

# Integrating climate resilience initiatives into sexual and reproductive health and rights programmes

## Key learnings

- Future sexual and reproductive health and rights programmes in climate-affected areas should include an element of climate response (advocacy, awareness and adaptation strategies) to support their resilience and reduce vulnerability to the climate crisis.
- It's crucial to work closely with local public and private stakeholders to ensure stronger support for disaster-prone communities.
- Future programmes should include climate-friendly energy initiatives (eg solar panels for service channels and electric bikes for field workers) which can serve as sustainable, renewable energy sources for powering our services.



## The challenge

### A high and growing need for SRH services in climate-affected areas

Climate crises including drought and flooding disproportionately affect low- and middle-income countries. Pakistan is considered the eighth most affected country by climate change according to the Germanwatch Global Climate Risk Index (2021)<sup>1</sup>. The climate crisis is an everyday reality for many of the women that MSS – a locally based NGO in Pakistan supported by the global MSI partnership – provides sexual and reproductive health services to. Its effects are compounded by gender discrimination and poor access to resources.

During the flash floods of August 2022, the government of Pakistan reported 33 million affected, which included about 8.2 million women of reproductive age. UNFPA (2022)<sup>2</sup> reported that there were 650,000 pregnant women in flood-affected areas who required antenatal care along with safe birth and childcare facilities. And we've seen a lack of access to become a real concern for communities dealing with displacement and disaster.

Climate catastrophes are becoming a seasonal occurrence for Pakistan. Disaster relief initiatives (camps providing medical and nutritional aid) and climate adaptation strategies need to be an integral part of any SRH programme in these communities. We must focus on building climate resilient health systems so that essential health services can continue during emergencies.

## What we did

### Integrating climate-resilience initiatives into our programming

MSS has delivered services through its programme since 2017, expanding access across 28 districts in three provinces of Pakistan, focusing on marginalised and rural areas. We design and promote climate adaptation approaches, ensuring that women's access to services is expanded even during times of crisis.

In August 2022, MSS delivered an emergency response to the floods by reallocating funding to set up relief camps providing essential free medical care and contraceptive services to flood-affected communities.

The team also disseminated health messages and offered technical assistance to the provincial government. In addition, MSS is continuing to work with SAFWCO (local climate partner organisation) to deploy an innovative pilot programme combining reproductive health services with climate change awareness. From August 2023 to June 2026, the team will create a coordinated response, delivering essential healthcare and ensuring that women and girls' health is not sidelined during disasters, advocating for women's sexual and reproductive health needs to be considered in any disaster response.

[1] Germanwatch (2021) Global Climate Risk Index 2021. Available at: [www.germanwatch.org/sites/default/files/Global%20Climate%20Risk%20Index%202021\\_2.pdf](http://www.germanwatch.org/sites/default/files/Global%20Climate%20Risk%20Index%202021_2.pdf)

[2] UNFPA (2022) Women and girls bearing the brunt of the Pakistan Monsoon floods. Available at: [pakistan.unfpa.org/en/news/women-and-girls-bearing-brunt-pakistan-monsoon-floods](http://pakistan.unfpa.org/en/news/women-and-girls-bearing-brunt-pakistan-monsoon-floods)

## What we found

**Reproductive health programmes that integrate climate strategies are critical to ensure that the health of women and girls is not sidelined during disasters.**

MSS's emergency response to the climate floods in 2022 successfully addressed the health needs of many community members. Between August 2022 and June 2024:

- ✓ **232,600 clients were served in 3,300 flood relief camps between August 2022 and June 2024, reaching 152,000 women and 50,500 children.**
- ✓ **MSI provided contraceptive services as well as treatment for medical ailments, including diarrhoea, respiratory infections, suspected malaria, scabies, and acute jaundice syndrome.**
- ✓ **78,679 Couple Years of Protection (CYPs) were delivered during this period.**

MSS intends to expand initiatives incorporating reproductive health and climate resilience, learning from previous responses and projects.

For example, the team established that outreach mobile vans are an effective service delivery channel during floods and disasters – Between 2024 and 2028, the team intends to run 17 mobile outreach vans, which will be based in eight districts, covering an additional 19 adjacent districts.

### Partnerships and the use of renewable energy are essential for sustainability

Developing and maintaining strong local partnerships, both in the public and private sectors, is critical for effective implementation of climate-related strategies and the provision of health services. Through climate resilience initiatives, MSS have developed strong networks and partnerships with district government teams and community leaders.

