

How Climate-Induced Emergencies Impact Education: insights from Pakistan floods

EiE Community Monthly Call | 15 December, 2022

About the Education in Emergencies (EiE) Community Calls

Staff, alumni and participants from across the Teach For All network come together regularly to share ideas, solutions and resources to support students and communities impacted by emergency situations. If you'd like to become a Member of the EiE Community and receive invites for future calls, please complete this [short form](#)!

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Video highlights

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(Passcode: n9K@Jd7L)

INSIGHTS ON WAYS OF WORKING



Understanding the impact on the organisation

As soon as the vast floods started, Teach For Pakistan quickly sent out a survey to their staff, fellows and alumni to better understand how each person in the Teach For Pakistan family was being affected. From the survey results they saw that many of their home towns and villages were under water, with families and friends losing livestock, crops and their homes, and evacuating out to other regions. This survey was critical in giving Teach For Pakistan an overview of the personal impact the crisis was having on their organisation.



Responding, not reacting

Given the magnitude of the disaster, Teach For Pakistan knew that they needed and wanted to somehow support affected communities. However, what they saw in the initial weeks of the emergency was hundreds of national relief projects and initiatives being launched. They could see that this approach was leading to a duplication of aid in some locations and a scarcity of aid in other areas. Teach For Pakistan then made the decision to take some time to plan a 'response', instead of jumping into a 'reaction' - they knew that the country would not only need short-term solutions, but also long-term support. The Teach For Pakistan team chose to take time to gather information, think about what was needed and what they were best equipped to provide.



Thoughtfully choosing the path forward

After gathering internally and reflecting, Teach For Pakistan concluded that they were not best equipped to directly provide humanitarian relief, such as medical aid, shelter or trauma support. But what they were well positioned to do was support communities via the incredible leadership of their fellows and alumni, who had already started to mobilise emergency efforts. They rallied around to support these individuals, with the aim of building their credibility so they could have a wider reach. Teach For Pakistan amplified their fellows and alumni's work, as well as setting up a [fundraising page](#) on their website to enable them to scale their efforts.

INSIGHTS ON FELLOWS AND ALUMNI LEADING EiE EFFORTS



Listening before acting

Teach For Pakistan fellows and alumni who chose to get involved in the emergency response efforts decided that whatever support they provided needed to be informed by those closest to the crisis. Therefore their first step was not to fundraise for, and distribute, basic relief items, but to travel to the impacted towns and villages to sit down and speak with families about what had happened. Through this approach they were also able to tap into networks of university student leaders, which enabled them to mobilise and respond faster.



Supporting holistic needs

Through various networks and organisations, Teach For Pakistan fellows and alumni were able to work in rural areas and Internally Displaced Person (IDP) camps. The initiatives supported communities' holistic needs, which included: hygiene items; food drives; warm clothes; blankets; mosquito nets and awareness sessions for malaria and dengue fever; menstrual products; and extra-curricular learning activities.



Remembering self-care

Teach For Pakistan's alumni frontline responders often worked long hours in difficult conditions. Although during these times they didn't consciously practise self-care and focus on their own well-being, they grounded themselves in their work as a way to keep going. They made an active effort to look for hope, to care for their colleagues, and be proud of the collective bravery shown to save their hometowns. These approaches help them to stay centred when caring for their communities. Teach For Pakistan were also in regular communication with them, holding space for them to talk and process.

INSIGHTS ON THE ROLE OF CLIMATE EDUCATION



Community-driven solutions

To inform the content of climate education, Teach For Pakistan recognise the need to learn from those who know the most about climate-induced emergencies - the communities impacted by climate change. These are also the same communities who tend to receive inadequate support from the Government, and are therefore forced to come up with innovative, low-cost solutions on their own.



Empowering without burdening

Teach For Pakistan reflected on how crisis-affected communities live a very different reality compared to other parts of Pakistan, often living without electricity, running water or a family vehicle. Around the world, climate education typically teaches children key actions, such as: reducing electricity and water consumption; recycling and reusing items; decreasing car usage. However, these flood-affected towns and villages have long been adopting such measures, not for the purposes of climate change but as necessary survival techniques as they don't have an abundance of resources to waste. Embedding this framing will lead to more inclusive climate education, which doesn't task vulnerable communities to solve problems which are not of their own making.



Student climate advocates

These 2022 floods have enabled Teach For Pakistan fellows to teach their students what climate change tangibly looks like and what the very real effects of it are. Now that students can see what climate change can do to them and their families, this is sparking a sense of urgency among students to fight for change. Empowering students to become climate advocates is also a powerful way to centre children's voices in national climate discussions. Student-led climate advocacy can also be used for political mobilisation on issues beyond the curriculum, such as safe school building regulations and social safety nets that protect communities during such emergencies. Student advocacy can also be used to keep attention on climate-induced disasters, given that global media soon moves to the next story and they can very quickly become forgotten crises.



Attendees dialled in from:

Enseña por Guatemala; Enseña por México; Teach For Armenia; Teach For Bangladesh; Teach For Ethiopia; Teach For India; Teach For Italy; Teach For Kenya; Teach For Nigeria; Teach For Pakistan; Teach For Romania; Teach For Uganda; Teach For Zimbabwe