

**THE EAST LONDON FOCUS GROUP
CONSULTATION ON DFID'S COUNTRY
ASSISTANCE PLAN FOR PAKISTAN, 2008-11.**

Final report

Written by

Abdul Razzaque

Pakistan Welfare Association East London

37 Kingston Road

Iford

Essex

IG1 1PB

27th April 2007

Commissioned, coordinated and report edited by
Connections for Development (CfD)



Contents

Foreword.....	i
1. Introduction and Methodology	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Methodology	1
Poverty Reduction Strategy	1
Economic/Governance.....	1
Geographical	1
2. Poverty Reduction Strategy.....	2
2.1 How best can the UK help to increase Pakistani peoples' access to basic services (for example education, health, water and sanitation)?	2
2.2 What do you think should be the Government of Pakistan's poverty reduction priorities?	2
3. Economic/Governance.....	3
3.1 What can the UK do to promote economic success and economic growth that benefits the poor in Pakistan?	3
3.2 What can the UK do in Pakistan to support more involvement of poor people, especially women, in decision-making that affects them?.....	3
3.3 What more can the UK do to help the Government of Pakistan to promote transparency and accountability?	4
4. Economic/Governance.....	4
4.1 DFID currently works at the federal level in Pakistan, and also in Punjab and NWFP. If DFID also considered new work in Sindh, Balochistan or AJK where do you think the benefits of development would be greatest, and what would be the challenges faced?	4
5. CLOSING REMARKS	6

Foreword

Prime Minister Tony Blair recently announced that DFID would be doubling its assistance to Pakistan, increasing spending to £480 million over the period 2008-2011. The new CAP will set out the framework within which this money will be spent.

This paper presents the key issues that were expressed at the East London Focus Group in relation to the Pakistan Country Assistance Plan (CAP) 2008-2011, and based on eight questions posed by DFID around three topics: Poverty Reduction Strategy, Economic/Governance and Geographical.

The Consultation Process

For the purpose of collecting a wider stakeholder response to the questions posed by DFID, CfD facilitated a Focus Group from within the CfD Network and beyond in East London. CfD worked in partnership with an East London based civil society organisation, Pakistan Welfare Association East London to arrange a Focus Group consultations, and we offered logistical support, coordinated the planning and facilitated the Focus Group. The literature CfD provided encourage participants to focus on the answers to eight principal questions:

Poverty Reduction Strategy

1. How best can the UK help to increase Pakistani peoples' access to basic services (for example education, health, water and sanitation)?
2. What do you think should be the Government of Pakistan's poverty reduction priorities?

Economic/Governance

3. What can the UK do to promote economic success and economic growth that benefits the poor in Pakistan?
4. What can the UK do in Pakistan to support more involvement of poor people, especially women, in decision-making that affects them?
5. What more can the UK do to help the Government of Pakistan to promote transparency and accountability?

Geographical

6. DFID currently works at the federal level in Pakistan, and also in Punjab and NWFP. If DFID also considered new work in Sindh, Balochistan or AJK where do you think the benefits of development would be greatest, and what would be the challenges faced?
7. What can the UK do through its development programme to help Pakistan improve relations with its neighbours?
8. How can the UK support Pakistan in adapting to the impacts of climate change?

Rationale for CfD Participation

Our mission is to promote and develop interest, raise awareness, co-operation and action on International Development (ID) issues, and areas of activity such as poverty reduction amongst BME voluntary and community sector organisations in the UK, with interests in overseas development.

We have a commitment to build a stronger, better-informed and more effective UK BME community for ID, by providing a framework for the open sharing of views and constructive dialogue. By facilitating members to participate in an open, non-prescriptive and participatory manner, we endeavour to encourage a sense of ownership and participation in public policy debates.

CfD regularly mobilizes BME communities and their organisations to take part in policy consultations with relevant UK Government Departments. This is our way of voicing our members' opinions and enabling their engagement in the UK domestic and international policy debates.

Connections for Development, 27th April 2007.

1. Introduction and Methodology

1.1 Introduction

The East London Focus Group was held on the evening of Thursday 26th April 2007 at the Ilford Community Centre, which was arranged by Pakistan Welfare Association East London (PWA) in partnership with Connections for development (CfD).

Thirty one (31) people participated, representing Pakistan-led civil society groups and a number of other concerned individuals.

1.2 Methodology

All participants had been circulated a copy of the current Pakistan CAP and the three broad areas that DFID requested people with an interest to consider. These were:

Poverty Reduction Strategy

1. How best can the UK help to increase Pakistani peoples' access to basic services (for example education, health, water and sanitation)?
2. What do you think should be the Government of Pakistan's poverty reduction priorities?

