



**ADA UNIVERSITY**

**SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

**MASTER OF ARTS IN DIPLOMACY AND**

**INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS**

**CAPSTONE PROJECT**

**The impact of Azerbaijan's humanitarian aid activities on bilateral  
diplomacy with Pakistan**

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**Baku, May 19, 2024**



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## STATEMENT OF AUTHENTICITY

I have read ADA University's policy on plagiarism and certify that, to the best of my knowledge, the content of this paper, entitled "*The impact of Azerbaijan's humanitarian aid activities on bilateral diplomacy with Pakistan*" is all my own work and does not contain any unacknowledged work.

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## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDA – Azerbaijan International Development Agency

MFA – Ministry of Foreign Affairs

NAM – Non-Aligned Movement

NGOs – Non-Governmental Organizations

ODA – Official Development Assistance

OECD – The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

SDGs – Sustainable Development Goals

UN – United Nations

**Abstract**

*Development activities on a regional and global scale have contributed to relations between countries. The capstone project aims to analyze and identify impact of the specific type of development activities, as known as humanitarian aid activities, by Azerbaijan on its bilateral relations with Pakistan.*

*The project revealed that development activities on a global and regional scale via bilateral and multilateral formats are not highly rated due to a lack of available data, although Azerbaijan continues its activities in main directions such as financial progress, education and health, sustainability of the environment, connectivity, and infrastructure with Pakistan. The introduction offers a comprehensive overview of ongoing activities within this field, providing foundational information. The methodology section is structured upon data gathered from primary sources, including interviews, as well as secondary sources. Subsequent chapters delve into the exploration of challenges hindering the promotion of humanitarian activities, encompassing political obstacles, deficiencies in media coverage, and gaps in monitoring practices. The paper recommends various policies and illustrates evaluation of proposed policy alternatives based on five criteria as: efficiency, effectiveness, equity, feasibility, and flexibility. The findings are summarized in the conclusion, along with recommendations for future possibilities.*

**Keywords:** *international development activities, humanitarian aid activities, bilateral relations, monitoring methods, global humanitarian structure, media, influence.*

## CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

The term "international development activities" describes the coordinated efforts, plans, and projects intended to promote the political, social, and economic advancement of developing or less developed nations (Fukuda-Parr, 2011). These initiatives seek to lessen poverty and inequality among the world's poorest communities and countries while also promoting sustainable economic growth, better living circumstances, and improved governance. A wide range of parties are involved in international development, working together to achieve shared development objectives. These parties include governmental organizations, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), international financial institutions, businesses, and local communities (Harman & Williams, 2014). Goals and frameworks established by international organizations like the United Nations (UN) usually serve as the basis for international development initiatives. UN member states use the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), an international set of objectives, targets, and metrics, to structure their political agendas and policies through 2030. The SDGs aim to address global issues such as poverty, inequality, climate change, environmental degradation, peace, and justice (Trent & Schnurr, 2018).

Within the field of international development, there are a number of important focal points, including political stability, good governance, environmental sustainability, social development, and humanitarian assistance (Bandura, 2023). The goal of economic development is to enhance a nation's or region's economic circumstances through policies and initiatives (Bauer, 1959). It entails boosting output, generating employment, encouraging entrepreneurship, and facilitating easier access to financial services and markets. The goal of social development is to enhance people's social well-being, which includes gender equality, access to healthcare and education, a decrease in child mortality,

and better mother health ensuring that the advantages of economic growth are widely distributed throughout the populace requires social development (Trent & Schnurr, 2018). When it comes to sustainability of the environment international development today include initiatives to support renewable energy adoption, conservation of natural resources, sustainable environmental practices, and mitigation and adaptation plans for climate change, as awareness of the effects of climate change grows (Haque, 2000). Political stability, sound governance, promoting political stability, and good governance are essential for sustainable development. This entails defending human rights, upholding the rule of law, combating corruption, and facilitating an inclusive and democratic political process. Even though humanitarian help is separate from development initiatives, there are frequently overlaps between the two, especially in post-natural catastrophe or conflict situations. Its fundamental goal is to deliver assistance as soon as possible in order to preserve human dignity, prevent suffering, and save lives (Leadership Council of the Sustainable Development Solutions Network, 2014). To sum up, it's important to note that there are several initiatives by UN regarding different perspectives of the international development activities which are : Climate Resilience Initiative, launched in 2015, Global Education First Initiative, launched in 2012, Every Woman Every Child, launched in 2010, Global Pulse, launched in 2009 (Trent & Schnurr, 2018).

Within the field of international relations, bilateral diplomacy and international development initiatives are related ideas that have a significant impact on one another.

