

Pakistan floods lesson ideas

During July and August 2010 Pakistan experienced its worst monsoon floods for 80 years. The disaster has claimed the lives of over 1,700 people and is estimated to have affected over 20 million people. These activities help learners to discover more about Pakistan before exploring the impact of the floods on local communities and some of the long-term solutions.

	1. Exploring Pakistan	2. What are the impacts of the floods?	3. Who are most affected by the floods?	4. How can we reduce the impacts of flooding?
Aims	<p>Locate Pakistan in the world and identify key places.</p> <p>Create a mind-map exploring what learners already know about the Pakistan and the floods.</p>	<p>Use images to investigate the flood's impact on Pakistan.</p>	<p>To explore some of the reasons why the poorest are the most vulnerable to flooding.</p>	<p>To understand how community actions can reduce their vulnerability to flooding.</p> <p>To explore long-term solutions from local to global.</p>
Resources	<p>Globe / atlas</p> <p>Google Earth</p> <p>Activity sheet: Blank map of Pakistan</p>	<p>Images of the floods in Pakistan</p> <p>Activity sheet: Pakistan photos</p>	<p>Case studies – also online at http://www.actionaid.org.uk/101117/blog.html</p> <p>Activity sheet: Life savers</p>	<p>PowerPoint and video http://www.actionaid.org.uk/100261/disaster_risk_reduction.html</p> <p>Activity sheet: short-medium-long</p> <p>Activity sheet: Action cards</p>
Instructions	<p>Use Google Earth to locate</p>	<p>Does anyone know someone from</p>	<p>In groups read the case studies and</p>	<p>Re-cap the long-term impacts of</p>

	<p>Pakistan.</p> <p>Fill in the key areas on the blank map of Pakistan. Use atlases or globes to help.</p> <p>Identify key features of the landscape.</p> <p>Write 'Pakistan' in the centre of the whiteboard or on a large piece of sugar paper. Brainstorm words and phrases that come to mind and add them around it. There are no right or wrong answers.</p> <p>Make links between words. Discuss what they suggest about Pakistan. Are they positive or negative? Explore where pupils got this information from.</p> <p>What five things are you most surprised to learn? Add these to your mind map.</p> <p>Create a country profile for Pakistan. Discuss, how did you decide what is important to</p>	<p>Pakistan who has been affected by the flooding – what's their story?</p> <p>Look at some of the images of the floods in Pakistan on the ActionAid website: http://www.actionaid.org.uk or on the accompanying PowerPoint.</p> <p>As a class, select one photo and project it onto the whiteboard. Write observational questions around it, e.g. What is happening? Where is it happening? When did it happen? How it is affecting people's lives?</p> <p>Brainstorm big picture questions (about the causes and solutions to what is happening in the photo) and write these in a different colour, e.g. What caused the disaster? Why is it so devastating? What can the world do about it? What can I do about it?</p> <p>In pairs or small groups, select other photos to use with the 'Pakistan – photos activity sheet' to build up a picture of the impacts of flooding on</p>	<p>note the following information; how did the flooding affect people, how did they find shelter, food and water, what have they lost?</p> <p>Feedback to the class to discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the causes of the floods? • Who is affected most by the impacts and why? • What are people's immediate needs? • What are people's long-term needs? <p>In pairs, look at the impact and solution photos on the 'Life savers' activity sheet and match them by drawing arrows in the space in between.</p> <p>Give reasons for your choices in the right-hand column and feed back to the class. There are no wrong answers.</p> <p>Create a similar chart and draw sketches to illustrate two more</p>	<p>the floods. Record suggestions as a mind map. These could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No crops • No livestock • People displaced – no homes • People upset • Small businesses ruined • Future floods during monsoon season <p>Show the film on Disaster Risk Reduction in Bangladesh, and show the powerpoint slide.</p> <p>List the actions which help people to reduce their vulnerability to flooding.</p> <p>As a class, read the list of solutions on the 'Short-medium-long activity sheet' and add any others.</p> <p>Categorise each solution according to when you think it</p>
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	<p>include? What can be missed out? What are the challenges in writing a 'profile' of a country?</p> <p>Useful web links:</p> <p>http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/south_asia/country_profiles/1157960.stm</p>	<p>people in Pakistan.</p> <p>Discuss, why do you think flooding affects poor people most? What are people doing to survive?</p> <p>Useful websites:</p> <p>http://www.actionaid.org.uk/index.asp</p> <p>http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/special_reports/pakistan_floods/</p> <p>http://www.dfid.gov.uk/</p>	<p>impacts and three more solutions.</p> <p>Feedback your findings to the class.</p>	<p>will be most beneficial to people, i.e. in the short, medium or long term. There are no wrong answers and some solutions may fit into more than one category. Discuss who is responsible for these solutions. Feedback your conclusions to the class.</p> <p>In groups, use the action cards to discuss actions we can take and add any other actions to the blank cards. Cut out the cards and rank them in a diamond shape from most effective to least. Discuss your reasons with the class.</p>
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Activity sheet Pakistan photos

Big picture questions

Why is it so devastating?

What are the causes?

Observational questions

Where is it happening?

What is happening?

Put photo here

How it is affecting people's daily lives?

When did it happen?

