

Solidarity, Campaigns, Rights and Food Sovereignty - Descriptive Report for ESSF support during 2023

Friday 29 March 2024, by [Crofter Foundation](#), [Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee - PKRC](#), [TARIQ Farooq](#), [ZIA Saima](#)
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With ESSF's invaluable assistance, PKRC [1] and the Crofter Foundation were able to continue our vital work on issues of food sovereignty, Tax and debt justice, Climate Justice and solidarity work among the farmers, agricultural workers, and landless peasants. Also throughout the year, we continued to work on critical issues like land rights, and growing inequality.

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Furthermore, we advocated for more spending in the budget for public services, especially focused on women, children, and youth, denounced rising price hikes, challenged the harsh conditionalities of the IMF and World Bank, and opposed the use of fossil fuels in energy production.

Pakistan's situation worsened in 2023 due to mounting political instability and uncertainty. Your support proved even more crucial during this year.

The implementation of a neoliberal agenda to fulfill the conditionalities of the IMF has resulted in over 20 million "new poor" in Pakistan over the last three years.

A severe economic crisis has led to the closure of most industries and widespread unemployment. The price hike of everyday goods has reached peak levels, with increases in the prices of gas, electricity, and oil being one of the formulas adopted by the present and former governments to raise revenue and repay foreign loans. There is no tax on the rich, but indirect taxation prevails at all times.

Food Sovereignty & Land Rights

Pakistan faces several challenges in achieving food sovereignty, despite being a major agricultural producer. Unequal land distribution is a major hurdle. A small number of large landowners control a significant portion of fertile land, while many small farmers struggle with limited resources. Farmers may become reliant on expensive, high-yielding seeds from multinational corporations, reducing seed diversity and putting them at risk of debt. Unfair trade agreements can expose Pakistani farmers to cheaper imports, undercutting their livelihoods. Poor storage facilities, inadequate transportation networks, and limited access to markets can lead to post-harvest losses and limit farmers' profits. Extreme weather events like floods, droughts, and heatwaves can devastate crops and disrupt agricultural production.

Government unfair policies and not any political determination and commitment a major cause affecting the food sovereignty of the poorest including the small-scale farmers. that prioritize exports over domestic food security or focus on cash crops over staple foods can undermine food sovereignty.

The government also announced corporate farming as the main vehicle of Pakistan growth. They allotted over a million acres of land to the rich farmers, Arab corporations and military officers. This was on the name of enhancing agriculture production and reducing poverty. We campaigned against this policy of government by taking different actions with the help of ESSF, South Asia Alliance For Poverty Eradication (SAAPE) and Asian People's Movement on Debt and Development (APMDD). Our demands for the campaign on food sovereignty and land rights are the following:

- **Land reform:** Redistributing land to small farmers to promote fairer land ownership. And no to corporate farming.
- **Sustainable agriculture:** Practices that conserve water, maintain soil health, and promote biodiversity.
- **Seed sovereignty:** Encouraging farmers to save and use local, traditional seeds.
- **Fairtrade policies:** Ensuring Pakistani farmers receive fair prices for their produce.
- **Investment in rural infrastructure:** Improving storage, transportation, building decent living infrastructure in the villages and roads building for the better access to markets for farmers.
- **Debt Cancellation:** total cancellation of debt for small farmers.
- **Tax Justice:** “ Tax the Rich, not the poor”

Relief Work

With the support of ESSF and other organisations PKRC/ Crofter Foundation continued the relief work in the flood-affected area in 2023 also for the 2022 flood victims. Over 80 percent of those impacted by the 2022 floods and torrential rains are still waiting for rehabilitation. Following are the problems people are still facing the flood-affected areas:

- **Nutrition Crisis:** One of the most pressing concerns is a looming nutrition crisis, particularly impacting children. Malnutrition rates remain high due to factors like limited access to nutritious food and contaminated water sources.

- **Livelihoods:** Many farmers lost their crops and livestock in the floods, impacting their ability to earn a living. Rebuilding their livelihoods requires ongoing support.

- **Reconstruction Needs:** Rebuilding homes and infrastructure continues, but funding may be limited, hindering complete recovery.

We distributed dry food rations to over a 1000 most poor families during 2013 Ramazan period in three districts of Punjab and Khaiber PukhtunKhawa provinces.

Our relief work among the Sindh and Balochistan peasantry continued in five districts in the shape of food, cloths, blankets, shoes, school books distribution.

