized groups.

1.2.2 PROJECT FOCUS AND APPROACHES

The C&F project is implemented by AWARE and SPO. The project aims to make conflict resolution processes around water conflict more participatory – especially for women and marginalized groups. To succeed the project focused on increasing the participation of women and marginalized groups in water distribution decision bodies, so called Water Course Associations (WCA)[2], and the Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority. The assumption is that through regular participation women and marginalized groups will get more opportunities to participate in conflict resolution. The project is implemented in the Akram Wah (Channel) Division, including three districts: District Hyderabad (below mentioned as 'Hyderabad' only), Badin and Tando Muhammad Khan (below TMK) of Sindh province.

Through awareness raising and capacity building AWARE and SPO support women and marginalized groups to meaningfully participate in water governance, and in particular conflict resolution. At the same time, the project worked together with duty bearers, like: Farmers' Organizations (FO), Canal Level Alliance (CLA), District Level Alliance (DLA), and, Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Authority (SIDA). The project's experience shows that these links are essential to provide a holistic and sustainable approach to solving disputes that arise from water mismanagement in the area. A brief overview of the programme in terms of expected outcomes and impact are presented below:

- **Desired impact**

The basic rights of people, in particular women, affected by structural discrimination and exclusive practices and policies related to water governance and land ownership are respected by local provincial and national duty bearers and human security is improved.

- **Long-term outcome**

Women and marginalized groups participation in formal water governance, land ownership, related peacebuilding and policy processes in Sindh province has increased and has led to the inclusion of women's needs, interests and priorities in water governance and land ownership policies, and water and land ownership peacebuilding processes.

- **Citizens' voice intermediate outcomes**

1.   An increased number of people (men and women) take action against women's and marginalized group's exclusion from water governance, land ownership and related peacebuilding and policy processes following Oxfam Novib/partners' actions.

2.   An increased number of citizens (men and women), including people living in poverty and injustice, consider inclusion in water governance, land ownership and related peacebuilding and policy processes fundamental rights for men and women

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[2] Water Course Association is a water governance body at water course level composed 20-25 land owning farmers from 2-3 villages

The C&F project in Pakistan worked on increasing citizens' voice and shifting norms and attitudes of community members through several intervention strategies. First of all, a rigorous social mobilization process was carried out to raise awareness on water rights, governance and peace building with different actors in the community. Herein, the emphasis was mainly on promoting women local leadership to assert water rights and claim their role in water related decision making.

Secondly, with the buy-in of important community members, the project moved to a more citizens' oriented approach, starting with awareness raising activities with the general public on water governance. Herein, they used different mediums, like village meetings and dialogues, viewing sessions of documentaries, FM radio broadcasting, and TV talk shows.

Thirdly, the project identified and targeted specific women and marginalized men as champions to speak up for their rights. These people were further trained and their capacity was strengthened on the above mentioned topics. Furthermore, they were supported to integrate in water bodies and farmers' organizations to represent their rights.

Lastly, these champions were supported in engagement with government officials, parliamentarians and other important stakeholders in water governance to formally secure their rights to participate in formal water governance, related peacebuilding and policy processes in Sindh province.

2 EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation questions of this qualitative evaluation for the Conflict and Fragility project in Pakistan were derived from the Theory of Change, the learning questions of the project, and overarching evaluation needs from the global perspective. These evaluation questions subsequently determine which indicators to assess that may have an influence on the outcome increased citizens' voice and shifted norms and attitudes.

Main evaluation question:

1. In what ways were women and men enabled by the project to raise their voice on the formal water governance, land ownership, and related peacebuilding and policy processes in Sindh province?

2. How have norms and attitudes of citizens (men and women), including people living in poverty and injustice, towards inclusion in water governance, land ownership, and related peacebuilding and policy processes as fundamental rights for men and women changed as a result of the project's interventions?

3. How has knowledge and awareness of citizens (men and women), including people living in poverty and injustice, on their rights in water governance, land ownership, and related peacebuilding and policy processes changed as a result of the project's interventions?

The project aims to create changes in knowledge, awareness, attitudes, norms and voice related to water governance, with special attention to women and marginalized groups.

3 EVALUATION DESIGN

This impact evaluation was meant to be a quasi-experimental impact assessment, meaning that the impact of the programme is assessed by comparing a group of project participants (target group) to a similar group of people that did not participate in the project (comparison group). This was done at the start of the project (baseline), when information was collected from people within the target areas (potential target group) and outside target areas (potential comparison group). However, at the time of the endline study, data collection through surveys was not possible because of restriction for data collection in the Pakistani context. Given these circumstances, we designed a qualitative endline assessment to still be able to grasp changes in outcomes that can be contributed to the project's activities.

This qualitative assessment tried to link its findings to the baseline findings – but also provides more in-depth insights into *how change is happening*. This approach made it challenging to separate changes in the context in which the project is implemented or other non-project related influences on the people we work with, from the actual effects of the project itself. For the qualitative assessment we did not include comparison group respondents, as this would be too heavy in time investment for both the evaluator and the respondent at stake.

3.1 BASELINE MEASUREMENT

At the baseline, the project was planning to work in the province Sindh in three main districts: Badin, TMK, and Hyderabad District. 42 villages were targeted in these districts with a total population of 13,820. In these villages, there were 558 landowners and 65 active WCAs. Based on this number, the diversity of the areas and the capacity of the partner organizations, the sample size was set at a total of 298 target group respondents and 292 comparison group respondents.

In the analysis of the baseline it was assumed that the households in the comparison provide a reasonable counterfactual; they represent the situation of households in the target group in the absence of project activities. Since respondents in both the target and comparison group did not yet participate in project activities, it was assumed they were comparable and therefore are presented as one group.