The term "bilateral diplomacy" describes the direct communication between two sovereign nations (Thompson & Verdier, 2014). It includes a broad variety of discussions

and interactions between governments with the goal of advancing the interests of each country. Economic, political, security, cultural, and environmental topics can all be discussed during these exchanges. Conventionally, diplomatic posts, consulates, high commissioners, and embassies serve as conventional channels for bilateral diplomacy, promoting dialogue and understanding between governments. Moreover, Thompson and Verdier (2014) mentioned that establishing bilateral relations are important in terms of FDIs as developing countries tend to demand more control on their decision-making processes due to the changing nature of political regimes and state interests, thus, bilateral cooperation and diplomacy provides them relatively more incentives in doing so.

Bilateral diplomacy is greatly impacted by international development initiatives because they provide economic possibilities, improve leverage, fortify relationships, foster stability, project soft power, and encourage international communication. As a reflection of the interwoven nature of development and diplomacy in the international arena, these initiatives not only support the strategic interests of the donor country in the framework of soft power but also the development aspirations of the receiving nation (Gulrajani et al., 2020). The paper shall focus specifically on the humanitarian aid activities to discover their effects on bilateral diplomacy.

Building stronger bilateral connections is one effect of humanitarian aid activities on bilateral diplomacy. Stronger diplomatic relationships are typically fostered by humanitarian aid initiatives, which operate as a bridge between donor and recipient nations. The donor nation may foster goodwill, respect, and understanding with the receiving nation by addressing its humanitarian difficulties; this will establish the groundwork for a stronger

bilateral collaboration. Significant development aid donors can increase their political clout and sway over recipient nations. In bilateral talks, the donor nation may be able to further its political, security, or economic objectives by using this leverage (Vaïsse, 2007).

Humanitarian aid initiatives that focus on eradicating poverty and advancing economic empowerment, healthcare, education, and social and political stability in the receiving nation can help to advance regional stability and security. It is in the best interests of both sides in a bilateral relationship for stable and successful nations to be dependable diplomatic and trade partners (Thompson & Verdier, 2014).

Humanitarian assistance and collaboration are instruments of soft power that enable nations to promote their ideals and exert non-coercive influence elsewhere. Donor countries may boost their reputation and worldwide image by contributing to the improvement of living conditions in developing nations. This will have a beneficial effect on all their bilateral connections. Moreover, continual communication and collaboration between donor and recipient nations are necessary for encouraging discourse and fostering confidence in order to carry out humanitarian aid activities (VanRooyen, 2013).

In Azerbaijan, humanitarian aid initiatives have aided in the expansion of influence over the beneficiary countries such as Middle East, NAM and OIC countries. As a result of these successes, Azerbaijan now enjoys improved bilateral ties and is able to play a more significant position on the regional and international stages (Asgarov, 2024). The interaction between diplomacy and development highlights the many effects of global aid and collaboration.

Azerbaijan's soft power-based foreign policy goes beyond merely influencing other countries through financial aid. It includes educational initiatives, humanitarian relief, cultural exchanges, and assistance for sustainable development projects (Eminov, 2002). Azerbaijan hopes to achieve two key goals of soft power through these channels: first, to improve relations and mutual understanding with its partner nations; second, to cultivate a favorable image (Hashimova, 2017).

The intricate relationship between Azerbaijan's humanitarian aid and its bilateral diplomacy, particularly with Pakistan, highlights a strategic use of soft power in international relations. This reflects a broader trend where nations utilize development assistance not just as an altruistic endeavor, but also as a tool to foster deeper diplomatic ties, enhance their global standing, and even secure tangible political and economic benefits (Cordies, 2014). Moreover, Pakistan does not recognize Armenia since it has occupied Nagorno-Karabakh. Such a strategy can yield significant dividends, particularly in regions that are geopolitically significant or in need of substantial development aid. Moreover, Azerbaijan's approach underscores the evolving nature of diplomacy, where traditional statecraft is increasingly supplemented by efforts to address global challenges such as poverty, disaster relief, and sustainable development (Asgarov, 2024).

However, the dynamics between humanitarian aid and bilateral relations are complex and multifaceted. While humanitarian efforts can certainly improve bilateral ties, they also pose risks of being perceived as motivated by self-interest or as mechanisms of influence rather than genuine acts of solidarity (Bermeo, 2010). This highlights the importance of ensuring that humanitarian aid is delivered in a manner that is transparent,

needs-based, and respectful of the sovereignty and dignity of the receiving nations. Furthermore, it underscores the critical need for a multilateral approach to humanitarian aid, one that involves international organizations and adheres to globally accepted principles and standards. This not only enhances the legitimacy and effectiveness of aid but also ensures that it contributes positively to international diplomacy and global stability (Bermeo, 2010).