We organized a massive landless peasantry conference for fair compensation for all at Shikarpur district. Over 3000 participated in the first ever Landless peasants climate justice march.

We organized the relief work through PKRC member organisations in the area. They provided the lists of those in most difficult situations and a priority formula was agreed for distributing the food rations things not done as charity but as solidarity.

Climate Justice

Floods, droughts, heatwaves, and erratic monsoons are becoming more frequent and intense. The devastating floods of 2022, linked to climate change, displaced millions and caused widespread damage.

The impact of the 2022 floods meant loss of income for many farmers in Sindh and Balochistan. They were not compensated, despite the establishment of UN negotiated "Loss and Damage" fund. Most of the agriculture land was affected.

Heatwaves and droughts are damaging crops, leading to food shortages and price hikes. This disproportionately affects the poorest and most vulnerable populations.

The 2022 floods in Pakistan were the worst in the country's history. They affected at least 33 million people and killed at least 1,739. The floods also caused widespread damage to infrastructure, agriculture, and livelihoods. PKRC and Crofter Foundation continued to work on climate justice and its impacts on the country and marginalized communities in Pakistan by organizing landless peasantry to build a mass movement for compensation for all. **Debt Justice:**

Pakistan's external debt was around **USD 131 billion** as the year 2023 ended. The figure has been steadily rising as Pakistan is negotiating with the IMF for the next three years. The burden of debt repayment falls disproportionately on ordinary citizens through taxes and austerity measures. Meanwhile, wealthy elites and corporations are not contributing their fair share. We kept talking and advocating debt justice a complete cancellation of Pakistan's debt, particularly odious debts incurred by previous governments. We also pushed for debt restructuring with more favorable terms to allow for investments in development.

The heavy debt burden hinders Pakistan's ability to achieve sustainable development goals. Resources that could be used for poverty reduction, education, and healthcare are diverted to debt repayment. We organized "Community Debt Audit Meetings" in 6 different cities to talk about the greater transparency in how debt is negotiated, managed, and used with the help of APMDD, ESSF and other organisations. It was necessary that citizens understand how debt is impacting their lives and hold their government accountable for responsible borrowing practices. **Tax Justice:**

In Pakistan tax system is a regressive tax system. Pakistan relies heavily on indirect taxes like sales tax, which disproportionately affect low-income earners who spend a larger portion of their income

on essential goods. Large landowners often benefit from exemptions or underpay taxes, reducing potential revenue. The wealthy and large corporations often pay a smaller share of taxes compared to middle-class earners and small businesses. More payment to debt and defense restricts the government's ability to invest in crucial areas like education, healthcare, and social safety nets. This disproportionately affects the poorest and most vulnerable populations, although the poorest are paying more taxes in the form of indirect taxes. Our demands for tax justice in Pakistan are the followings:

1. Stop illicit financial flows and tax abuses in the extractives sector;
2. Tax the superprofits of extractive corporations by instituting windfall profit taxes;
3. Curb tax incentives granted to the extractives industry;
4. Make extractives companies pay their share in taxes and immediate costs of rehabilitation and rebuilding;
5. Use taxes for peoples' needs, especially for the needs of communities affected by social and environmental damage.
6. Protect and uphold the rights of workers and women affected by mining, including their rights to defend their communities.

IIRE Islamabad School:

With help of ESSF support and generation of local support, the three-days IIRE Islamabad school was held at Khanspur, in KPK province in July 2023, over 50 activists from around the country participated in the event. Most of the school participants paid the expenditures themselves. However, some subsidy was given from the support of ESSF for the travel of some well-deserved comrades who were not on jobs.

Our main discussions were on climate justice, socialist feminism, Marxist internationalism and on political scenario of Pakistan. Every session was very live and great speakers and contributions inspired many who were attending first times.

ESSF support is also used to pay regularly a part of expenditures of the office and activities of IIRE Islamabad. The school has been in function for the last 10 years and has survived on the donations and contributions of FI members and supporters inside Pakistan. IIRE Islamabad is organizing schools some times several times a year to train the comrades of trade unions and progressive parties in Socialist ideas.

* * *

This general report is an appeal to all donors, friends and supporters of ESSF to continue to support our comrades in Pakistan who are working in an extremely difficult situation and who have kept the banner of international solidarity high.