3.2 QUALITATIVE EVALUATION DESIGN

This qualitative evaluation makes use of in-depth interviews, Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), and Focus Group Discussions (FGDs). These complementary methodologies are explained below:

In-depth interviewing is a qualitative research technique that involves conducting intensive individual interviews with a small number of respondents to explore their perspectives on a particular idea, programme, or situation. Herein, the focus lies on individual opinions and experiences of people targeted by the project activities.

Key informant interviews are also in-depth interviews with people who know what is going on in the community, but who are not necessarily part of the project. The purpose of key informant interviews is to collect information from a wide range of people that are knowledgeable on the topic at hand and can influence decision making — like community leaders, government officials, or members of WCAs and/or FOs—who have first-hand knowledge about water governance and land ownership and rights in the community.

FGDs are semi-structured discussions with groups of 4–12 people - once-only meeting - that aim to explore a specific set of issues. FGDs seek understanding of the structures of perceptions and beliefs, and of reasons for attitudes and motivations in a group, from a historically and culturally situated perspective of the community. Here we looked for opinions of general community members, influenced

by each other, resulting in newly created ideas and knowledge around water governance and land rights in relation to women and marginalized groups.

To answer the research questions, in-depth interviews were held with identified women champions. These are marginalized women and men who participate in formal water or land committees. In addition, KIIs were conducted with male community members and leaders who are part of WCAs or FOs wherein female champions are active, as well as government officials, landowners and land leasers and other strategic partners that are involved in WCAs or FOs. In addition, FGDs have been held with both all-female and all-male groups and one mixed group of community members.

The qualitative approach to this evaluation has been conducted in collaboration with Mehran University of Engineering and Technology's (MUET) US Pakistan Center for Advanced studies in Water. MUET ensured that their staff was trained on the aims and tools of the evaluation. The enumerators that conducted the endline data collection were supervised by MUET. They ensured that data was in line with agreed research standards. In collaboration with IMK, MUET developed an analysis framework which allowed for coding of information from both the interviews and FGDs. They also provided the IMK team with a descriptive report of findings which was used as a base for this impact report.

This report focuses on the qualitative findings at endline of which the methodological design is discussed below. In each section we will also compare qualitative findings to the baseline survey findings to reflect on the changes in outcomes and attempt to analyse the contribution of the project to the changes perceived.

3.3 SAMPLING AND ANALYSIS

The interviews with champions, the KIIs and the FGDs were conducted with participants from targeted areas of treatment in Badin, TMK and Hyderabad. MUET University randomly selected respondents from the beneficiary list at village level. The target number of respondents was set to eight to ten interviews per region, so between 20 to 30 interviews in total, of which 70% were women. A total of 25 interviews were conducted, 15 (60%) of which were with women. The interviewees were selected from 10 villages across the regions, including villages that were included in the baseline.

For WCA/FO members, the aim was to have eight to ten interviews in total. In the end eight interviews were conducted, across three villages from each region. For government officials, the aim was to have around 10 interviews with different stakeholders. Here, the target achieved was only four, which means that there were a total of 12 KIIs. An all-male and all-female FGD was conducted in each of the districts, as well as an additional mixed FGD in TMK, adding up to a total of seven FGDs across one to two villages in each of the regions. A full sampling table can be found in Annex 1.

3.3.1 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

Champions

25 in-depth interviews were conducted with champions across the three districts, of which 15 were female and 10 were male. The age of the champions ranged from 25 to 55, with an average age of 43, 37 and 37 in Hyderabad, TMK and Badin respectively. Level of schooling varied as well, from no schooling to 16 years of education, although the largest group (ten respondents) reported receiving no schooling. The average landholding of the champion respondents was 5.57, 3.55 and 7.37 acres in Hyderabad, TMK and Badin respectively.

WCA/FO members

Eight WCA//FO members were interviewed. Their level of education varied from no school (one respondent) to receiving intermediate education (three respondents). They had an average landholding of around 12.5 acres.

SIDA, Canal Level Alliance and media respondents

A total of four respondents from SIDA, CLA and the media were interviewed. These respondents reported considerably higher levels of education than the champions and WCA/FO members: two

respondents were graduates (16 years of education) and two respondents were post-graduates (18 years of education).

Focus Group Discussions

A total of seven FGDs with community members were conducted. One all-male and one all-female FGD was conducted in each of the districts, and one mixed gender FGD was additionally conducted in the TMK district. The age of the FGD respondents ranged from 18 to 60 years old. The level of education of the male respondents ranged from primary school to intermediate schooling. For female respondents this ranged from no education to graduation.

Baseline respondents versus endline sampling

The baseline surveyed 590 respondents from Badin, TMK and Hyderabad regions, of which 68% were male. The represented regions are the same as the endline qualitative data collection. At the baseline, the respondents had not yet participated in activities organized through the project. The average baseline respondent was an illiterate male farmer, which suggests that the endline respondents were slightly higher educated. Furthermore, at endline purposively more women than men were sampled. The endline focuses on champions in the project. Hence, it is not a representative sample of project participants as was the case at baseline. As a result this evaluation cannot measure the impact of the project, but rather focuses on explaining how change happens and looks into the contribution of the project interventions to change. Lastly, the endline also included key informants – experts in the field of water governance in Pakistan – to learn about their experience of women and marginalized groups raising their voice in water governance and in relation to water conflicts. These type of experts were not part of the baseline measurement.

