

# YOUTH, CLIMATE, & SOCIAL COHESION



THE VIBRANT ROLE OF YOUTH IN PROMOTING SOCIAL COHESION AND RESILIENCE IN KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA THROUGH INFORMAL SOCIAL PROTECTION MEASURES

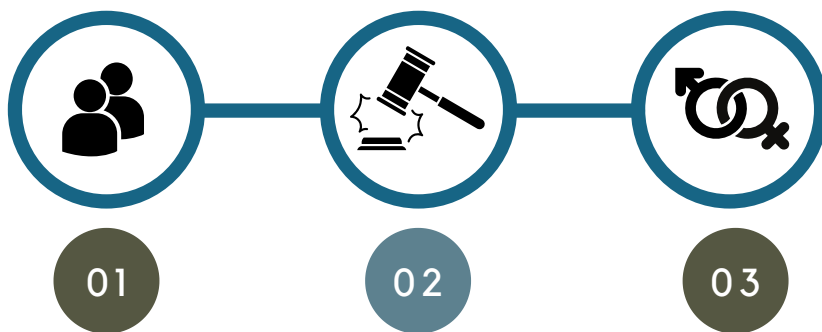
## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Pakistan is facing unprecedented consequences of climate change. Climate action and climate justice are the emerging phrases to deal with this precarious situation. The impacts are more pronounced in impoverished areas such as the two study districts, North Waziristan and Khyber.

This study looks at how youth and women engagement may be strengthened to empower local communities through participatory approaches. The “Resilient Initiative for Development and Adaptation” (RIDA) and the “North Waziristan Initiative for Economic Up-lifting” (NWIE) projects by Islamic Relief are currently engaging communities through participatory and gender inclusive approach with gender mainstreaming, disaster risk reduction, protection, and climate change as crosscutting themes. The aim of conducting this study is to generate insights for further strengthening the interventions of Islamic Relief by analysing the understanding and impacts of climate change in the two target districts.

## PROJECT OBJECTIVES

This study aims to present an overview of the role of youth in promoting and sustaining social cohesion in NMDs of KP, with climate change as the overarching theme. The overall objectives, therefore, are:



To generate community-based research with academia and institutions.

To assess the impacts of climate change and the role of the youth.

Provide recommendations for informed and gender-inclusive and to integrate other marginalised groups decision making in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa.

## Key FINDINGS

Despite low education, people in both districts have a relatively sophisticated understanding of climate change and its impacts generally.

**86%**

of respondents reported that average temperatures changed over the past 10 years.



**55%**

of residents in both districts believe that climate change negatively impacts their quality of life while 37% suggest that the effects are positive.

**55%**

Majority of illiterate population (70%) reported negative impacts of climate change on their quality of life than literate population (32%).

**70%**



**53%**

believe that climate change is human induced and 20% believe it is natural. Only 55% population believes that frequent disasters are an outcome of climate change.

Population understanding of climate change is limited only to water-related calamities. 61% believe climate change causes major flooding.

**Only 22%**

Only 22% of respondents believe that they can play a role to reduce or reverse the impacts of the climate change.



## Gender and Age Lens

Both women and the youth are more likely to have a greater understanding of climate issues compared to men and the elderly.



## YOUTH AND CLIMATE CHANGE

NMDs, along with the rest of Pakistan, are experiencing a youth bulge, as well, where 43.6% of population falls in the youth category (between 15-24 years). Youth bulge offers new opportunities as well as poses challenges.

Young people reported that climate change has impact on their education, livelihood and to some extent on sports and cultural festivals. The most evident impact of climate change occurs due to internal migration which disrupts their education (43%) and livelihoods (23%). For other young people, climate change also affects their involvement in sports (16%) and cultural festivals (23%). More young men suggested that their education is disrupted by climate induced events (such as flooding) than women.

Since lesser young women attend education institutions, for them the cultural involvement in household and communal events gets affected by climate events.

## GENDERED IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

Both men and women are equally affected by climate change. However, in terms of women challenges, locals cited water shortages effecting reproductive health and psycho social wellbeing.

As the study shows, women may have access to productive resources but not control over them. 32% of the population reported that women do not have access to agricultural lands, forests, water resources and livestock. The reasons for no access include tribal patriarchal structures (51%), other cultural barriers such as restrictions on mobility (32%) and lack of skills (17%).

Women invariably are also affected more in disasters, as cases of gender-based violence in the face of disaster is comparatively high than the normal.

## CLIMATE CHANGE AND SOCIAL COHESION

Climate change along with many constraints brings about a plethora of opportunities as well. Investment in climate mitigation policies could result in so many new jobs for the rural regions and additionally bring funds for the resilient development of those areas. Climate mitigation efforts that focus on land management and restoration would provide jobs and funding opportunities to landowners in rural areas. These mitigation efforts have the potential to provide dual benefits to rural communities by enhancing both the social and ecological health of these regions. Overall, investment in climate mitigation efforts can increase the quality of life in rural regions well into the future, especially by skill-building of youth of those regions, creating more social cohesion in the community by working in harmony towards achievement of a better tomorrow.

### CONTACT

#### Islamic Relief Pakistan

2nd Floor, IRM Complex, Plot # 7, Sunrise Avenue, Park Rd, Near COMSATS University, Islamabad, Pakistan  
Phone: +92-51-2114212-17  
Email: [info@irp.org.pk](mailto:info@irp.org.pk)



## KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- The report recommends some key motivations for circumventing climate change adaptation constraints among rural youth, as there is an increasing demand for informed policy measures and interventions.
- The current education system in schools and colleges should put more emphasis on preparing the youth for future employment and sustainable livelihoods, including green jobs and renewable technologies like wind and solar energy.
- Some recommended avenues for youth inclusion on climate action include implementation of KP's climate change policy in letter and spirit, recognising youth as agents of change, more nuanced focus on climate education, youth leadership forums, initiation of a quasi-institutional engagement of youth with government channels, and a general indigenous model of 'Qabail-led development' approach.
- Constructive youth engagement can be used as a bridge to support youth for their positive development while transitioning from a gentle pattern of knowledge about climate change to current rapid and rigorous devastating impacts and future uncertainties.
- At the same time, this research study has shown that social cohesion can improve climate change adaptation, as highly cohesive communities often fare better during and after natural disasters; more specifically, social cohesion improves cooperation, especially in emergency response.
- Thus, the study recommends community inclusion, as when the community as a whole are better informed about climate change and see possibilities and opportunities associated with it, they will be more liable to accept climate change policies devised on local, provincial and national level, build their trust in the governing bodies and eventually be able to play their part at the global front.

