

**HUMANITARIAN AID (SDC-HA) PAKISTAN**

**RECONSTRUCTION AND LIVELIHOOD PROGRAMME RLP**

## **Housing Reconstruction Programme (A Gender Dimension)**

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## Abbreviations:

AI Team	Assistance and Inspection Team
AJK	Azad Jamu Kashmir
DRU	District Reconstruction Unit
DHC	District Housing Coordinator
ERRA	Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority
GTZ	German Technical Cooperation
HRC	Housing Reconstruction Center
LFA	Logical Framework Analysis
NWFP	North West Frontier Province
OT	Outreach Team
PO	Partner Organization
ToT	Training of Trainers
TMIS	Training Monitoring Information System
RLP	Reconstruction and Livelihood Programme
SDC	Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation
UN HABITAT	United Nations Programme for Human Settlement
UC	Union Council
VRC	Village Reconstruction Committee

# 1 Background

The devastating earthquake on October 8, 2005 over an area of 30,000 square km across NWFP and AJK killed 88'000 and injured more than 100'000 people. As a result according to the official statistics of government of Pakistan 460'000 houses damaged. Most of the damages occurred in the rural and mountainous areas.

SDC-HA is one of the institutional partners to the governmental Earthquake Reconstruction and Rehabilitation Authority (ERRA) in the implementation of the private rural housing reconstruction strategy. SDC operates two out of 11 ERRA Housing Reconstruction Centers (HRCs), one in district Battagram and one in Tehsil Balakot. The HRCs are staffed with a team of technical advisors and trainers.

Trainings and technical assistance is provided in the two HRCs on earthquake safer building methods according to the standards of the << **Build Back Better**>> -Strategy since spring 2006. Trainings are conducted at various levels and for different target groups (masons, engineers, self builders, Army, social mobilizers, trainers, NGOs etc).

The HRC's further provide information to everyone on other construction related issues (e.g. technical standards), particularly through the partner organizations (POs). POs pass on the private housing policy to the rural areas in their assigned union councils through so called "mobile teams". Mobile teams are composed of a mason/engineer and a male and female social mobilizer. SDC-HA is itself a partner organization in union councils Shamlai (Battagram) and Mohandri (Balakot) where field offices are established and functioning.

The financial support on private housing reconstruction is provided through the government of Pakistan. Affected household receive a grant of Rs. 175,000 for fully damaged houses (approx. CHF 3'000) and Rs. 75,000 (approx. CHF 1'250) for partially damaged/retrofitable houses.

The concept of an << owner driven>> private housing reconstruction approach has been adopted as the guiding policy. Apart from the training component, the programme identifies additional support to the most vulnerable and marginalized people by building some model houses. This is done as gender inclusive community based and integrated approach.

SDC is committed to strive for mainstreaming gender into all its interventions as a **transversal theme**, so that it ultimately leads the target community towards achieving gender equality in a true sense.

Since the start of the Housing Reconstruction Programme, RLP team has integrated gender considerations as a transversal theme as it is integral part of Housing strategy as well as RLP Programme. Available tools (for example, LFA, Check list, reports, documentation of lessons learned and best practices) used and are being used to monitor the progress and to improve performance measurement of gender related results.

## **2 Gender Dimensions in Housing Reconstruction Programme**

### **2.1 General Picture of Society in NWFP (Battagram and Balakot Thesils) regarding GENDER with special reference to Women:**

If we look at the socio-cultural context of NWFP, Women are considered to be confined to the four walls of the house and have no any major participation in any task outside home. It is the man who is responsible for earning, decision making and ultimately have a complete control over resources. One can find disparities differently across the valley and even village to village. Being patriarchal as well as a conservative society; having very strict norms and values regarding women's subordination; force directly or indirectly the community to be more unwilling and/or resistant for accepting change. i.e. empowerment of women and participation in community development. In some areas women and men to some extent have greater social cohesion and acceptance for collective development through community based organizations supported by some local and national NGOs and bi-lateral agencies. For example, in some Union Councils of Tehsil Balakot and Battagram, Sarhad Rural Support Programme (SRSP) and SUNGI formed Village Based women and men's organizations and build their capacities in order to make them self reliant and could practice collective approach in development.