3.3.2 ANALYSIS

The interviews and FGDs were transcribed verbatim, after which they were analyzed using an analysis framework. The transcripts were coded using a combination of inductive and deductive approaches, with the analysis framework being based on the research questions and interview guide, but allowing for new coding whenever necessary. MUET filled in the analysis framework, with on-a-distance support from IMK, meaning that IMK assisted MEUT to present the findings in line with the analysis framework and checked the quality of analysis. Regular consultation was conducted to formulate and interpret the findings and conclusions of the data. Finally, after qualitative analysis the findings were compared to the baseline findings.

4 FINDINGS

This chapter describes the findings related to the research questions. It outlines the contribution of project activities to citizens raising their voice, to shifted norms and attitudes, and to increased knowledge and awareness, all related to water governance, land ownership, and related peacebuilding and policy processes.

4.1 CONTRIBUTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES TO CITIZENS RAISING THEIR VOICE ON FORMAL WATER GOVERNANCE, LAND OWNERSHIP, AND RELATED PEACEBUILDING AND POLICY PROCESSES

Citizens' voice is about citizens taking action to have their concerns heard by duty bearers, challenge the power of the state and corporate sector and have a say in the future direction of their society. It is also about ensuring that duty bearers consult and take into account the citizens to whom they are accountable.[3] The project has aimed to contribute to citizens raising their voice by, on the one hand, increasing their knowledge and awareness on formal water governance, land ownership, and related peacebuilding and policy processes, and, on the other, facilitating citizens' mobilization to claim their rights. This section will outline how citizens raise their voice in formal water governance bodies, what the effects of participation are, and how women and marginalized groups raise their voice during conflict resolution.

4.1.1 RAISING VOICE IN FORMAL WATER GOVERNANCE BODIES

During the baseline, we saw a low level of participation of respondents in action against injustices or to fight for rights in general. 92% of female respondents and 78% of male respondents said they had not participated in any collective or community action. The findings showed that, for women, it was even more difficult to raise their voice than for men. Furthermore, the context analysis of the project at baseline showed that the irrigation and water governance system in Sindh province is predominantly operated by male and powerful segments of society.

The project has developed the capacity of women and marginalized groups to change this system of water governance towards their meaningfully participation in water governance. By liaising with the decision making bodies, it aimed to create an enabling environment for women and marginalized groups to use their (new) capacities to raise their voice in water governance and related conflict resolutions.

The findings of interviews with champions show that several respondents reported feeling comfortable in raising their voice and speaking up, particularly during community level meetings. The notion of feeling comfortable to raise their voice was emphasized by both women and men who are part of marginalized groups, as well as by other stakeholders reflecting on their experiences with marginalized women and men participating in water governance. Furthermore, the respondents pointed out several enabling factors that allowed them to increase their voice – like increased confidence to talk publicly, getting support from others and being taken seriously by decision makers.

In some cases, respondents directly related the meaningful participation of women and marginalized groups in water governance to the project interventions. As this directly related to the project's long-

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[3] Green, D. (2008). From poverty to power: How active citizens and effective states can change the world. *Oxford: Oxfam Publishing*

term outcome, this point was further elaborated in the FGDs, in which participants disclosed that they were satisfied with the activities of CSOs around the inclusion of women and marginalized groups in water governance. These activities included community groups, capacity building trainings, consultation and coordination meetings. They enabled the interviewees to raise their voice at various forums (SIDA, Sindh Provincial Assembly, Members of the National Assembly (MNAs) and Members of the Provincial Assembly (MPAs).

Experience of women and marginalized groups participating in water governance	Enabling factors for participation in water governance	Contribution of the project to the meaningful participation of women and marginalized groups in water governance
"We (marginalized groups and women) don't have any difficulty to voice our opinion in CSO meetings." (female champion from TMK) *"Women and marginalized group participate actively, they don't hesitate and comfortably speak about their rights."* (male CLA member) *"[N]ow women ask to play their role in community organizations even in programmes organized in Hyderabad; I heard women demands for participation in water governance at all levels."* (male champion from Badin)	*"I feel comfortable because now I have confidence and I can talk."* (male champion from Hyderabad) *"Yes, now I feel comfortable and confident to raise my voice for my and our rights. I always speak at all forums and meetings in which I participate."* (female champion from Hyderabad) *"We feel comfortable and very much happy because they help us to come forward."* (female champion from Badin)	*"Females suffered more but now they raise their voice through this group. Now they speak about their rights by raising voices in different meetings. This change has occurred because of this project."* (female CLA and DLA member) *"During the project activities we met with MNAs & MPAs in Sindh Assembly for the inclusion of females in local water governance bodies."* (female FGD participants from Hyderabad)

At the same time, one respondent reported not having this level of comfort for raising his voice as he reported not feeling welcomed by his group. This shows the importance of making sure other members in the group are being inclusive and actively involving marginalized groups.

> *"I do not feel comfortable because my group members are against me. FO and SIDA do not want me to come and from the group [WCA], there are only a few members who appreciate me. […] Most of the time when I try for raise voice on different issues other members resist me and try to stop me from raising voice. I had faced many problems."* (male champion from TMK)

The researchers noted that women were less talkative around meaningful participation than men. Only a few female champions could well explain how they participate actively in water governance. Others seem more to listen in than to actively contribute, which can be considered as representation instead of meaningful participation. This may be due to the patriarchal culture in Pakistan that does not encourage women to speak out about their rights and needs. Nonetheless, the findings show that women are increasingly participating in water governance structures.