Economic/Governance

3. What can the UK do to promote economic success and economic growth that benefits the poor in Pakistan?
4. What can the UK do in Pakistan to support more involvement of poor people, especially women, in decision-making that affects them?
5. What more can the UK do to help the Government of Pakistan to promote transparency and accountability?

Geographical

6. DFID currently works at the federal level in Pakistan, and also in Punjab and NWFP. If DFID also considered new work in Sindh, Balochistan or AJK where do you think the benefits of development would be greatest, and what would be the challenges faced?
7. What can the UK do through its development programme to help Pakistan improve relations with its neighbours?
8. How can the UK support Pakistan in adapting to the impacts of climate change?

Participants were separated into three discussion groups, one for each of the three broad areas for discussion. Group were given 45 minutes to discuss the broad issue and produce a collective response to the questions raised. These responses were written and a nominated spokesperson from each group was given the opportunity to make a verbal summary, which was recorded.

2. Poverty Reduction Strategy

2.1 How best can the UK help to increase Pakistani peoples' access to basic services (for example education, health, water and sanitation)?

The participants agreed that increased access begins by having adequate infrastructure, therefore, it was stressed that physical structures need to be put in place, such as Primary Schools, health clinics, all buildings with adequate water and sanitation, and improved transport links. In addition to physical infrastructure, it was agreed that human resources required development, through, for example, teacher training, nursing training etc.

It was noted that abject poverty had led to significant levels of child labour, which prevented many children from attending school. This issue requires attention and, perhaps, poor families could be offered incentives to encourage their children to attend school. Such incentives must match the potential earnings of their children and could be financial or in the form of vouchers for food and clothing. By all means the culture of child labour needs to be changed and families need to be educated to the long-term benefits of education.

Primary health care must be developed further. This could be done by building more clinics and training more doctors and nurses or via mobile units.

It was agreed that a significant means of increasing access to health, water and sanitation is to support the development of rural community-led project in, for example, solar energy, production of biogas from cattle and human waste, slow sand water filtration etc. These technologies are tried and trusted, and are relatively simple to apply. In view of this, rural civil society groups should be encouraged and supported in such endeavours.

On the issue of managing the various projects and programmes, it was agreed that milestones must be clearly established, value for money should be a key consideration and, always, realistic targets should be set. Most importantly, we need more feedback from the Pakistan Government and DFID about achievement of outcomes so that we can gauge the success of the CAP.

2.2 What do you think should be the Government of Pakistan's poverty reduction priorities?

A number of key issues were identified as essential for poverty reduction:

- ◆ Planned Primary Care provision;
- ◆ Empower people with the skills to develop projects for energy production, eg solar, biogas, water etc;
- ◆ Prevention of long-term illness leading to less disability and people living healthier more productive lives. This would lead to a more productive society and more stable economy;
- ◆ Require expert consultancy on all areas of agriculture, such as improving crop yields and adding value. It was stressed this was not just about money

but the need for expertise to assist in the development of the agricultural sector;

- ◆ Encourage cottage industry in rural areas, and this would require an element of training and support through, perhaps, micro-credit schemes via credit unions.

3. Economic/Governance

3.1 What can the UK do to promote economic success and economic growth that benefits the poor in Pakistan?

It was stressed that just giving financial assistance was not necessarily the best use of public funds unless it was shown to be developing infrastructure that led to long lasting self-sustainability. The Pakistan people wish to be able to sustain their families and look to the future with hope and expectation of the chance to improve themselves. This can only be done through infrastructure development:

- ◆ Investment in infrastructure that is long-term and self sustaining;
- ◆ Investment in industry, creation of jobs and new markets;
- ◆ Related training in necessary skills to enable people to access employment opportunities;
- ◆ Since most people live in rural areas, efforts should be focussed on agriculture, livestock etc.

Pakistan requires investment in infrastructure, modern technologies and agriculture to develop the means to self-sustainability.

3.2 What can the UK do in Pakistan to support more involvement of poor people, especially women, in decision-making that affects them?

It was recognised that over recent years there had been a significant growth in the active engagement of women at all levels of society in Pakistan, but much more needs to be done.

In answer to what can be done to promote economic success and involvement, the group felt that:

- ◆ Local NGOs require strengthening. Since many work in rural areas, if they were supported, encouraged and trained adequately, they could take the lead on delivering services at a local level. For example, with adequate support, local NGOs could be major players in areas of health, education and development of cottage industries;
- ◆ Women have traditionally had a great deal of involvement in agriculture in rural areas. We need to develop rural agriculture and empower communities, particularly women, with the skills and abilities to develop agricultural practice that is more than subsistence farming;

- ◆ Local people's involvement at a local level is critical. There is a need for devolution of power and resources. We want to see the UK Government providing training and support to human resource development, not just money, that would enable people to become self-sufficient. We would like to see the DFID establish a rural training scheme headed by appropriately skilled people – it doesn't matter where they come from as long as they have the appropriate skills to develop rural capacity. This could be fulfilled through an Exchange Scheme of professional.
- ◆ It was agreed that emphasis needed to be put on Education and Primary Health Care, and the UK could provide training and support for human resource development in these areas;
- ◆ It was emphasised that if people were more able to support their families, child labour would naturally diminish. More children would attend school and longer-term prospects would improve considerably.