Pakistan Kisan Rabita Committee & Crofter Foundation, Farooq Tariq (Crofter) and Saima Zia (PKRC)

Key activities held by PKRC/Crofter Foundation in 2023 with support of ESSF and other Organisations

DATE	TITLE OF ACTIVITY	Description
20 th January	Fight Inequality Activities	<p>According to development experts in Pakistan, between 1998-99 and 2013-14, consumption-based poverty fell from 57.9 percent to 29.5 percent. Multidimensional poverty which comprises education, health, and living standards dropped from 55.2 percent to 38.8 percent between 2004-5 and 2014-15. In addition, during 2013-14, the Gini coefficient was 0.41 while in the years 1987-88, it was 0.35. Besides, the richest 20 percent in Pakistan spend seven times more than the poorest 20 percent. Currently, our country is on the trajectory of a high economic deficit. This has caused 35 percent of the people to live below the poverty line, around 22.4 million children are out of school and 45 percent are stunted. Moreover, women's unpaid domestic work is not measured in any data. They are not paid equal wages and around 63 percent of youth spend their life impractically. In Pakistan, PKRC/Crofter Foundation with the collaboration of the Asian People's Movement on Debt and Development and Fight Inequality Alliance Global organized demonstrations in 10 cities with the following demands: Demands:</p> <p>The following demands and objectives were focused on: 1. Reforms in taxation systems and moving to a progressive and just tax system 2. The government needs to increase education, health, and social protection spending, and provide equal labor wages for both men and women. 3. Debt cancellation is crucial for the recovery of the economy.</p>
22 nd January	Action on Chinese new Lunar year	<p>Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee organized a protest outside Lahore Press club, against Chinese fossil fuel funding projects. The protest was organized on the occasion of Chinese new Lunar year. Protesters were carrying placards chanting "Climate Justice, Now" and "Stop Funding all fossil fuels."</p>

8 th March	Women's March	PKRC/Crofter Foundation participated in the March organized by the civil society and women organizations on the eve of International Women's Day. The Aurat March ("Women's March") is an annual socio-political demonstration in Pakistani cities such as Islamabad, Karachi, Lahore, Multan, Peshawar and Quetta to observe International Women's Day. The march calls for greater accountability for violence against women and supports women who experience violence and harassment at the hands of security forces, in public spaces, at home, and in the workplace. The march demands economic justice, including implementation of labor rights and the Protection Against Harassment of Women at the Workplace Act, 2010, recognition of women's unpaid contributions to the "care economy", and provision of maternity leave and daycare centers to ensure women's inclusion in the labor force. It also demands recognition of women in the production of food and cash crops, access to a fair judicial system, the inclusion of women with disabilities and the transgender community, reproductive justice, access to public spaces, inclusion in educational institutions, the rights of religious minorities, promotion of an anti-war agenda, and an end to police brutality and forced disappearances.
12 th March	All women Pedal for People and Planet bike action - All women PPP	The all-women bike action was organized by Pakistan Kissan Rabita committee, Aman Foundation and Crofter Foundation in Lahore. More than forty bikers took part in the all-women Pedal for People and Planet bike action held at Bagh e Jinnah, Lahore to celebrate International Women's Month. The bike action aimed to raise awareness on climate change and the issues of food and clean energy and highlight the role of women in the fight for climate justice. The Bike action is also organized in Karachi by Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum.
17 th April	International Peasant Day	Crofter Foundation/PKRC celebrated the International Peasant Day to show solidarity with peasants and small-scale farmers globally in their struggle for food sovereignty, land and water rights.
4 th May.	Don't Gas Asia Mobilization	Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee, Labour Education Foundation, Crofter foundation and Tameer e Nau Women's worker's organization held a protest outside Lahore press club. Protestors slam gas and Fossil fuel expansion in Pakistan. Call on the government to hasten clean energy transition. The protest was held to step up pressure on the government to accelerate the shift toward clean, renewable energy. Protestors demanded rapid, just and equitable transition to 100% renewable energy in order to cope up with the effects of climate change. The protestors were raising placards and banners reading "Don't Gas Asia" and "Don't Gas Pakistan."
18 th May	Action at the time of G7 Mob	On the occasion of the G7 Leaders' Summit scheduled on May 19-21 in Hiroshima, Japan, Climate campaigners held rallies in various cities across the world. Climate campaigners from Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee, Labour Education foundation and crofter foundation denounced fossil fuel funding of G7 countries and Japan. In a Photo-op demonstration by the PKRC in Lahore, activists demanded increased investment in renewable energy to meet climate goals.