Story 1: Women raising their voice

A woman from Hyderabad said that in the past her brother-in-law would manage the family's affairs and negotiate for their share of water on the family's behalf. Now she has joined a community organization and attended a workshop in Hyderabad, where she learnt many skills to help her fight for her rights. She says: *"Women must have a say in water distribution because the lack of water affects us more. We don't just need water for our fields but also for washing, cooking and drinking. For years, we have been forced to give cloudy water to our children. So the children are often sick and money has to be spent on treatment and their schooling is disrupted"*. She stated that the men

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in her village were initially resistant to the idea of allowing women to step out. However, with Oxfam's support and encouragement she and the women around her felt stronger: *"We negotiated with the men and eventually we were even allowed to travel to Hyderabad. Now I know all our issues will be resolved because we have come together. In the beginning we were only two, then we were eight and soon we will be sixteen. There is power in numbers. With our voices combined and amplified no one will be able to ignore us."*

4.1.2 INFLUENCE ON DECISION MAKING PROCESSES THROUGH RAISING VOICE

The project assumption was that, through meaningful participation in water governance, the issues of women and marginalized groups would be resolved more quickly and appropriately. This would then result in less conflict over water resources.

The findings from the interviews show both positive and negative findings regarding this assumption. Twelve respondents reported that raising their voice had positive effects. They for example reported feeling that their issues were listened to and dealt with seriously. Consequently, some respondents reported an improvement in decision making processes and even that their issues were resolved. However, at the same time, there were ten interviewees that were less positive about changes in decision making processes. Some interviewees believed that, while women do raise their voice more than before, they don't exercise any real influence over decision making processes. This could also be the result of the higher expectations people may get when they know their rights to participate in decision making. In that sense, negative findings may be a sign of empowerment as well, but with limited influence attached.

While the end result is rather mixed in terms of positive and negative perceptions, the question is also whether a four or five year project is able to move from a situation of almost complete exclusion and marginalization towards inclusion (representation) and even meaningful participation in the sense of having influence over decision making processes. In that sense, it seems quite a good, structural finding that water governance bodies and other institutions linked to water management are now more open to get influenced by marginalized groups and are even more inclusive.

Positive effects of meaningful participation	No / limited effects of meaningful participation

"We discuss our issues in meetings, participants take it seriously and try to resolve it." (male champion from TMK)	*"There is no influence of women in decision making, we just raise our voice."* (female champion from Hyderabad)
"Through our inclusion and participation, decision making process has improved." (female champion from Badin)	*"At least now we will talk about our issues through this project so maybe it will help to improve decision making through our inclusion."* (female champion from Badin)
"Increased knowledge and understanding of issues and rights have given us confidence to raise our voice regarding decision making about water governance and water related issues." (female participant from mixed FGD group from TMK).	
"Issues are addressed seriously by community members. I think the amendment in the SIDA act is a big success and proves that women and marginalized group voices are taken serious." (female CLA and DLA member)	*All members support and encourage our participation in meetings, but our issues are not resolved."* (male champion from Hyderabad)
"At this moment I think our inclusion, our gathering at one platform, our regular meetings, sharing of problems and talking about solutions is our great achievement and I think all above activities are improving our decision making as well. Such as deciding on timing and grouping for water fetching." (male champion from Badin)	*"I don't know about improvement in decision making, but I raised and put our issues on the table which was not possible few years back; and I hope, if not now then in the future, the change will occur. I would say powerful and authorized people still do not take our problems seriously and try to ignore us, but how long will they keep on ignoring us?"* (female champion from Badin)
"In one of WC on our minor issue addressed by woman was resolved. She said our village is at tail of water course so first give water to us then people at head use according to their share." (key informant from Badin)	

4.1.3 RAISING VOICES OF WOMEN AND MARGINALIZED GROUPS IN WATER CONFLICTS

Water conflicts in Sindh are quiet conflicts. The mass level armed conflicts in Sindh over water resources are minimal, still tensions at local level are prone to turning into violence because water is also used as a weapon to settle other socio-political disputes. Underlying structural disparities, power asymmetries and governance failures leverage perpetuation of unequal access and distribution of water. Material water shortages form insecurity that can easily aggravate frictions and trigger water conflicts at local level.[4]

Informal conflict resolution processes known as Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms have traditionally been the solution to water conflicts. However, they are criticized for being feudal, discriminatory, and male dominated.[5] In a recent research study conducted by the C&F project in collaboration with MUET on water scarcity in lower Sindh[4], around 80% respondents viewed water theft by powerful landlords as a major cause of water shortage. In the same study, the second main reason for water conflicts was reported to be manipulations in water distribution, locally known as 'warabandi'. Regarding conflict resolution process, it was confirmed that informal institutions still continue to play an important role in conflict resolution in rural settings. Participatory Irrigation Management (PIM) promotes legal water management bodies of land owning farmers to institutionalize formal conflict resolution mechanisms but women and marginalized groups remain excluded. The project assumed that through raising voices in formal water governance bodies, women and marginalized groups would also get more

[4] USPCAS-W (2019). Water scarcity in lower Sindh; Reality vs Myth. *Internal document can be retrieved via the authors.*

[5] Hussain, Ghulam & Mohyuddin, Dr. Anwaar & Mahesar, Firdous. (2013). Conflict Resolution Mechanism in Rural Sindh: Rationalizing Life-world of Peasants. Voice of Intellectual Man. 3. 35-54. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259757031_Conflict_Resolution_Mechanism_in_Rural_Sindh_Rationalizing_Life-world_of_Peasants

involved in conflict resolution related to water management. The examples of issues being resolved seem to indicate that this has worked well in some cases. The project has nurtured women leaders to play a role in water related conflicts. Women and men have been trained on water rights and conflict sensitivity. There are examples were women were accepted as mediators (see story 2) in conflicts unlike in the past where they were considered mere domestic water providers. This suggests that when given spaces, women can prove their worth as peace negotiators. It is expected that women will make water management bodies under PIM more effective when they are formally included as members.