### **2.2 Union Council Shamlai and Mohandri**

#### **Before and after earthquake:**

In both UCs the socially constructed and defined roles and responsibilities of men and women are more or less the same. The society is more conservative and reluctant to accept changes especially on gender considerations. It is apparent that women do the household chores as well as helping men outside home. Women are involved in agriculture activities, collecting wood, looking after livestock and give hand on in construction activities as well. The economic conditions of the people in both UCs were not stable. In such circumstances, lives of women especially the Female headed household were worsened. There were not any platform at UC level to unit the community and work for collective interest and/or resolve problems.

After earthquake the situation is different. Now women and men are struggling to change their life style through social cohesion and synergy from different organizations. Women and men formed village reconstruction committees and are working with different projects of livelihood. As women are traditionally helping men in housing reconstruction, dissemination of the technical guidelines and informations related to housing strategy enabled the women to influence their male partners in constructing safer houses. Funding opportunity has created an enabling position for both communities to resolve their long standing problems i.e. better education and healthcare and sustainable livelihood.

### **3 Programme Results:**

#### **3.1 HRC Level:**

##### **3.1.1 Equitable Access to housing reconstruction related services:**

SDC HRCs are playing their role as a focal point in disseminating information and contributing knowledge and skills to Men/Women and vulnerable groups through direct trainings on earthquake safer houses and Social Mobilization directly and through Partner Organizations.

##### **3.1.2 Trainings/ Capacity Building:**

Besides Technical trainings, HRCs offered extensive trainings on Social Mobilization. Gender was an integral part of these trainings. Social Mobilization of the targeted communities is an integral part of Housing Reconstruction Strategy. Social mobilization trainings at different levels so far conducted for 78 (49 Male & 29 Female) Social Mobilizers and 64 technical persons of Partner Organizations in NWFP.

The following Social Mobilization Trainings offered to Social Mobilizers and Technical advisors of all Partner Organizations beside volunteer activists from the community, Local government and official from line departments:

1. Social Mobilization in a disaster affected areas
2. Role of Community in Rural Housing Reconstruction
3. Social Mobilization Basic I
4. Social Mobilization Basic II
5. Social Mobilization Phase II (Generic Course)
6. Training of Trainers (ToT)

These trainings have greatly supported Mobile Teams in conducting meetings, dialogues and formation of Male and Female Village Reconstruction Committees (VRCs) in order to strengthen the community and smoothly run Housing Reconstruction process through out the districts.

##### **3.1.3 Grievance and Compliance related issues:**

As Partner Organizations are closely working under HRCs so according to ERRa structure POs refer or consult field issues related to grievance and compliance to HRCs. SDC HRCs referred cases on the subjects to technical advisors at HRCs, DRU, DHC, Army and ERRa. Very recently trainings are being conducting on compliance catalogue in order to resolve non- compliance issues in the field.

### 3.2 Field Office Level:

SDC-HA is operating in two union councils namely UC Shamlai (District Battagram) and UC Mohandri (Tehsil Balakot) as a partner organization by itself in housing reconstruction programme.

#### 3.2.1 Social Mobilization:

Social Mobilization of the targeted communities is an integral part of Housing Reconstruction Strategy. Three Mobile Teams composed of one Technical advisor along with one male and female social mobilizer undertaken activities in UC Shamlai and Mohandri in collaboration with male and female VRCs. The activities are mentioned below:

- Village Mapping
- Formation of Village Reconstruction Committees (VRCs)
- Identification of Vulnerable Families/Individuals
- Need Assessment Surveys
- Identification of Craftsmen
- Hands-on Training of Local Craftsmen
- Door to Door Assistance
- Mitigative Retrofitting Methods
- Grievance Redressal/ Referral Processes

#### 3.2.2 Women specific Activities:

##### 3.2.2.1 Enhanced and Balanced participation of women in Housing Reconstruction Committees:

Female social mobilizers visited the community, conducted door to door meeting in which they organize the community for meeting to form a VRC. Initially it was quite difficult as male members of the household didn't allow females to interact with even with female Social Mobilizers. But gradually community showed support and acceptance after effective dialogues and sensitization through Male VRC members. Ensuring owner – driven housing reconstruction, Mobile Teams formed 174 Village Reconstruction Committees in Union Council Mohandri and Shamlai. Out of 174 VRCs, 116 are Male VRCs whereas, 58 are Female VRCs.