4 th June	2 nd leg PPP Lahore	The bike rally in Lahore was organized by Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee, Crofter Foundation and Labor Education foundation. More than fifty Bike riders participated and demanded climate justice, demanding rich countries to pay their fair share for damaging climate in the global south.
22 nd June	Paris Summit mobilization	Pakistan Kissan Rabita committee, Labour Education Foundation, Tameer e Nau Women Workers organization staged a protest outside Lahore press club demanding reparations for climate change in Pakistan. The protest was organized on the occasion of the opening day of Paris Summit for global financial pact. The two-day meeting chaired by French President Emmanuel Macron brings together heads of states, leaders of international financing organizations, and the private sector to build a consensus on a push for a new global finance pact to fund Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) targets and the decarbonization of economies.
8 th August	Women's right to land	PKRC/Crofter Foundation organized the meeting on Land rights of women in Pakistan in collaboration of South Asia Alliance for Poverty Eradication and Tameer e Nou Women Workers Organization.
6-25 th September	Citizen's Debt Audit meetings	PKRC/Crofter Foundation organized 6 meeting in 6 cities for citizen's debt audit in collaboration with APMDD with the following objectives: • To enhance public understanding of Pakistan's debt situation and its impact on the lives of ordinary citizens. • To identify and document the social, economic, and environmental consequences of debt accumulation in Pakistan. • To develop concrete recommendations for addressing Pakistan's debt crisis and promoting debt justice. • To build a network of civil society organizations and community groups committed to debt transparency and accountability in Pakistan.
8 th September	G20 actions	Ahead of the G-20 Summit in India, Climate Activists and campaigners from Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee, Crofter Foundation, Labour Education Foundation, and Tameer e Nau Women Workers organization staged a protest in Lahore. Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum organized action in Karachi. The protestors held placards and banners slamming G-20 countries for creating debt traps for the Global South. The protest called for urgent climate action from bigger economies demanding rechanneling of public funds away from fossil fuels. The protestors demanded rapid, just and equitable transition to 100% renewable energy in Pakistan.
15 th September	Global mobilizations against Fossil Fuels	The protests were part of Global Day of Action against fossil fuels which is observed all across the globe on 15 September. The Climate Justice March in Shikarpur, Sindh was organized by the Pakistan Kisan Rabita Committee and Hari Jeddojehad Committee. Climate Justice Marches and rallies also held in Karachi and Pakpattan on 15 th Sept.
18 th September	Press conference on tax justice	Crofter Foundation/PKRC organized a press conference on tax justice issue in collaboration with APMDD At its core, this initiative advocates for: • Tax the Rich, Not the Poor! • Wealth Tax Now! • End unjust tax burdens on the People! • End elite and gender biases in tax systems! • Stop corporate tax abuses! • End inequalities in global tax rules and rulemaking! UN Tax Convention Now!

29 th September	US embassy Lahore action	Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee, Labour Education Foundation, and Tameer e Nau Women Workers organization, organized a protest outside the US embassy Lahore. The protest was organized at the time of Second Pledging Conference of the Green Climate Fund (GCF), scheduled to take place on October 5 in Bonn, Germany, where governments of the Global North are expected to announce increased contributions to climate finance.
Sep-October	People's Assemblies, People's Caravans and People's Tribunals	Crofter Foundation/PKRC organized 2 people's Caravans, 2 assemblies and 2 People's Tribunals in 6 different cities in Collaboration with Fight Inequality Alliance Global. Around 2000 people participated in these activities. Objectives of these actions were followings: People need to understand why they are poor and how the IMF and World Bank policies affect their lives. Why do the governments have no money for public services? This climate and debt issues are very much interrelated, finances fossil fuels projects are ruining the climate and making poor people's lives more miserable. Political awareness among the people so they can understand the politics and games IFIs are playing with countries like Pakistan. In the long-term public opinion and political awareness can make a difference in the policies. Raising awareness of the issue, the first step to addressing the problem is to raise awareness of the issue and to educate people about how IMF and World Bank policies contribute to poverty. Also holding the IMF and World Bank accountable, People need to hold the IMF and World Bank accountable for their actions and demand that they change their policies.
10 th October	Press conference - GWOA on Debt, Climate and Economic Justice	PKRC held a press conference on 10 th Oct to kick off the GWOA on Debt, Climate And Economic Justice.
12 th October	GWOA Mobilisations on Debt, Climate and Economic Justice in Lahore, Karachi, Shikarpur and Toba Tek Singh	Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee organized mobilizations in Lahore, Shikarpur, Karachi and Toba Tek Singh. Timed with the 2023 annual meeting of the IMF and World Bank, PKRC has joined hundreds of other organizations worldwide marking the Global Week of Action for Debt, Climate and Economic Justice. Lahore - Its organized by PKRC, Labour Education Foundation (LEF), and Tameer e Nau Women Workers organization (TNWWO) Karachi - Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum and Haqooq e Khalq Party Shikarpur - by Hari Jeddojehad Committee Toka Tek Singh - By Pakistan Brick Kiln Workers Union
19 th October	Asia Day of Action on Food and Climate	The protests were a part of the Asia Day of Action on Food and Climate timed to coincide with the celebration of World Food Day and the World Food Forum taking place on October 16-20 at the headquarters of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) in Rome, Italy. Lahore - By PKRC, Labour Education Foundation (LEF), and Tameer e Nau Women Workers organization (TNWWO) Karachi - By Pakistan Fisherfolk Forum
23 rd November	Global Day of action in solidarity with the People of Palestine	Lahore: In a display of support for the Palestinian people, the Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee, Labour Education Foundation, and Trade Union Action Committee organized a protest outside the labor department in Lahore. The demonstration, aligned with the Global Day of Action in solidarity with Palestine, aimed to bring attention to the pressing need for addressing the ongoing crisis in Gaza