Story 2: Women's involvement in conflict resolution

A woman from Badin explained how women in her community were involved in the resolution of a conflict. "*Water disputes often happen because men fight over their turns to use water under the warabandi system. Men would stay awake at night to have a turn at taking the little water that comes our way. When women are involved they think about their whole community and disputes are less likely to become violent*", she says. She explained how a conflict between her community and another village had come about: "*A girl from one village had run away and was offered shelter in the other. This led to a dispute and while we are one caste, we would not interact with one another. Even the children from the other community would not be able to attend school in [the other village].*" But the women would miss one another and even cry. Under the project, a community theatre performance took place and people from both the villages attended. "*We saw one another and started hugging and weeping. The old grudges were forgotten and now we meet frequently. The biggest success has been that children who could not attend school are now going.*"

However, in other cases, respondents state that, usually, conflict around water is resolved in communities themselves through informal justice systems and not through the WCAs or FOs – that are overarching for multiple communities. Clan elders and village landlords, who tend to be men, are key figures in solving community level conflicts, which means that women are still excluded from community level conflict resolution. The respondents of this evaluation with experience of real conflict around water governance stated clearly that water conflicts should be solved by men. This shows that traditional practices and restrictive social norms are hampering women to get a meaningful role in conflict resolution. Although the C&F project has had a meaningful contribution to the participation of women in water governance and herewith the prevention of water conflict, it has not been possible to show a coherent contribution of the C&F project on women's participation in conflict resolution.

Conflicts are resolved at community level and not through WCAs or FOs	Conflict resolution is strictly for men
"In case such problems arise, we will solve them, like any other problems, through community interventions." (male champion from Hyderabad) *"In our area there is no fighting in terms of Bloodshed but some little conflicts (MUMARI) occur. We resolve them by community intervention."* (male key informant from Badin)	*"In our area, men resolve water related conflicts."* (female champion from TMK) *"Water conflict is always considered a men's issue rather than women's"* (male FGD participants from TMK)

4.2 CONTRIBUTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES TO SHIFTED NORMS AND ATTITUDES TOWARDS INCLUSION IN WATER GOVERNANCE, LAND OWNERSHIP, AND RELATED PEACEBUILDING AND POLICY PROCESSES AS FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS FOR MEN AND WOMEN

An attitude is someone's thinking or feeling with regards to someone or something. Attitudes towards an issue can influence whether or not an individual takes action on that issue. An individual's attitude

can be influenced by social norms. We therefore also consider social norms as potential influencers of action. A social norm is "*an unwritten behavioral rule to which individuals prefer to conform on the condition that they believe that most people in their reference group conform to it, and most people in their reference group believe they should confirm to it*".[6]

The project aimed to cause a change in attitude so that an increased number of men and women consider inclusion in water governance, land ownership and related peacebuilding and policy processes fundamental rights for both men and women. The projects assumes that these changes in attitudes can enable more participation of women and marginalized groups.

Several interviewees reported a change in attitude towards women's participation in decision making over time. Some noted a change in their own attitudes, for example stating that they used to believe women shouldn't participate, but that they had now changed their mind. Others reported changes in attitudes from people around them, including family members. Female interviewees also reported feeling appreciated by community members for their participation in CSO meetings. While this shows progress on the level of community participation, there were also community members, including some of the respondents, that believed women shouldn't participate in meetings. Reasons stated for this included the patriarchal social norm that women shouldn't participate in public gatherings at all, and that women should stick to their traditional roles, such as doing household work.

This shows that there are still prevailing harmful norms for women's participation. This seemed particularly true for women's participation in meetings on a more formal level. Some interviewees reported that, while they felt welcomed and appreciated in CSO meetings, they had difficulty gaining acceptance within the structures of WCAs or FOs. One respondent was of the opinion that women should not be allowed to be official WCA/FO members, and during a FGD, a case was discussed where a woman became vice-president of an FO but had to resign due to family pressure. The project anticipated these norms, and addressed them through raising awareness on water governance, the role of women in water management and women leadership.

Positive attitudes towards participation	Hampering social norms	Difficulties in accessing formal participation
"*I think women should be involved in decision making, we want women empowered, they should participate in water management.*" *(male key informant from Hyderabad)* "*Water scarcity affects us all, so women should participate in water governance. I am happy that women are participating.*" *(male key informant from Hyderabad)* "*I feel welcomed and my family also appreciates and encourages me to actively participate because we learn a lot in trainings and meetings.*" *(5, female champion from Hyderabad)* "*Community members, including men, encourage and appreciate the women's role in*	"*We don't allow women in the project because we don't allow our women to participate in public gatherings. Even after witnessing women [champions] participating in social activities because our culture doesn't allow it. […] I think woman remain in home to do household work and man work outside to earn.*" *(male key informant from Badin)* "*I am not saying 'all community members' as there are some community persons who still have objections to women's participation in group meetings and they do not allow their women to participate in meetings. They have this old fashioned slogan that women should perform their traditional*	"*Women and tenants should not be allowed to be member of WCA/FO. After completion of the project, women, will remain in their homes and will not participate in FO/WCA meetings.*" *(male key informant from Badin)* "*As far as FO meeting are concerned, we women are never invited but in community meetings organized by NGOs and WCA meetings, I have been invited to participate and feel welcomed.*" *(female champion from Badin)* "*There is a problem of acceptance by official members of the groups, especially in WCAs, as officially in these associations only landholders can be members of the group.*"

[6] Bicchieri, C. (1990). Norms of Cooperation. *Ethics, 100(4): 838–861. doi:10.1086/293237*

the group; that gives me confidence and is what I like about this group." (female champion from Hyderabad)	roles." (female champion from Hyderabad)	(male key informant from Hyderabad)

While these findings don't seem to paint a positive picture of women's participation, it is important to take into account the context in which the project is set, where strong-rooted patriarchal social norms around gender still hamper women's participation in many spheres of society. Nonetheless, the fact that the endline respondents reported changes in their own awareness and those of their community members regarding women's participation in CSO meetings at a community level, shows that there have at least been some positive changes in attitudes. This can be seen as a first step towards increased normalization and acceptance for women's and marginalized groups' participation in water governance.