SDC-HA HOUSING & RECONSTRUCTION				
Union Council	VRC Formed	Door to Door Assistance	Model Houses constructed	Trained Community members
Shamlai	53 Male 23 Female	4'371	5	2'051
Mohandri	68 Male 54 Female	3'254	6	992
<b>Total</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>7'625</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>3'043</b>

### 3.2.2.2 Improved construction/health/hygiene related skills and capacity building of women:

Being a patriarchal society, stereotypes exist regarding women's appropriate tasks but it was important that female headed households and vulnerable groups must be targeted and sort synergies to complete their houses without any obstructions. Trainings were conducted for these female VRCs on earthquake safer buildings along with awareness sessions on health and hygiene. It has been observed that male members of the households started consulting females on the primary direction and components of housing programme. It is also apparent that women traditionally give a hand in reconstruction tasks along with male partners, which increase the work burden of women and girls. Despite of these burdens women are happy to get trainings and awareness on the above said subjects and are able to interact with each other, gained confidence and sensitized to collectively work for their broader development.

***Women can make a difference as men do:  
A case from Sari Bandi Union Council Mohandri:***

*Authors: Samina Kiran*

*Date: February 12, 2007*

*Gulshanar having 3 children living in a village Sari Bandi she is working in the housing reconstruction activities. She is making cement blocks for her own house reconstruction.*



**Women in Housing Reconstruction:  
A Case Study from UC Shamlai District Batagram:**

*Authors: Samina Kiran (SDC Female Social Mobilizer)*

*Date: February 12, 2007*

*In Shamlai the women are working side by side with man in different activities like reconstruction and agriculture. During earthquake lots of houses damaged in this area their involvement in such activities has increased after earthquake. We formed different female VRC in Shamlai. There is a need of creating awareness regarding reconstruction because the major cause of damaged houses is weak construction. The weakness was very heavy roof with lots of mud, weak joints, weak foundation, wrong site, and rough wood in Dhaji construction.*

*In village Thor Ziyarat, the females showed interest to take training on ERRA housing reconstruction guidelines for better construction mean which have lots of resistance to earthquake.*

*In order to see this demand, we have organized one day training on Dhaji construction for VRC members in Thor Ziyarat. Most of the lady showed their hands which showed their involvement in reconstruction of their houses. The activities done by females in reconstruction are to prepare the mud mixing, lapping on the walls, provide help in bringing material, selection of site for kitchen and bathroom. As the females are involved in such activity that's why there is a need to give them training on best construction methods. We have arranged training on ERRA reconstruction guidelines for 16 females. The main objective of this training was to make female self builders for houses reconstruction. We identify problems faced during reconstruction and gives suggestion where possible. After the recitation of Holy Quran and introduction discussed the earthquake, its causes, and types and shared their experience. Aware them about the major weakness traditionally or normally people are ignoring while constructing houses.*

*During that training they knew the best practices of housing reconstruction. They all were very satisfied and thankful for us about sharing the new information. According to them no body discussed this information before. They will share this information with others and will utilize this in reconstruction. We have not paid them any incentive for attending this training workshop. They were very thankful of SDC-HA for these capacity building activities in UC Shamlai Batagram.*

**3.2.2.3 Incentive based approach to improve livelihood:**

It is a natural phenomenon that without incentives or interests one can not fully cooperate or accept any change. Initially the non cooperation from male member of households was based upon the same as they never let their female to public or communal activities. The livelihood programme gave a major input in motivating and convincing male members to allow female to form VRC and conduct meetings and trainings. SDC-HA Livelihood programme provide support in development. Mobile Teams identified various livelihood projects for the community which includes distribution of seeds, tool kits (Hack saw, Tenor, pick Axe, Pinch Bar, Spade, Hammer, Pliers, Helmet, Ladder, Tool box etc), drinking water supply, walking track, stones blasting, bridges, live stock distribution, vocational center, individual sewing machines, and kitchen gardening training.