In the case of Azerbaijan, it provided 49.2 U.S dollars of Official Development Assistance (ODA) in 2022 which shows the dedication of the country to the development activities globally to pursue the well-being of the recipient countries (OECD, 2023). According to the OECD (2023), allocation of ODA from Azerbaijan to top 10 recipients are mainly in the Middle East, South and Central Asia and Europe, such as Iran, Lebanon, Pakistan and Albania.

Azerbaijan's focus on soft power and its humanitarian endeavors presents an opportunity to lead by example in the creation of a new framework for international development and diplomacy. Such a framework would prioritize collaboration over competition and mutual benefit over unilateral advantage. It would also emphasize the importance of long-term sustainability and the need to address root causes of poverty, instability, and underdevelopment. By championing such principles, Azerbaijan can not only strengthen its relationships with countries like Pakistan but also contribute to the shaping of a more equitable and stable international order (Asgarov, 2024).

In this context, the role of organizations like the Azerbaijan International Development Agency (AIDA) becomes crucial. AIDA can serve as a conduit for Azerbaijan's international development efforts, ensuring that they are aligned with both

the nation's foreign policy objectives and the broader goals of global development and humanitarian aid. This necessitates a strategic approach to aid delivery, one that leverages Azerbaijan's strengths and addresses the most urgent needs of partner countries while fostering an environment of cooperation and mutual respect.

As the capstone project moves forward, it will be essential to conduct a thorough analysis of the impacts of Azerbaijan's humanitarian aid on its bilateral relations, with a particular focus on sustainability and the promotion of a positive global image. This involves not only a review of past and ongoing initiatives but also a forward-looking perspective that considers emerging challenges and opportunities. The research should seek to identify best practices, lessons learned, and innovative approaches that can enhance the effectiveness and impact of Azerbaijan's humanitarian efforts. According to the FTS Record for Humanitarian Aid, Azerbaijan has shown a rapid development increasing from 0.5 million U.S dollars in 2019 to 7.1 million U.S dollars in 2023. This data indicates the willingness of contribution to humanitarian assistance from Azerbaijan in the global arena (UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, 2024).

Azerbaijan's humanitarian aid activities hold the potential to significantly influence its bilateral relations, particularly with nations like Pakistan that have directly benefited from such assistance. By approaching this endeavor with a commitment to transparency, collaboration, and respect for international norms, Azerbaijan can strengthen its position in the region, forge lasting partnerships, and contribute meaningfully to the global efforts toward sustainable development and peace (Cordies, 2014). The findings and recommendations of this capstone project could provide valuable insights for policymakers, shaping the future direction of Azerbaijan's foreign aid strategy and its role

in the complex dynamics of international relations and development diplomacy. In the middle of August 2022, Azerbaijan proved the fortitude of the bilateral ties once again, showing its eagerness to help in the wake of the severe flooding in Pakistan. On the other hand, this philanthropic act created a new chapter in the bilateral relationship between Azerbaijan and Pakistan, as Azerbaijan was acknowledged to have helped the people of Pakistan in a timely manner (AzerNews, 2022). The aid provided by Azerbaijan was not only directed at the problems that resulted from the disastrous floods, but it also underlined the unbreakable bonds and affection between the two countries. Facing the consequences of a catastrophe, Pakistan, in turn, appreciated the diplomatic support from Azerbaijan, which demonstrated the power of the friendship and cooperation between the states that led to the development of trust and amicability. This event manifests Azerbaijan's willingness to provide international solidarity and humanitarian assistance that ultimately helps the country improve relations with Pakistan.

Several critical inquiries and areas of debate surround the focus of this capstone project that require investigation. A primary concern is to make sure that Azerbaijan adheres to global united humanitarian aid activities not only in bilateral levels but also in multilateral level to promote unbiasedness and objectiveness of such actions on political sphere of influence, explore methods for assessing and improving the sustainability and long-term results, and devise strategies for promoting humanitarian aid activities done by Azerbaijan and creating an effective image in the global world. Additionally, the project aims to develop policy options aimed at addressing the existing challenges within this framework.

Although various policies have been formulated to further evoke a profound effect on bilateral relations with Pakistan through humanitarian aid activities perspective, such measures are not adequate to provide long-term results. Moreover, the insufficiency of the data indicates the need for further research to enhance the investigations into how to address the challenges. The importance in investigating this topic is to identify key causes and possible mechanisms for overcoming hardships. Altogether, this capstone project aims to evaluate the impact of Azerbaijan's humanitarian aid activities on bilateral relations with Pakistan and offer pertinent suggestions and solutions to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of the Republic of Azerbaijan, and specifically AIDA.