Story 3: Changing attitudes around gender and women's participation

A mother of seven from Hyderabad explained how changing attitudes not only allowed her to participate, but also how it gave her new perspectives on gender. She said that in the past, women like her were never included in discussions about water. Most women from her community had never even stepped out of their villages. Convincing families to allow them to travel to Hyderabad and Tharparker for the rights training was a challenge. "*I said to my father and brother that other people are flying in the sky and women like me are stuck in our corners. Illiterate and hungry. So I was finally allowed to go.*" Attending the workshops was a lifechanging experience for her. "*We learnt about gender equality. Both men and women have their social roles and women should not feel like lesser beings. We now understand our rights and are ready to speak up for them. We will go to Area Water Board (AWB) and to Sindh Irrigation and Drainage Department (SIDA) and demand our share of water.*", she says.

4.3 CONTRIBUTION OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES TO INCREASED KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS ON THEIR RIGHTS IN WATER GOVERNANCE, LAND OWNERSHIP, AND RELATED PEACEBUILDING AND POLICY PROCESSES

We define knowledge as facts, information or skills obtained through experience or education. Awareness relates to knowledge and refers to familiarity with an issue. The Theory of Change assumes that citizens first need to gain knowledge of an issue, before having or changing their attitudes and norms on it, and therefore before taking action on it. Knowledge and awareness are seen as key ingredients of raising citizens' voice. This section will focus on whether the project activities have increased knowledge and awareness according to the interviewees, and second, whether increased knowledge leads to respondents taking more action.

4.3.1 CHANGES IN KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS

The interviewees reported that they had increased their knowledge and awareness by participating in one or more of the project trainings in four thematic areas. These are 1) general water rights, 2) water governance, 3) specific challenges for women and marginalized groups, and 4) disagreement resolution mechanisms.

Some of the interviewees said that, before they participated in the project, they didn't have much or any knowledge of water rights. Many of the interviewees reported an increase of knowledge on and awareness of their water rights, which they linked to their participation in the project. While the baseline findings didn't address knowledge on water rights, the endline responses do seem to suggest a change in those interviewees participating in the project. Although most interviewees didn't disclose what exactly they learned in regard to their water rights, some of them did mention a change in understanding

for whom water rights exist. For example, one respondent stated that he previously thought that only big land owners had water rights, but that he now understands that women and marginalized groups have those rights too.

Similarly, the interviewees reported an increase in knowledge on water governance. While knowledge on water governance also wasn't measured during baseline, the responses during endline again suggest an increase in knowledge when compared to before the project started, as respondents specifically linked their increased knowledge to the project. Examples of increased knowledge and awareness on water governance included the respondents understanding the roles of SIDA, WCAs and FOs, including that it is SIDA's and FO's responsibility to resolve water shortage and theft issues. In addition, respondents mentioned how the project helped them gain awareness of the inclusion of women and marginalized groups in water governance.

Increased knowledge and awareness on water rights	Increased knowledge and awareness on water governance
"The project intervention has provided knowledge on our water rights." (male champion from Hyderabad) *"This NGO told us about the all issues and water rights, and made us aware about water issues."* (female champion from Badin) *"Through this project now people know all the issues and their basic rights, and specially water rights, and water related knowledge."* (male CLA member from Hyderabad) *"Previously we had understanding that only big land owners have water right, but now we understand that women and marginalized groups also have water rights."* (male champion from TMK)	*"I learned a lot about water governance; they trained us how to process applications in SIDA/ID and how and where to raise our water related problems."* (male key informant from TMK) *"It is the responsibility of SIDA and FO to resolve water shortage and theft issues."* (female champion from TMK) *"Knowledge about water governance and distribution of Akram wah [canal for water distribution]. The role of WCA and FO."* (female champion from TMK) *"Previously, only landowners were included in water related decisions but now we know we [women], should be involved in this; the project gave us awareness on this."* (female champion from Badin)

Reflecting on women and marginalized groups, there were respondents that stated they did not believe there were specific challenges these groups had to deal with. While this seems to suggest a lack of awareness, other interviewees did demonstrate knowledge on specific challenges for marginalized groups, and in particular, women. In some cases, they specifically stated they had learned this through project interventions. Challenges that were cited included time division between children and the household, a lack of education, increased suffering in cases of water shortage, and issues such as harassment or fear of attacks from stray dogs. They also disclosed that water shortage can especially affect women and marginalized groups.

Finally, the interviewees reported that the project helped them increase their knowledge on conflict resolution within the community, as well as conflict resolution mechanisms outside of the community. They, for example, described they know how to resolve conflicts or what process to follow. While at baseline, the majority of male and female respondents already had information about peace processes at the community level (68% and 73% respectively), the fact that the interviewees specifically stated their knowledge had increased since joining the project suggests a change since baseline. On top of that, the respondents at endline mentioned that the project increased their awareness on the role of both men and women in conflict resolution mechanisms. During baseline the majority of respondents didn't believe that participation of women in the peace process was possible. Among men, 89% said participation of women was either somewhat possible or not at all possible, and among women, this

share was 96%. This suggests a change in awareness towards roles of men and women in peace processes, brought about by the project.