SDC-HA LIVELIHOOD						
Union Council	Sewing Machine	Tool kits	Seeds distributed per household	Karyana Shops	Stove	Vocational Centers
Shamlai	9	850	1'000	0	60	4
Mohandri	3	500	1'100	7	60	3
Balakot	3	300	2'000	3	0	3



The vulnerable community asked for some micro business (shop) which could not only be a source of income but also help the affected community to purchase thing at their door step. In this regard 10 karyana shops have been opened in Balakot and Mohandri. Many females showed their interest in agriculture so vegetable seeds of the season along with kitchen gardening training has been conducted for them.

### ***Economic Empowerment of Women: a case study from village Dhano***

*Authors: Samina Kiran (SDC Female Social Mobilizer)*

*Date: November 04, 2007*

*There is a village Dhano of Hamlet Jared in Union Council Mohandri located to the left side of Mohandri Bazar. No. of households of Dhano is 40. We paid visit on 04 November 2007 and find this case study.*

*Omer Jan a 33 years old lady live there. Her I.D card # is 13501-9044224-2. Her husband Mohammad Zaman is a T.B patient for last three years. His condition has become worst. She has seven children, 5 girls and 2 boys. All of them are under 18. Shazia 14 years old, Tanweer 12 years old, Khadija 10 yrs old, Touseef 8 yrs old, Faisal 6 yrs old, Baserat 4 years old and Sabila 2 years old. Now Omer Jan herself is suffering from same disease like her husband. They have no earning source that's why they spend all their savings on medicines and running expenses.*

*This lady is identified by the community as most vulnerable in VRC meeting. She has a very poor living condition of her home and her children. No basic facilities at all. She is serving her family by taking loan from the villagers.*

*We went their with our livelihood project she was very happy to see us. She was agreed that she can serve her family very well if we start a shop for her at her home. The entire villagers were also happy with our activity. With the help of this shop she will have an earning source through which she can serve her family very well and will no more depend on others help and support.*



### **3.2.2.4 Improved rights and entitlements of women (house ownership by women) leading to better status in society:**

Awareness raising sessions and training have enabled the women as well as men to some extent realized the importance of women in community participation and their basic rights but there is a long way to go and much more efforts are still needed. Regarding entitlements; it is a common assumption that man is always head of household. In UC Shamlai a land owner did not allowed a widow tenant to construct house as her husband was died during earthquake. SDC Mobile Team has identified the case and referred to District Reconstruction Unit of ERRA as well as to the concerned VRC. Through dialogue and motivation the owner agreed to permit her to construct house on his land by signing the No Objection Certificate (NOC).

### **3.2.2.5 Support Female Headed Household through Model House Construction:**

A total of 11 Model Houses in different designs (Confined Masonry, Bhatar and Dhaji) were constructed in Union Council Mohandri and Shamlai. The last two are traditional method of construction in the project areas; approved by ERRA. The primary aim is to conduct hand-on trainings in the villages, so that a model houses can be constructed stepwise and communities can follow the same technique. Two out of the eleven houses have been handed over to a widow. In this regard, female mobilizers have been collected widows and vulnerable individuals through out the UCs. After identification of extremely vulnerables and land location to be at central point in close consultation with VRCs, the construction is in now in the completion.

## **3.3 Training for Male VRCs:**

Extensive trainings conducted for male VRC members as well as for self builders from the community identified by VRCs on the following topics:

### **Technical Trainings**

- Load Bearing Structures
- Concrete-Frame Structures
- Confined Masonry
- Dhaji (Timber)
- Bhatar (Timber)

### **Social Mobilization Trainings (VRC Strengthening)**

- Social Mobilization in a Disastrous Situation
- Role of Community in Rural Housing Reconstruction
- Social Mobilization Basic I
- Social Mobilization Basic II
- Social Mobilization Phase II (Generic)
- ToT

## **3.4 Information dissemination and door to door assistance:**

Mobile teams are fully equipped with earthquake safer building techniques, information products to distribute among community members and visit door to door to give advices on the spot to the house owners and skilled persons if any deficiencies identified. Priorities are given to the most vulnerable households and widows during field visits.

