



Secure  
Livelihoods  
Research  
Consortium

Researching livelihoods and  
services affected by conflict

# Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium

## Pakistan Research Programme

Ayesha Vellani/Save the Children

# About us

The Secure Livelihoods Research Consortium (SLRC) is a six year global research programme exploring livelihoods, basic services and social protection in conflict-affected situations. Funded by the UK Department for International Development (DFID), Irish Aid and EC, SLRC was established in 2011 with the aim of strengthening the evidence base and informing policy and practice around livelihoods and services in conflict.

SLRC is undertaking research in eight focus countries, including Afghanistan, Pakistan, Nepal, Sri Lanka, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Sierra Leone, South Sudan and Uganda. The Pakistan research programme is being led by the Sustainable Development Policy Institute (SDPI) based in Islamabad, Pakistan.

## What is the focus of SLRC's Pakistan research programme?

For decades, active conflict has prevailed along Pakistan's north-western frontiers, particularly within the Federally Administered Tribal Areas (FATA) and the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP). Following the 9/11 attacks, Pakistan joined a coalition of nations in fighting the 'global war on terror', thereby bringing KP and FATA directly under the gaze of external military forces. Pakistan's northwest has since been subjected to numerous US drone attacks, and military operations by the Pakistani army in response to the Taliban's advances into the Malakand Division in KP. Massive internal displacements from Swat and Malakand – two heavily affected districts within KP – saw almost 3 million people flee their homes seeking refuge in safer places. However, although IDPs have now safely returned,

during the return and resettlement process large swathes of the northwest region were hit by heavy flash floods (July 2010), affecting an estimated 1.2 million people.

The combination of conflict and natural disasters has left KP with levels of poverty and food insecurity significantly higher than the national average. The crises have also severely damaged public and private infrastructure, limited households' livelihood opportunities, and reduced local economic activity. Yet, while a number of rapid needs assessments have been carried out in Pakistan's northwest, little is known about how livelihood strategies shift over time and throughout the continuum of conflict. We also lack an understanding of what specific factors are primarily responsible for improvements or deteriorations in wellbeing and livelihood outcomes.

Pakistan sits high on the agendas of many bilateral and multilateral development agencies and, perhaps as a result of this, is one of the highest net recipients of official development assistance (ODA) globally. Much of this aid supports interventions to protect and strengthen the livelihoods of households affected by conflict and flooding, but little is known about the effectiveness of such interventions, not least in terms of whether they are appropriate to the needs, activities and aspirations of those they are trying to reach.

SLRC's Pakistan research programme aims to address the knowledge gaps outlined above, generating robust and usable evidence that will help to inform livelihoods policy and programming in KP, and perhaps further afield. The programme will be guided by three research themes and a series of more specific research questions, outlined below.

## 1 Compound crises and shifting trajectories: Tracking the livelihood outcomes of conflict and flooding in northwest Pakistan

- What are the dynamics of livelihood patterns and livelihood trajectories (including coping strategies) in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa?
- How have the livelihood activities of people in conflict-affected areas changed?
- How do people perceive these changed livelihood strategies?

## 2 The challenges of return: (Re)Building resilient livelihoods

- What livelihood opportunities and support structures are available for displaced persons in conflict-affected areas that influence them to return to their places of origin?
- Who has access to livelihood opportunities and who is excluded?
- What is the institutional context that supports or restricts people's access to livelihood opportunities?
- What is the role of the private sector in supporting (or constraining) the livelihoods of IDPs and returnees? How do the dynamics of supply chains influence livelihood outcomes?

## 3 Effectiveness issues: The role of aid programming in processes of recovery

- What is the typology of national and international actors engaged in livelihoods-related interventions in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa?
- In what ways do aid interventions attempt to support livelihoods and service delivery?
- What is the significance of these interventions to people's lives? Are they

having much of an impact?

- How inclusive are the interventions of marginal and socially excluded groups? How are interventions specifically dealing with issues related to social exclusion?



## How will we carry out the research?

The research programme is focussing on Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, a north-western province heavily affected by both conflict and natural disasters. Research in KP will focus in particular on the two districts of Swat and Lower Dir.

Key elements of the programme's methodological approach include:

- A longitudinal element to enable us to track livelihoods trajectories and the impacts of government or donor interventions to support livelihoods over time;
- A mixed-methods approach that combines and sequences both qualitative and quantitative methods to help understand the specific variables that influence livelihood trajectories; and,
- A mixed-analysis approach that incorporates stronger political economy analysis into livelihoods frameworks, and draws on value-chain analysis.

In 2012, the first round of a panel survey will be conducted to capture data on the livelihoods of crisis-affected households, experiences of service delivery, and

perceptions of governance actors. A second round of the survey will be carried out in 2015, and it is hoped that we will be able to interview many of the same households again, thus enabling us to track trajectories and identify determinants of change. Qualitative methods such as oral / life histories and livelihood biographies will be used in the intervening years to allow us to understand the trajectories of specific households in greater detail.

Focus group discussions, key informant interviews with relevant stakeholders, and participant observation will also be conducted in order to generate an overview of efforts by the state and other agencies to provide basic services and social protection, and to shed light on the effectiveness of programming. In addition, action research will be carried out in partnership with a number of selected aid agencies in order to explore the impacts of particular interventions and to help identify the local level political dynamics that influence intervention effectiveness and success.

### **What will be done with the research?**

Through a combination of regular engagement with key stakeholders and disseminating compelling, accessible and relevant research outputs it is anticipated that the research will be used to provoke policy dialogue amongst international donors. Currently, national and provincial government investments in livelihoods are fragmented and neither the provincial and federal authorities in Pakistan nor actors within the international community appear open

to supporting a comprehensive and sustainable livelihoods programme in KP. In addition, much financial assistance continues to support interventions that are inappropriately designed to suit 'on-the-ground' realities. As a result, much is being done without any meaningful impact.

We anticipate that, by generating an improved evidence base on what makes different livelihood interventions work and why, the research findings will be useful for local, provincial and national governments as well as for donors and bilateral partners. In particular, uncovering the informal power relations that limit livelihood opportunities could help promote the inclusion of civil society and local community voices (especially those of the marginalized sections in society) into programming decisions.



To find out more...

[www.securelivelihoods.org](http://www.securelivelihoods.org)  
Email: [slrc@odi.org.uk](mailto:slrc@odi.org.uk)  
Phone: +44 (0)207 922 8221  
Follow: SLRCtweet