Increased knowledge and awareness on specific challenges for women and marginalized groups	Increased knowledge and awareness on disagreement resolution mechanisms
"We realized our problems through these sessions. And we also realized that water issues are not only hurting us (male) but these are more serious for females and marginalized groups." (male champion from Badin) *"Women do not have education that is why they are facing many problems."* (male champion from TMK) *"In case of water problems, women and marginalized groups suffer the most.* (female champion from Hyderabad) *"Once water does not reach at their lands, the aquifer (underground layer of water-bearing permeable rock or sand), will not recharge and we will be unable to fetch water from hand pumps and need to walk a lot to fetch water from faraway hand pumps, which is not only time consuming but involves security risk as well. Hence, the water shortage brings more vulnerability and poverty to women and marginalized groups."* (FGD with male participants from Badin).	*"Gained knowledge about resolving conflicts, at first stage within community, if not resolved, at second stage involvement of third party to solve issues. Issues are always resolved by dialogue; not with fighting."* (female champion from Hyderabad) *"Now I know that every issue can and must be resolved through discussion."* (female champion from Badin) *"They give us knowledge through theatre that males and females can work together and by doing this they can resolve any problem."* (male champion from TMK)

4.3.2 CONTRIBUTION OF KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS TO EXPRESSING VOICE

The interviews reported changes in level of knowledge and awareness, as well as changes in attitudes and an increase in citizen's raising their voice. While it is difficult to point out a causal link between the three aspects from just the interviews alone, some of the data does seem to show a link between knowledge, changing attitudes and raising voice.

First of all, as mentioned previously, the project interventions led to increased knowledge on, for example, water rights, which seemed to bring about a positive change in attitudes towards the idea that men and women enjoy the same water rights. In addition, multiple interviewees were of the belief that women and marginalized groups should be involved in decision making processes, which seemed to also be a result of increased awareness and knowledge. For multiple interviewees, this attitudinal change led to the belief that women's issues need to be solved. Knowledge on water rights, governance and water related issues increased interviewees' confidence, which particularly helped women in raising their voice after they started participating in meetings. This does not automatically mean, however, that this increase in participation is also translated into more influence.

Awareness leads to change in attitude	Confidence due to increased knowledge leads to raising voice
"They especially focus on women to improve their knowledge. CSOs support us in understanding the water related issues and, because of their activities, I think all the women	*"Before this project, I didn't know about rights and needs, but now I can confidently raise my voice."* (female champion from Hyderabad)

are now united, I know my water rights; I understand that women's issues have equal importance and need to solved." (female champion from Badin)	*"We have knowledge so now we can address our issues in front of any person or authority." (male champion from Badin)*

The endline interviews showed that interviewees gained at least some knowledge on water rights, water governance, conflict resolution mechanisms, and – to a certain extent – specific challenges for women and marginalized groups. The responses also seemed to suggest that knowledge can influence attitudes towards the participation of women, as well as raise confidence, which can make it easier for people to raise their voice. It is difficult to link these levels of knowledge to baseline findings, as the knowledge questions asked at that time were very basic. In conclusion, we can say that knowledge is likely to enable changes in attitudes and raising voice, which is in line with the Theory of Change, but we are less sure about the scope of the increase in knowledge that the project has brought about.

Story 4: How increased knowledge can lead to raising voice

A widow from Badin managed to achieve what no man or woman in her village had done before: her activism resulted in the breaking down of a blockade which had endangered her community with flooding and had prevented them from accessing their fair share of water for seven years. She says that before her community attended the rights training in Hyderabad organized by AWARE and SPO, they were unaware of their rights. She says that her increased knowledge made her confident to raise her voice: *"If we had not been invited to learn about our rights under the project, this blockade would never have been removed. Now that I am aware of my rights, I am not scared of anyone."* It allowed her to speak up in a seminar on the blockage in Badin with FOs and government officials present, challenging the men: *"If you can't get this blockade removed, us women will go and do it".* This resulted in the officials taking the police along and managing to destroy the blockade.

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5 CONCLUSION

5.1.1 CITIZENS' VOICE

Respondents reported feeling increasingly more comfortable to raise their voice, particularly during community level meetings. Several enabling factors allowed them to increase their voice – like increasing their confidence to talk publicly, getting support from others and being taken seriously by decision makers, and project activities. The interviewees thus raised their voice more often, and some reported that this led to their issues being listened to and dealt with more seriously. This was not the case for everyone, however, as some interviewees, for example, believed that while women now do raise their voice more than before, they don't exercise any real influence over decision making processes.

While there were positive signs of women's participation in community level meetings regarding water governance, there were not yet signs that they were participating in water conflict resolution mechanisms as well. Respondents explained that conflicts are still primarily solved at community level through informal justice systems. These informal justice groups exist mainly of influential elderly in the communities. Sometimes, these men also take part in WCAs and FOs, but that is not necessarily the case. As women and marginalized groups are traditionally not included in water governance, let alone informal justice systems, the project focused on influencing amendments in the water law for the inclusion of women in formal water management structures. While there has not yet been a change in law, the project did manage to ensure the inclusion of women in FOs and advisory committees which support the FOs in conflict resolution and other water related matters. Participation of women in water governance, that prevent conflict and advice on conflict resolutions, is considered a first step towards full participation of women in conflict resolution.

5.1.2 ATTITUDES AND NORMS

The interviewees reported a positive change in attitudes towards women's participation in decision making over time. Female interviewees, for example, stated that they feel their participation in CSO meetings is appreciated by community members and often they are supported by other community members to participate and raise their voice. However, there seem to be prevailing social norms that still hamper women's participation, leading to some community members not accepting women's participation. In particular, while women felt generally welcomed in CSO community meetings, they had difficulty gaining acceptance at more formal levels, for example within WCAs and FOs. Still, respondents (champions, regular community members, as well as WCA members and key informants) reported changes in their own attitudes and those of their community members regarding women's participation within Pakistan's patriarchal context, which shows a first step towards increased acceptance for women and marginalized groups' participation.