24th November

Crofter Foundation/Pakistan Kissan Rabita committee has organized a consultation meeting on tax justice in Pakistan in collaboration with the Tax Payers Association Pakistan in Islamabad at Islamabad Press Club on 22nd November 2023. The timing was 2:30 to 6:00 PM. Around 25 participants attended this consultation meeting. **Objectives of the meeting:**

- Reviewing the current state of tax justice in Pakistan, especially in the extractive industry
- Transparency and accountability in tax systems under the UN convention
- Develop strategies for improving tax justice in Pakistan
- Raise awareness of tax justice issues in Pakistan
- Raising taxes on the wealthy makes MNCs pay their share
- Investing tax revenue in public services
- Reviewing and making exchanges of the organizations in the network about their campaign on tax justice

Following were the key issues and challenges that resulted after the discussion

- Informal economy: Addressing the large informal sector and its contribution to tax evasion.
- Regressive taxation: Analyzing the balance between direct and indirect taxes and their impact on different income groups including farmers, workers, and other marginalized communities, especially women
- Tax the rich including MNCs and agriculture
- Stop the illicit financial flow in any form including the extractive sector
- Simplifying tax laws and procedures: Making the tax system easier to understand and comply with for all taxpayers.
- Promoting tax awareness and education: Building public understanding and support for tax justice principles.
- Exploring progressive taxation: Reviewing tax rates and structures to ensure greater contribution from those with higher incomes and wealth

Our calls on governments and multilateral institutions to:

1. Stop illicit financial flows and tax abuses in the extractives sector;
2. Tax the superprofits of extractive corporations by instituting windfall profit taxes;
3. Curb tax incentives granted to the extractives industry;
4. Make extractives companies pay their share in taxes and immediate costs of rehabilitation and rebuilding;
5. Use taxes for peoples' needs, especially for the needs of communities affected by social and environmental damage
6. Protect and uphold the rights of workers and women affected by mining, including their rights to defend their communities.

9th Dec

Global Day of Action for Climate Justice

Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee and Labour Quami Movement organized Climate Justice March on the Global Day of Action for Climate Justice to demand reparations and Climate Debt from Global North. The Global Day of Action for Climate Justice calls on world leaders gathering at COP28 to commit to a fast and fair phaseout of fossil fuels and a just, clean energy transition. The campaign demands Northern governments to deliver climate justice to the people and communities least responsible for the climate crisis but who suffer its worst impacts.

Key Achievements climate justice movement (2023) with partial support of ESSF

- Country-wide network of contacts: As we have members in all parts of the country, we can reach out larger number of people and organizations.
- Mobilize and coordinate with grassroots organizations and groups, and mobilize the media.
- Advocacy for the public policies for people's needs and demands.
- We have built the movements at the national and global level on Poverty and inequality, tax & debt justice, and social justice.
- Report by: **Saima Zia (Crofter Foundation), Farooq Tariq (PKRC)**

Farooq Tariq general secretary Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee - PKRC

To send donations via ESSF

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P.S.

- Farooq Tariq is general secretary, Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee - PKRC

Footnotes

[1] Since 2017, the Pakistan Kissan Rabita Committee is a network of 27 small farmers'

organizations and the the only member-organization of La Via Campesina in Pakistan.