This research project seeks to address and tackle the issue of Azerbaijan's ineffective management of humanitarian aid activities to Pakistan to produce long-term impact on bilateral diplomacy.

## 1.1. Methodology

Qualitative research method was used in the capstone project. This method was chosen for deep searching and identifying and collecting data in a broader sense and in many areas in a common direction. For the qualitative data collection, interviews were held with officials from related departments of the AIDA and The Institute for Development and Diplomacy at ADA University as primary source. The following interview questions were posed to all interviewees:

1. What is humanitarian aid for you and is it an effective tool for bilateral diplomacy?
2. What do you consider about the Azerbaijan's humanitarian aids globally, especially, in the case of Pakistan?
3. How do you consider about the impact of such activities on Azerbaijan-Pakistan bilateral relations?
4. What are the challenges in implementation and evaluation of the impacts of humanitarian aid activities?
5. What is your advice and recommendations on how to increase the impact of such actions to develop relations?

The first interview was conducted with the Deputy Director of AIDA, and it was conducted via WEBEX due to the availability of the interviewee and the duration was about 20 minutes. During the interview, 5 questions were directed to the representative, sparking a comprehensive discussion about Azerbaijan's international development activities in the context of humanitarian aid and its implications for bilateral relations with recipient countries. Then, another interview was conducted with the Programme Director of AIDA from the relevant department, to gather sufficient data in order to deeply analyze the problem specifically focusing on Azerbaijan-Pakistan relations. It was conducted via WEBEX due to the availability of the interviewee and the duration was about 20 minutes. The last interview was conducted with the Director of The Institute for Development and

Diplomacy at ADA University, to clarify the key takeaways about the possible future policies to enhance the long-term impacts of Azerbaijan's humanitarian aid to Pakistan. It was conducted via Google Meet due to the availability of the interviewee and the duration was about 10 minutes.

At the same time, statistical information from websites of international organizations, ministries, foundations, news outlets, and articles of experts was used as secondary sources for collecting information and necessary data.

The limitation of the study is a lack of available data regarding Azerbaijan and Pakistan, as the capstone project focuses on humanitarian aid activities by Azerbaijan for the Pakistan and its impact on bilateral relations. Because the project focuses on the bilateral level rather than the global scope, and research has limitations on the internal data, therefore, creating difficulty in finding related materials on this topic.

The policy paper is organized into five chapters that examine various aspects of policy issues. The first chapter serves as an introduction, providing a theoretical and conceptual understanding of the topic, its description, overall background, statistical information, declaration of purpose, methodology for data collection, and a roadmap explaining the overall layout of the policy paper. The second chapter defines problems by using available materials on the topics, their connections, practices, and policies by other states. The third chapter provides policy options taking into account of the areas of humanitarian aid activities by Azerbaijan to Pakistan, and its impacts on bilateral relations. The fourth chapter clarifies the evaluation of policy alternatives from the perspectives of

effectiveness, efficiency, equity, feasibility, and flexibility. In conclusion, the primary findings within the context of the selected policy option are presented, followed by comprehensive concluding remarks.

## CHAPTER 2. PROBLEM DESCRIPTION

Assessing the effect of Azerbaijan's humanitarian contribution on bilateral relations with Pakistan is crucial for the following reasons: On the one hand, it helps realize the potential of humanitarian aid as a means of diplomacy and developing and sustaining international relationships. Appreciating how this sort of aid shapes perceptions, trust, and cooperation will enable diplomats to refine their policies and aid measures. Moreover, analyzing the influence on bilateral relations is an excellent tool for knowing the strong points of the partnership between Azerbaijan and Pakistan and any difficulties. Through an analysis of the impacts of humanitarian aid, policymakers can improve outcomes by making their interventions more collaborative. Besides that, finding the circumstances of bilateral relations in humanitarian assistance is essential to the more extensive discussion of international relations theory and practice. The role of assessing the effects on bilateral relations also constitutes an essential foundation for the overall evaluation of the influence of humanitarian activities on the creation of diplomatic ties in the wider world (De Lauri, 2020).