5.1.3 KNOWLEDGE AND AWARENESS

The interviewees reported gaining some knowledge on water rights, including who are the bearers of these rights, the concept of water governance in general, conflict resolution mechanisms, and specific challenges for women and marginalized groups, such as harassment and lack of education. Increased knowledge on, for example, water rights seemed to help bring about a change in attitudes towards the idea that men and women enjoy the same water rights, as well as in favour of women's and marginalized groups' participation in water governance processes. Participation in conflict resolution is still challenging, but at least the issues of women and marginalized groups seem to be heard in the decision making processes, although often still with very limited influence over the direction and outcome of these process. Knowledge and awareness also helped interviewees to raise their confidence, which helped women in particular in raising their voice and addressing issues they face in meetings.

5.2 LIMITATIONS

As this research used a qualitative evaluation method, the sample size is limited and thus the findings of this research are not meant to be generalized to the overall population within the three regions. This made it difficult to evaluate changes compared to the baseline evaluation. While the findings seem to suggest some changes have happened due to project activities, it should be taken into account that these cannot be fully ascribed to project activities alone since external factors have not been accounted for in the analysis. Instead, the findings should be interpreted as the experiences of the respondents, which provide insights into how social change can happen. Despite these limitations, the findings still provide information that helps us to test some of the assumptions of the project in a more general way and show indications of impact.

5.3 CONCLUSION

While the limitations as described above mean that it is difficult to draw a strong conclusion when comparing the endline findings with those of the baseline, it does seem that respondents have started feeling comfortable to raise their voice due to enabling factors such as increased knowledge, which project activities have contributed to. While their issues aren't always resolved yet, and while some of the interviewees felt that they not yet have influence on decision making processes, they were hopeful that initial changes might lead to more sustainable impact in the future.

While women and marginalized groups still face difficulties when participating in more formal structures, they do seem to be more involved in community level meetings when compared to the baseline findings. They also reported feeling increasingly more accepted and appreciated for their role in these meetings.

The structural barriers to women's participation in decision making processes are deeply rooted. So, to create spaces for women's participation, social norms around women's participation need to change first. While some restrictive social norms still exist and can make it difficult for women to participate in formal meetings and informal systems, this is exactly where the project has contributed: participants noted changes in their own norms as well as in the norms of their community members. Conflict resolution mechanisms are so far only accessible for influential men – as these processes take place outside of the WCAs in informal justice systems at community level. Hence, the project focused on social acceptance of women's participation in the formal water governance bodies that prevent and advice on conflicts about water.

6 LEARNINGS

The C&F project in Pakistan brought about positive changes with more acceptance and appreciation for women and marginalized groups to raise their voice in water governance. To sustain the process at system level, the following learnings should be taken at heart. These learnings are the results of reflections on the findings with the project team in Pakistan:

- Increasing knowledge and awareness on water governance seems to work well to develop the capacity of women and marginalized groups to raise their voice. An important aspect herein is strengthening their confidence to speak up. The knowledge base will be strengthened locally through capacity development of local water governance institutes that can continue to train women and marginalized groups when the project is facing out. Furthermore, the project wants to bring its success to the attention of decision makers in government to try to sustain the efforts – to sustain and broaden the base of female champions in water governance.

- From participation in formal water governance systems, the project also tries to influence the participation of women in conflict resolution. As there are patriarchal social norms that hamper the participation of women, it is not possible to take a direct approach. Conflict resolution is done through informal justice systems at community level that are not easy to influence. However, the champion stories show that change is possible, since they have increasingly participated and raised their voice in community level meetings. The project wants to continue this efforts to ensure formal amendments, so that WCAs and FOs officially become part of decision making in water governance and conflict resolution.

- Conflict resolution mechanisms are not yet inclusive for women and marginalized groups. It takes more time to influence the informal justice system that is deeply rooted in Sindh societies. The indication that women's issues regarding water rights are gaining more respect is promising for a stronger role in conflict resolution in the future.

7 ANNEX 1: SAMPLING

RQ	Where	Number of Respondents	Inclusion Criteria	Target Achieved
Champions	Badin / TMK / Hyderabad: Select 10 villages (include villages of baseline sample) for interviews with Champions	8-10 interviews per region: total = 20-30 interviews	30% men 70% women New member of community group, WCA / FO	Distt: Male Female Total HYD 2 5 7 TMK 5 5 10 Badin 3 5 8 25
WCA/FO Members	Select 3 villages per region (include villages from baseline sample) from the 10 villages (selected earlier) for interviews with WCA / FO member	2-4 interviews per region: total = 8-10	100% men Established member of WCA / FO	Distt: Total HYD 4 TMK 1 Badin 3 8
Government Officials and other Stakeholders	Hyderabad offices	About 10: 1 SIDA: gender expert (Farzana Abasi) 1 SIDA: watercourse contact WCA / FO 1 Area water board: social organizer (Zeb-un-Nisa) 1 Area water board: contact person WCA / FO 3 Canal level alliance: members per district (Badin, TMK, Hyderabad) 1 canal level alliance: representative minority group 1 canal level alliance: social welfare department 1 media		1 SIDA 1 Media 2 CLA
Community Group/FGD	Select 1-2 villages per region (include villages from baseline sample) from the 10 villages (selected earlier) for FGD with community members	Per village: 1 male and 1 female group 6-10 participants per group Maybe one mixed group	50% men and women Not a member of community group, WCA or FO	Distt: Male Female Total HYD 1 1 2 TMK 1 1 3* Badin 1 1 2 7 *In TMK 1 Mix group FGD