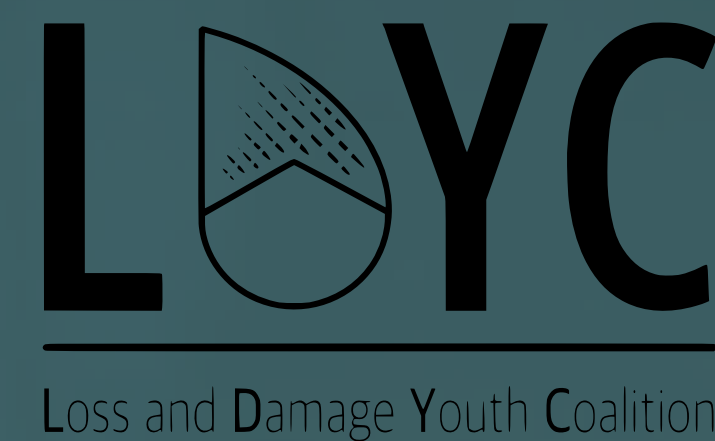


Empowering Communities: My Journey **in Safeguarding** Against **Climate Change** Impacts in Sindh

By Yusra



**A story on Lived Impact of The
Climate Crisis in **Pakistan****

Safeguarding means protecting people, especially women, children, and other vulnerable groups, from harm, abuse, or exploitation. During emergencies like floods, when communities are already struggling, safeguarding becomes even more important. It helps make sure that people are safe, respected, and supported.

In the past few years, climate change has caused more heavy rains and floods in our region of Sindh, Pakistan. These disasters have affected thousands of people, damaged homes and livelihoods, and increased risks for women and children. When people lose everything, they also become more vulnerable to abuse and exploitation.

About Sindh: The Land, the People, and the Challenges

Sindh is a beautiful and diverse region in the southeast of Pakistan, with wide, flat plains, deserts like the Thar, and the mighty Indus River running through it. It is home to over 50 million people from many cultures, languages, and traditions.

Agriculture is the backbone of Sindh's economy, with crops like wheat, rice, cotton, and sugarcane feeding millions and supporting trade across Pakistan

However, the region faces harsh summers with temperatures often soaring above 45°C, and unpredictable rains that sometimes bring droughts and sometimes bring floods.

Sindh also struggles with deep social challenges: many areas have low education rates, limited healthcare, and high poverty. When climate disasters strike, they make these issues even worse, leaving the most vulnerable even more at risk.



How Climate Change is Affecting Sindh

Climate change is hitting Sindh hard. Rising temperatures, erratic rainfall, and stronger floods are destroying crops, homes, and infrastructure. Poor families who depend on farming and daily labor lose their only sources of income.



An aerial view of a village in Sindh submerged by floodwaters — a stark reminder of the region's vulnerability to climate change and extreme weather events.

Health risks like waterborne diseases increase after floods, and displacement puts women and children in unsafe environments. Communities that are already dealing with poverty now face even tougher challenges every year.



How I Got Involved in Safeguarding

I'm Yusra Daudpota, and I work as a Protection Officer and Safeguarding Focal Person with ARTS Foundation, under the Flood Recovery and Response: A Community-Wide Approach in Sindh project, supported by Oxfam.

I first joined as a safeguarding focal person because I wanted to protect people and make sure they feel safe. I attended a training called "Strengthening Safeguarding Practices," where I learned about safeguarding investigations, evidence documentation, survivor-centered interviewing, case management, and how to promote safety in our work.

This training helped me understand how to respond to safeguarding concerns in a professional, caring, and confidential way.



Awareness sessions with Member of community based protection committees

What I Do as a Safeguarding Focal Person

- **Awareness sessions** in villages so people know their rights
- **Feedback mechanisms**, so community members can share their concerns
- **Visual materials** like posters in local languages that are easy to understand
- **Safety committees**, especially led by women, to make local decisions on protection

I also helped review our organization's policies and made a simple one-page safeguarding guide, which is now displayed in our office for everyone to see.

Connecting Safeguarding with Climate Change

Safeguarding is now more than just preventing abuse — it's also about helping communities deal with the effects of climate change. When floods come, people are forced to live in camps or temporary shelters. In such situations, women and girls face higher risks of harassment and violence. Safeguarding helps protect them during these difficult times.

We also talk to communities about how climate change affects their lives and how to stay safe during floods and other disasters. Many women shared that before, they didn't know where to go if something bad happened. But now, they understand their rights and feel more confident speaking up.

Stories from the Community

One woman from UC Dengan Bhurgari, named *Amina*, said :

“Before, we were scared and silent. Now we know where to go and who to talk to when there's a problem.”

Climate change affected Amina's life when the floods destroyed her home and the small piece of land her family depended on. Forced to move into a temporary camp, she faced unsafe conditions. But after learning about safeguarding, she feels empowered to protect herself and others around her. She and other women are now also planting trees and keeping their environment clean to reduce the impact of floods. They're becoming leaders in their communities.

Another participant, Rahila, said: “Safeguarding is not only about complaints. It's about stopping abuse before it happens.”

Rahila's village was hit hard by floods, washing away her family's crops and livestock. Without a steady income, life became even harder. But through safeguarding sessions, Rahila gained the confidence to organize local women into a safety committee, helping prevent violence and raising awareness about early warning systems for floods.

These stories make me proud. They show how people — especially women — are learning, growing, and protecting each other.