### 3.5 Referral system established for grievance issues:

It is always difficult to meet the expectation of the entire community in resolving all their problems and fulfilling needs. During field visits and community meetings Mobile Teams are collecting problems and issues in the villages' especially regarding housing grants (e.g. error on cheques and bank accounts, survey of house not undertaken by Army, lack of land, tenant and owner issue, support for vulnerable groups or individuals, other communal needs etc.)

A referral system has been established so as to facilitate the community or individuals by identifying the right person or appropriate office where they can get right information or solution of their specific cases or problems. This approach has benefited the extremely Vulnerable Individuals to get support from VRC members for housing reconstruction, three women and a young man has been referred to Social Protection Unit of ERRA for treatment purpose. Problems related to cheques, surveys, installment of grants or land issues have been referred to Army, District Reconstruction Unit of ERRA. Communal needs have been referred to Livelihood, School and BHU Units of SDC-HA RLP and developed linkages with other stakeholders as well.



## **4 Impediments and Constraints**

- Socio- cultural and religious hurdles in empowering women
- Lack of education and even awareness about rights of women and men, girls and boys
- Lack of extensive trainings, exposure even outside home and confidence to share problems and issues related to women and girls
- Security issues and unacceptability of Female staff in the field especially in District Battagram by individuals or groups for different vested interests. In consequence as from October 2007 SDC did not deploy any female staff in district Battagram.
- Weather condition and remote area
- In order to comply with the local culture in May 2007 SDC separated the joint female/male MT into female and male MT.

## **5 Lesson Learned**

- Incentive based approach has greatly supplemented ensuring participation of women in housing reconstruction and creating conducive environment to work with the community.
- As a result of extensive information campaigns and dialogue, social cohesion and acceptability of any change can be effectively ensured at community level.
- Strengthening of VRCs and linkages development with other stakeholders helps to sustain the process of change and improvement in the well being of the community especially the vulnerable groups and/or individuals.

## 6 Field stories

### Case Studies

#### Role of women in the Housing Reconstruction

Authors: Samina Kiran (SDC Female Social Mobilizer)

Date: December 8<sup>th</sup> 2006

Before 8<sup>th</sup> October earthquake SADIQA along with her husband and five daughters were having quite happy life in the mountainous region of Balakot. Her husband was earning enough to feed his family.

The dawn of 8th October brought a drastic change in the life of Sadiqa. That morning, she along with her husband was cutting grass in the mountain field. Suddenly, the earthquake started happening and they saw big stones rolling from the very mountain they were on. One of the stones came and struck her husband and she saw with her own eyes his intestine and the kidneys oozing out from his stomach. She rushed madly to home, leaving her husband there unattended, to see her children. With the blessing of Allah, all her children were safe..... But when she went again to carry her husband back home, she found him covered with big stones and dead. She wept and then removed the stones with the help of other people of the village and carried his dead body. Her life was totally damaged. Now there is no one to care for her children and herself. She was crying that “I wish that instead of my husband, the children would have died. It would have been much better than becoming all alone and bearing all the responsibilities.”

Life of Sadiqa was totally changed. Being a female it was hard to find shelter and food easily. Different Organizations have helped her but with the passage of time these organizations shifted to other places. Now, Sadiqa had a serious challenge ahead – The Winter; to save children from harsh winter there were a need of roof and permanent house for security. Government has announced Rs. 175'000 assistance for Housing Reconstruction by strictly following Earth quake Resistant Techniques.

Sadiqa being an illiterate was not fully aware about the whole procedures. One day a Mobile Team visited her damaged house. The team filled in the survey forms. Sadiqa asked them about the installments of assistance, earth quake resistant techniques; laboring etc. The team suggested her to visit Housing Reconstruction Center Balakot for complete information. She contacted HRC female Social Mobilizer and got complete information about the Earthquake Resistant Housing Reconstruction Trainings and government's policy.