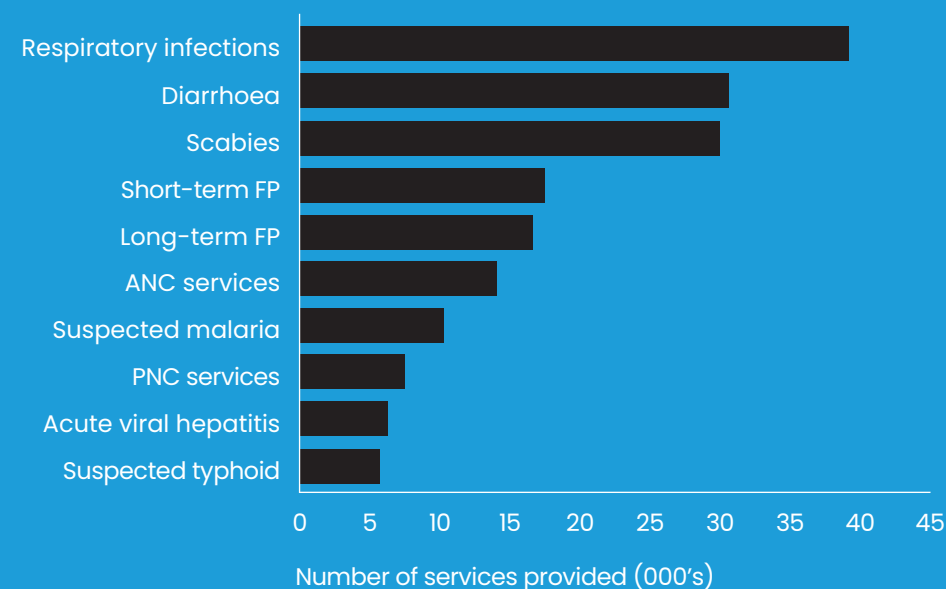
The team intends to leverage these relationships in future collaborations and support areas that are particularly prone to climate change-related disasters.

To mitigate rising fuel costs and ensure the financial sustainability of programmes, it will be important to use renewable, clean energy sources like solar and electric for service delivery and climate mitigation approaches.

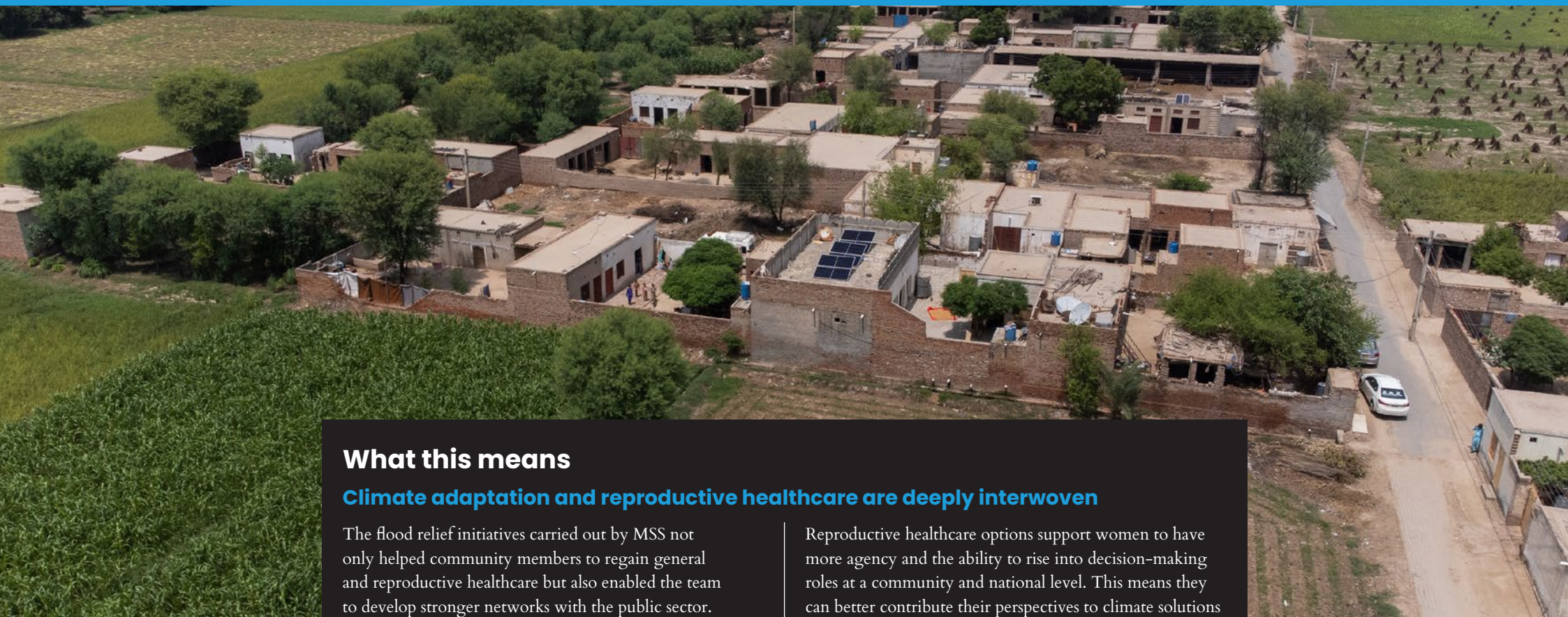
MSS intends to invest in solar-panelled cells for outreach services, which will minimise the need for generators.



**Top 10 services provided by MSS in the flood relief operations between August 2022 and June 2024. 15% related to long and short-term family planning needs**







## What this means

### Climate adaptation and reproductive healthcare are deeply interwoven

The flood relief initiatives carried out by MSS not only helped community members to regain general and reproductive healthcare but also enabled the team to develop stronger networks with the public sector. These relationships will support future programmes delivering reproductive health services to climate-affected communities. MSS is working to ensure all plans are aligned with the Federal Ministry of Health recommendations in the Framework of Action on Climate Change and Health.

Reproductive healthcare options support women to have more agency and the ability to rise into decision-making roles at a community and national level. This means they can better contribute their perspectives to climate solutions and build community resilience against climate shocks. This isn't just healthcare – it's crucial for the future of these communities and helps to advance gender equality.

## More information

For more information on MSI Reproductive Choices and the work that we do, please contact:

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