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CV

Saleem is managing various programmes related to Natural Resource Management in UNDP Pakistan since 2001. Overall he has over 20 years of experience in coordinating development projects and programmes with the UN agencies, Federal & Provincial Governments, NGOs and Corporate sector. Six years of which is focused on South and South East Asia. He Managed the UN Joint Programme on Environment for Pakistan and led the implementation as National Programme Coordinator, where he coordinated the efforts of 11 UN agencies, National Ministries of Planning & Climate Change, Provincial Governments, Civil Society Organizations and Private Sector. He has facilitated the Rio + 20 process in Pakistan and finalized the National Sustainable Development Strategy (NSDS), Nationally endorsed and presented in Rio + 20 conference in Brazil in June 2012. He has in-depth understanding of the Grass-root Initiatives and has coordinated over 70 community based projects on natural resource management in Pakistan. On behalf of UNDP, he is the focal person for Every Drop Matters programme in Pakistan, which has awarded three projects in the country.

On the broader side he has facilitated the formulation and approval of Climate Change Policy for Pakistan (under the UN Joint Programme on Environment), he is also the focal person for negotiating trans-boundary initiatives on natural resource management with the other countries of the region.

Saleem has Master degree from Wageningen University and Research Centre, the Netherlands. His education is focused on integrating indigenous practices in prevailing Natural Resource Management.

Managing GLOF in Karakoram-Hindukush region through grafting Indigenous and scientific management practice

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The Hindukush-Karakoram region of Northern Pakistan is prone to Glacier Lake Outburst Floods (GLOF) and out of around 2000 glacier lakes 50 are identified as potentially dangerous. The communities, facing this impending hazard, have evolved a variety of GLOF related management practices based on their tacit indigenous knowledge. These practices include mobilizing community groups, surveillance, warnings, and raising structural measures. The indigenous management is although promising and less costly, however randomly engendered and used.

The state-led management stream is although scientific in nature, where technology such as remote sensing, GIS, automatic weather stations, etc. are used to map and monitor the situation. However this is prone to isolation from the communities and the local government. Therefore there are three tiers of parallel managers: the scientists/researchers, the communities and the local government line agencies. The presence of three parallel strengths – community driven practices grounded in indigenous knowledge, scientific approaches led by research/scientific federal Government bodies and the mandated implementing line departments of the local Government –can't attain the desired impact in the absence of desired synergy.

UNDP Project, Reducing Risks and Vulnerabilities from GLOF in Northern Pakistan, counts on the three strengths, ventures to grafts the indigenous knowledge with the scientific approaches. The project thus intends to pool these niches and strengthening the line departments towards a more proactive and sound role in managing GLOF in the area. Beside the generic principle, the integration/grafting is specifically done in the following areas:

Knowledge Management: systematic inventory and analysis of the indigenous knowledge by identifying the pieces of tacit knowledge, analyzing with the lens of effectiveness and archiving these in implicit form. In parallel conventional approaches and practices that worked elsewhere in the region are internalized, special cases are countries such as Bhutan and Nepal.

Early Warning Systems: the community based/derived early warning systems are in use in the area since centuries; however these are not used to the benefit of the hi-tech warning systems that are recently brought by state institutions. The project is encouraging the communities to revive their early warning approaches on scientific lines. The end product will be adopted through MOU between the community organizations and the relevant line departments.

Land Use Planning: The project is demonstrating all the non-structural and structural interventions in two valleys each in Hindukush and Karakorum mountain ranges. All the land uses and related threats and opportunities are mapped and interventions are accordingly planned for various land-uses in the overall context of GLOF, nevertheless the livelihoods opportunities are kept in sight.

Structural measures: to stabilize the situation engineering, soil bio-engineering and biological measures will be integrated for successful results. Although, the bio-engineering structural measures are well tested in Western Himalayas, however are improvised for the specific socio-physical circumstances of the Hindukush and Karakorum region. Soil bioengineering (the use of living plant materials to construct structures that perform some engineering function) is used to treat sites where surface stability and erosion problems arise. These techniques are used in combination with conventional engineering techniques. Bioengineering relies on a combination of structural components and plant material to produce a dense stand of vegetation that serves as a “living system to protect the slope.

Although the project counts on the soundness of these approaches, however the main stay of the project to attain the stipulated outcomes is by creating synergy in the approaches and harmony among the key stakeholders.