Now Sadiqa committed that she will learn the earthquake Resistant Techniques and ERRA guidelines to be able to at least supervise her housing reconstruction. She approached the organization working in her Union Council on Housing Reconstruction and got a complete training. After training, she started saving money through sewing cloths in her temporary shelter. She saved money along with the assistance from the government and started construction of her house under her own supervision. The local people were much impressed the way Sadiqa did construction. Now she is a role model for others in the area.

## **VULNERABLE-FIRST**

### **VRC Dhandan, JARED**

Authors: Shokaib Hussain (SDC Social Mobilizer)

Date: September 12, 2007

VRC Dhandan, established in October 2006, is an all male VRC with an astonishing membership of 300 persons. Although females have a separate VRC in this village, members of both male and female VRCs coordinate and exchange information in order to work in a unified manner in pursuit of the collective goal of building back better.

The unique characteristic of the VRC Dhandan is the determination of its President to help everyone in the community, especially those that are most vulnerable. With this philosophy of Vulnerable-First, reconstruction of houses, as well as purchase and distribution of construction material, livestock etc., is carried out for vulnerable groups on a priority basis.

The VRC has developed strong linkages with a local chapter of an international organization and as a result of this partnership has constructed a water supply pipeline in the village. However, it must be mentioned that the construction of a water supply pipeline in a neighboring village was undertaken first due to their immediate need for water. This decision was taken by the President with the consensus of all VRC members. Such initiatives underscore the principle of Vulnerable-First and its application by the VRC in the community it represents. Another important initiative undertaken, on a self help basis, by VRC Dhandan members is the construction of a link road which connects the village to the main road. This has resulted in a reduction in the transportation and carriage costs of housing reconstruction material for the entire village; needless to say that the village is now more accessible than before. The construction of the link road and the water supply project provides an insight into the collective thinking process of this organized community and highlights their desire and commitment towards the greater benefit of the village.

The VRC has implemented a well thought out advocacy campaign to raise awareness about ERRA guidelines and activities of the VRC. This is carried out through display of banners and posters at strategic locations and the wide dissemination of ERRA information products. Reconstruction is behind schedule due to the slow disbursement of the housing installments by ERRA. However, to date, construction of nine houses is completed; another 37 are under construction, which are currently at the plinth and lintel level. There is good coordination and unity between the VRC and the community; the members have displayed their dedication and honesty towards development and optimism about their future.

## RECONSTRUCTION AND DEVELOPMENT GO HAND IN HAND

### VRC Shamlai, District Battagram

Authors: Shakeel Ahmed (SDC Social Mobilizer)

Date: August 7, 2007

VRC Shamlai, with a total membership of 35, is actively participating towards housing reconstruction with a vision to bring about maximum benefit to the community. The VRC President has an impressive resume including working in the social development sector in Karachi. His experiences, coupled with his understanding of key development issues have enabled the community to progress in the right direction. VRC Shamlai represents 350 households; members maintain a thorough record of basic data pertaining to household reconstruction. This data is the basis for most of the VRC reconstruction interventions; more so, the members of VRC Shamlai are able to prioritize activities for the vulnerable individuals in the community. Decisions on all activities are made through consensus at VRC meetings. To date, 9 meetings have been convened with a good participation rate of over 75%. The meeting proceedings and attendance are well documented and have proven useful to the members for reference purposes.

The additional benefit to this VRC is its roots in the local Community Organization (CO), many members of which are also members of this VRC. Since COs are well versed in their role in community development, this expertise is a value addition to the function of the VRC. The newly established VRC is already promoting itself to the wider community by distributing ERRA information products and other relevant reconstruction information through the use of banners and posters.

The community members have been given the opportunity to enhance their capacity in reconstruction through a series of basic technical trainings. This has been complemented with trainings in agriculture and livestock maintenance which is contributing towards livelihood development. In collaboration with a partner organization, the VRC Shamlai has successfully coordinated trainings in disaster preparedness for the benefit of the community.

The members have developed productive linkages with a number of local and international NGOs for various development initiatives in the area. Work in water supply pipelines and drainage sanitation is underway. There is scope for other development works, for which the VRC is actively looking for partner organizations.

### Village Mapping

Authors: Syed Mubashir (SDC Social Mobilizer)

Date: October 2006

