

Area Water Partnerships in Pakistan bring water security to the local level

IMPACT STORY

A SNAPSHOT

How to introduce integrated water resources management (IWRM) to more than 220 million people, speaking over 70 different languages and dialects, and living in some of the world's most remote and climate-challenged regions? From villages in the Himalayas to deserts at the Indian border, the Pakistan Water Partnership (PWP) is helping communities gain secure access to water, and the finance and technology needed to adapt to a changing climate. Area Water Partnerships (AWS) across Pakistan have led to new leadership capacity at community level, promoting dialogue and local action, and contributing to improved water security for about 13,400 people.

THE CONTEXT

In South Asia, huge cities and remote villages present a challenge for introducing water management approaches that help communities adapt to a changing climate. The region's river flows – fed by glacier, snowmelt, rainfall and runoff – are increasingly stretched when it comes to providing enough irrigation for crops, and water and sanitation services for growing populations.

The Global Water Partnership South Asia, recognising that centralised Country Water Partnerships alone could not solve this problem, developed the concept of Area Water Partnerships – created from a network of local departments, institutions, civil society organisations and stakeholders. AWP have been set up when there is a common and pressing need in a specific geographic setting, using water as an entry point for natural resources management.

AWPs allow variety in their membership – to reach out beyond the usual water players, and to cross sectoral boundaries and work in a partnering mode. Pakistan, with its large population, diverse and challenging landscapes, and mix of institutions with an interest in water, has made good use of this approach.

**150**

Communities with leadership capacity improved

13,400

People with improved water security

23+

Area Water Partnerships mobilised



GWP'S CONTRIBUTION

The **Nara Water Canal AWP**, set up by PWP and Women Water Network in Sanghar in 2001, **has empowered women to resolve conflicts**. As a result, conflict related to canal water distribution in 44 villages was resolved, average household income increased by 20%, integrated agricultural practices were adopted by 32% of the farming community, and 2,500 people benefitted overall.

In the Cholistan desert, **the Bahawalpur AWP has provided safe and secure drinking water** for thousands of people. The AWP trained community members in preparing low-cost filters that use local sand to remove harmful microbes and heavy metals. Complementary health work on soap and deworming medicines was carried out in three villages, benefitting more than 2,600 individuals.

PWP, in partnership with local government and the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme, formed in 2018 the **Chitral AWP**. This AWP **has improved access to drinking water and sanitation** in the one of the world's highest and steepest mountain districts. The work has a special focus on youth and women, training more than 200 community members in water management, purification, sanitation and hygiene.

In 2007, Pakistan's largest city **Karachi became the host of South Asia's first urban AWP**. Partnering with the Hisaar Foundation, PWP set up the Karachi AWP in the northeast of the city. More than 300 partners joined the AWP, helping to disseminate water conservation guidelines, appoint trained water inspectors, and form a local Women and Water Network.

CO-CREATING RESULTS

Pakistan's AWP's have brought together previously disconnected organisations for a common cause, helping more than a million people. Some AWP's have reached groups unfamiliar with IWRM. Others have acted as local platforms, stimulating local organizations to work in water management, or have reoriented larger water-related programmes through collaboration. The new links have helped to resolve local problems through common strategies that empower entire communities. The bottom-up approach also influences national and provincial policies: support from the PWP enables access to the country's highest political leadership, creating a flow of constructive ideas to decision-makers.

By participating in Pakistan's AWP's, more than 200 office bearers have gained new knowledge and skills, developing their capacity for community leadership. The mutual accountability encouraged by AWP's has led to conflict resolution and problem solving. A key strength has been organisational flexibility and an absence of bureaucracy that allows AWP's to adopt innovative approaches and directly reach thousands of people across Pakistan – from the remotest villages to densely packed large cities. In recognition of this success, the President of Pakistan announced in 2002 a grant of EUR 50,000 to PWP – to introduce IWRM at political, bureaucratic and grass roots levels, and enable better management of scarce water resources. Pakistan's Water Partnership is committed to using the AWP approach to continue building trust and accelerating IWRM action at community and national levels.

“ There is unlimited value in building capacity and engagement at the local level. In 2015, for example, PWP was helping to develop catchment basins in Tharparkar ... local workers took ownership and gained the motivation to maintain the basins. Sustainability requires a sense of ownership. ”

Muhammad Awais, PWP



GWP'S ONLINE IMPACT STORIES

<https://link.gwp.org/ImpactStories>

WHAT IS A GWP IMPACT STORY?

GWP's activities influence water governance for a water secure world. We measure our impact in terms of enhanced quality of life for populations and increased water-related investment. Our impact stories are our vehicle to tell what is behind those numbers.