3.3 What more can the UK do to help the Government of Pakistan to promote transparency and accountability?

It was pointed out that accountability was a difficult issue, because we need to clearly define who is responsible for what.

It was agreed, however, that there must be clear definition of purpose in every intervention. Most importantly, there needs to be development of partnership between local government, NGOs and local people. Community participation needs to be stressed so that local communities take ownership over any project or programme. In this way, sustainability of efforts is much more likely. We believe that there should be joint planning and control at both UK and Pakistan level. Such joint planning would help in terms building local capacity through transfer of skills and services.

Finally, there needs to be a more robust and transparent monitoring and evaluation (M&E) regime, with strong project management. We feel that ordinary people are not informed adequately about successes and failings of various interventions. It should be stressed that governments are accountable to the people they serve, and so we require more robust and independent M&E, so that we are all made aware of progress. One obvious way of improving accountability is to engage local people in all development activities, and this reiterates the point that was raised in bullet point three in section 3.2 above.

4. Economic/Governance

4.1 DFID currently works at the federal level in Pakistan, and also in Punjab and NWFP. If DFID also considered new work in Sindh, Balochistan or AJK where do you think the benefits of development would be greatest, and what would be the challenges faced?

It was agreed that to insure successful interventions by DFID in other provinces of Pakistan, they should work directly with the Federal Government in those areas. Whilst the central Government would be aware of the overall

needs in the various provinces, the federal Governments would have very specific knowledge and understanding of needs across the area.

It was pointed out that 60% of the population of Pakistan is in Panjab, and as such most programmes have been devoted to this area. It was unanimously agreed that DFID should continue its programmes in this area, but at the same time develop in to needy areas such as Sindh and Balochistan. But this should not be done at the expense of existing development programmes, and all new work should attract additional financial support.

The challenges that are faced and priorities in areas such as Sindh and Balochistan are unlikely to be the same as Punjab and NWFP. All new programmes must be adapted to meet local need and priorities, although it was stressed that water and sanitation was a high priority in Sindh

In its new programmes, DFID should work closely with local NGOs and communities to establish what local people see as their priorities, and through this means community participation DFID's strategy should be developed and channelled. This brings us back to community ownership, which is the critical path to sustainability of any intervention.

4.2 What can the UK do through its development programme to help Pakistan improve relations with its neighbours?

It was agreed by all in the group that improved relations with Pakistan's neighbours was a question of education. We have to educate the population of Pakistan so that communities get a broader perspective of what's happening in the world. It was suggested that rural education curricula should be extended to include exposure to international issues. Role models should be identified from amongst the Pakistan population to illustrate what can be achieved with focussed effort. Essentially, we need to focus people's thought on the prospects of self development and improve their aspirations for themselves and families so that, in turn, there is less need to focus on conflict.

4.3 How can the UK support Pakistan in adapting to the impacts of climate change?

It was recognised that climate change is a very topical yet controversial topic. It was pointed out that developed countries were using the UN machinery to put in place controls and conditions for emissions and reversal of climate change, and that this would impact most dramatically on developing countries that are experiencing strong industrial growth, like Pakistan.

Again, we believe this is a question of education. There needs to be a much more dedicated effort in educating people in the benefits of conservation and recycling. Communities need to be sensitised and empowered with the skills to exploit alternative energy resources, such as solar, biodiesel, biogas etc, and on the benefits of recycling. It was noted that there was a general reluctance on behalf of ordinary Pakistanis to recycle, so there was an urgent need to develop appropriate education programmes that clearly identify local, national

and global environmental benefits of recycling and use of renewable energy resources.

5. CLOSING REMARKS

Two related overarching themes that emerged from the Focus Group was the need to develop Pakistan's manufacturing base and the capacity of its population to engage more fully in the country's economic development.

It was stressed that the best any country's assistance programme can do for Pakistan is to channel efforts into enhancing the manufacturing base. If this was matched by capacity building programmes, unemployment would be reduced, living standards would rise and child labour would reduce. It would also enable Pakistan to produce more quality goods, increase export opportunities, realise less trade deficits and enable more investment of Pakistan's own resources into its own development. The end result – self-sustainability.