What can the world do about it?

What can I do about it?



Hamida's family were displaced from their house when the Pakistan floods hit.

She said: "It was in the morning that water made its way to our village. We had little time to save our households. Even I did not get a chance to pack my books.

"I was afraid of water. I could not sleep for the first two nights. My mother asked me not to worry because soon we would go back to our home. I could not understand why water was so cruel to us."

The floods destroyed the whole of their village including houses, school, road, livestock and crop.

Hamida is worried about getting back home and to her life. She said: "How will we get back our home, luggage, books and livestock? I remain worried of my studies. I love reading books and I want to be a doctor. Many people in our camps are suffering from diseases and if I would have been a doctor, I could have treated them free of cost.

"At our home, we used to have plenty of food but here we find very little to eat. Initially we were only provided with cooked rice. Now my mother cooks food for us. It is too hot here and mosquitoes do not let sleep well in the nights. During the day, flies disturb us too much. All the children here remain sad and gloomy; hence I cannot ask them to play with me.

"Who will bring us back all that we have lost in the flood?"



Zakaria Nutkani, Communications Officer, ActionAid Pakistan was astonished to find many people referring to the mighty Indus as 'Khawja Khizar' - the saint who is in command of the river Indus, according to the local folklore. They saw the floods as something both holy and supernatural.

"They thought that it was not the fault of the Indus for inundating the populated areas. Rather in their eyes the blame lied with authorities and influential landlords who encroached on the river bed without realizing that it could prove disastrous one day.

Many affected people had their explanations for the flooding, and criticised the authorities for not introducing an effective water management system. They, however, realized that the disaster could not have been avoided altogether because people had stepped in the river to invite its wrath. Some people thought the disaster would bring development into long-neglected areas.

In most of the areas I visited I found many people voluntarily repairing and improving the dykes, helping themselves to avoid further flood devastation to their villages. They were critical of government's effort to divert flood water to deserted areas. There were many spots where they could have avoided further breaches in the river and its canals if timely and effective actions were taken.

Many people who are now living in camps are desperate to get some kind of support, either from the government or aid agencies. They were complaining of the authorities for not assessing the damage to their land, livestock, crops and houses. Many of those affected want a better future but they were helpless and destitute, and could not build upon their vision."



Jan Muhammad, 54, is a father of three sons and two daughters. He lives with his parents and three brothers.

There are 23 members of his family. They were small farm land owners and all of them worked in fields.

Floods destroyed his house in Rohjan Jamali. He has lost belongings, grains, livestock and crops. He is constantly migrating and wishes to go back to his hometown as early as possible.

“Initially we cooked food with the material we managed to bring with us while we ran for our lives,” said Jan.

“I was scared of the flood because it was almost seven feet deep. It came like a flash and washed away everything coming in its way.

“Our first priority was to take care of our children. Meanwhile, our women packed some belongings and we took two sacks of grain along with us.

“I strongly wished to save my livestock, but it was too late to risk that.

“Those were the most painful moments of my life when I had to leave behind my most invaluable households, farm machinery and the livestock. Now we are in real trouble as we have nothing left to feed our children.”



Bilal’s mother is worried for the future of her 13 year old son Bilal. After losing her husband a year ago, she has pinned all her hopes on her teenage son. “I want him to get good education and become a doctor” she says. But looking at the disrupted educational facilities, she is worried. She does not know when the schools will reopen and how her son will be able to catch up with his interrupted studies.







Floods have damaged or destroyed 452 schools in the province of Khyber Pakhtoonkhwa. 69 educational institutions have been destroyed in Swat alone.

Education has come to a halt. The summer holidays has been extended to accommodate those who have had to flee their homes to escape the waters, or who have lost their homes altogether.

Bilal says he misses his school and hopes that it is still standing. He worries for the well-being of his friends and teachers also but most of all he is worried for the trees he planted last summer as part of 'tree plantation campaign' in his school.

“My friends and I watered the plants in recess and sometimes put manure on them to help them grow healthy and strong. I hope the waters have not destroyed them.”

Activity sheet **Life savers**

Impact		Sustainable solutions	Reasons
 <p>Heavy rains have washed away bridges.</p>			
 <p>Some classrooms have been damaged or are too dangerous to use.</p>			
 <p>Floodwaters wash away the crops, leaving muddy soil.</p>			

Activity sheet **Short-medium-long**

Solutions			
Dredge rivers	Re-build schools on higher ground	Build housing on raised platforms	
Teach children First Aid	Build shelters for livestock	Re-build bridges	
Learn to swim	Plant flood-resistant crops	Plant trees along riverbanks	
Improve flood management	Learn to cross rivers safely	Repair buildings	Early warning systems

Short term	Medium term	Long term

Activity sheet **Action Cards**

Lobby MPs, write to newspapers,
sign petitions on issues

Join a campaign group to make
your voice heard

Fundraise for people who are
most vulnerable

Take care of the environment

Take action in your community by
organising an event to raise
awareness

Your school can sponsor a child in
a poorer country

Find out more about issues by
linking with a school in a different
country

Think of your own solution

Think of your own solution



Draw in and label these key areas:

- 1) The River Indus
- 2) Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan
- 3) Swat
- 4) Sindh