



Training Workshop Synopsis

From Disaster Coverage to
Climate Accountability

Strengthening climate journalism requires moving beyond event-based reporting toward a deeper engagement with governance, accountability, and ethical storytelling. In this regard, Accountability Lab Pakistan, in collaboration with the Green Media Initiative (GMI), convened another session in its ongoing training series for district-level female journalists. The session brought together practitioners and experts to examine how climate narratives can better reflect structural challenges while equipping journalists with the tools to investigate and report with rigor and responsibility.

The session opened with remarks highlighting a key gap in climate reporting across Pakistan: the tendency to focus on immediate impacts of disasters rather than the systemic governance failures that drive recurring environmental crises. Participants were encouraged to view their role not only as reporters but as investigators who can trace underlying causes, identify institutional gaps, and contribute to public accountability through informed storytelling.

Building on this foundation, discussions explored the broader media landscape and its engagement with climate change. Despite the expansion of television, radio, and print media, climate issues are often framed as isolated incidents rather than long-term structural challenges. Speakers emphasized the need for sustained coverage of slow-onset crises such as drought, alongside acute disasters like floods and heatwaves. Ethical considerations were also foregrounded, particularly the importance of consent, dignity, and responsible representation when reporting on vulnerable communities. The initiative's expanding network of female journalists, including participants from remote regions such as Balochistan, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, and Kashmir, reflects a growing effort to decentralize climate reporting and amplify underrepresented perspectives.

A central component of the session focused on climate justice and governance. Experts highlighted the disproportionate burden faced by countries like Pakistan, which contribute minimally to global emissions yet experience severe climate impacts. Discussions underscored the importance of transparency in climate finance, raising critical questions the allocation, implementation, and monitoring of funds intended for climate adaptation and resilience. Journalists were encouraged to investigate whether resources reach the most affected populations and to assess the effectiveness of policies designed to support marginalized groups, particularly women.

The session also examined the intersection of governance and disaster response, noting gaps in institutional preparedness and inclusivity. For instance, the absence of female responders in disaster management systems can limit access to assistance for women in affected communities. Participants were guided on how to identify responsible authorities ranging from local administrations to provincial departments and to ground their reporting in verified policy frameworks and implementation realities.

Further discussions addressed the role of misinformation in shaping public understanding of climate change. Simplistic or misleading narratives often divert attention from structural issues such as deforestation, unregulated urban expansion, and weak land-use planning. Pakistan's water crisis was presented as a case in point, where scarcity is driven less by absolute shortages and more by governance failures, including inefficient irrigation systems, inadequate storage infrastructure, and unregulated groundwater extraction. The coexistence of floods and droughts within short timeframes was highlighted as evidence of systemic mismanagement rather than isolated anomalies.

Emerging topics such as carbon markets and climate financing were also introduced, with a focus on their implications for local communities. While initiatives like mangrove-based carbon projects create new financial opportunities, concerns remain equitable benefit-sharing and transparency. Participants were encouraged to critically examine such projects, linking global climate mechanisms to local socio-economic realities and ensuring that community voices are reflected in their reporting.

The session concluded with a transition to mobile journalism, reinforcing that impactful storytelling is not dependent on advanced equipment but on clarity of narrative, thoughtful framing, and effective use of sound. By integrating governance analysis, ethical considerations, and practical reporting skills, the training aimed to strengthen the capacity of female journalists to produce nuanced, accountable, and community-centered climate stories. Collectively, such efforts contribute to a more informed public discourse and support the development of a media landscape that holds institutions accountable while amplifying voices from the margins.

