

IR's Pioneering Climate Change Research in Pakistan



The Islamic Relief climate change team led by Dr Shahid Zia (Global Advisor for Sustainable Livelihoods) and staff from IR Pakistan conducted climate change adaptation research in selected flood affected districts of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KPK) in Pakistan. As part of the research, the IR Policy team met with Pakistan's Climate Change Adviser, Dr Qamar uz Zaman who elaborated on the extensive challenges Pakistan has to face in meeting climate change trends, including floods, droughts and most worrying of all, the potential of Pakistan's glacial reservoirs melting within a generation. Glaciers provide up to 80% of Pakistan's river and canal waters which maintain the enormously productive agricultural farmland within the Punjab and elsewhere.

IR is working with communities in four districts (Mardan, Nowshera, Swabi and Charsada) to help revive their economies, which have been severely damaged since the floods. Both qualitative and quantitative methods of gathering information were used. A comprehensive questionnaire was designed and used together with Participatory Rural Appraisals (PRA) and Focused Group Discussions (FGD) to collect household and community level data on vulnerability, risks and the adaptation capacity of individuals and the community. The research first concentrated on gathering the farming communities' perceptions regarding climate change including changes in crop growing seasons, sowing and harvesting windows and the intensity of summer and winter seasons. The questionnaire sought detailed answers from communities with regards to temperature changes, the adoption of new crops, livestock production techniques and technologies to cope with climate change.

Overall, the study carried out in-depth research into farmer's perceptions of climate change and coping strategies. It also looked at farming communities' vulnerabilities, potential challenges and the roles of different stakeholders in climate change adaptation techniques. Farming communities previously used lifelong experience to make farming decisions taking in to consideration household requirements and the risks involved. However, now farmers feel that their experiences are no longer relevant. They have to continually adjust to the climate but without access to the information required to manage with today's ever changing conditions.

This research will also be carried out in drought affected regions in Ethiopia in the coming months in order to carry out a comprehensive research study.