The aim of this chapter is an objective assessment of the role of Azerbaijan's humanitarian assistance activities in bilateral cooperation between Azerbaijan and Pakistan. Through such field research, the sociologists gathered data on various aspects of the relationship, such as the political dimension, social-economic impact, and public interaction, which aimed at constructing a holistic understanding of how humanitarian aid works as a tool for shaping bilateral ties between the two countries (Murat, 2020). By means of a systematic approach that combines three paragraphs, accordingly, will lead to the knowledge of the causality of the Azerbaijan-Pakistan interactions, including both the

factors that unleash their development and those that restrain it. In this section of the analysis, not only we will exemplify humanitarian aid as a vital diplomatic tool, but we will also address the wide-ranging consequences of international relations theory and practice. By specifying the purposes of some sections and their outlines at the beginning of the chapter, it has become clear why the chapter has chosen to explore this in fields that are multi-directional.

### *2.1. Insufficiency in Addressing Shared Humanitarian Challenges between Azerbaijan and Pakistan in the Global Context.*

The political facet of aid provided by Azerbaijan to Pakistan is vital for impressions in both countries for increased understanding of solidarity and partnership established among the two countries (AzerNews, 2024). This way, the regional dynamics and the bilateral relations between the two countries are all influenced. Siddikoglu and Sađırođlu (2023) argue that analyzing responses to refugee influxes can explain how the aid offered during these events helps shape people's political views and perceptions of each other. The delivery of Azerbaijani assistance to Pakistan during the present circumstances, which include enduring challenges such as natural disasters, economic hardships, or health crises, is directed not only towards addressing the urgent humanitarian requirements of the affected population but also towards nurturing a sense of mutual camaraderie and goodwill between the two nations. Given these adversities, Azerbaijani aid is pivotal in easing immediate difficulties and enhancing diplomatic

relations by showcasing solidarity and providing assistance during Pakistan's challenging period (AzerNews, 2023). The author (Milliken, 2021) mentions Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Pakistan's geopolitical triangle, including Azerbaijan as a humanitarian aid giver, where Azerbaijan's aid could strengthen this triangle relationship. Through its crisis-time aid assistance, Azerbaijan demonstrates Pakistan's political power as a reliable partner and ally in favor. Moreover, as studied by Milliken in 2021, geopolitical processes occurring in the region indicate that humanitarian aid plays a significant role in the development of alliances and in the isolation of external participants.

Also considered is how the geopolitical landscape and regional politics give Azerbaijani humanitarian aid meaning. The mutually constitutive relationship between Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Pakistan, exemplified by Milliken (2021), illustrates that political interests are not in isolation from strategic aims. The humanitarian assistance provided by Azerbaijan not only meets the immediate humanitarian needs but also strengthens the heart-warming familiar story of brotherhood among Muslim nations (Milliken, 2021). This reflection perfectly matches the Pakistani people's view of it, which represents the idea of a unison of Muslims. It's crucial to note that Heydar Aliyev Foundation completed the program of hepatitis B vaccination and the open-heart surgery in collaboration with "Kulsum International" at "Edhi Home," "Women and Children Hospital" at Lakki Marwat and free treatment at "Akbar Care Institute for Cerebral Palsy" in Peshawar in 2012 (AZERTAC, 2012). Besides this, these humanitarian aid acts from Azerbaijan are not only intended to help mitigate the sufferings of people but also increase the political perceptions and reinforce diplomatic ties of people between the two countries not only within the regional context but also beyond.

Humanitarian help by Azerbaijan to Pakistan has brought about significant shifts in their bilateral ties and geopolitical dynamics, illustrating the maybe moving trend of their bilateral relations and regional geopolitics. It manifests how the aid practices contribute to the degree of vulnerability or the quality of resilience in catastrophic regions such as Baltistan and Pakistan, as discussed by Awais and Ingrid (2021). The reaction of Islamabad to humanitarian aid offered by Baku, which was documented by AzerNews (2022), manifested the importance of such aid, which shows up in difficulties and negotiations. Therefore, the ties between the two countries can be strengthened with it. Khalilov (2022) mentions the solid strategic partnership between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, which has progressed by joining hands in rendering humanitarian aid. It has resulted in improving partnership and cooperation in times of need (Neset et al., 2023). It demonstrates a significant change in diplomatic strategies, prioritizing humanitarian assistance to ensure long-lasting bilateral relationships and helping create regional stability.

Moreover, the geopolitics of human aid from, to, and among Azerbaijan and Pakistan, respectively, exceeds bilateral interactions and significantly affects regional alliances and dynamics. Talking about the triangular relationship between Azerbaijan, Turkey, and Pakistan mentioned in the Milliken (2021) article is politically and strategically aligned by shared interests. Humanitarian aid is the potential factor to further the alliances. Consequently, the result of Pakistan and Turkey's refugee case responses, shown by Siddikoglu and Sađirođlu (2023), raises questions about the interaction between diplomatic strategies in solving humanitarian issues and international politics (Neset et al., 2023). This implies the development of consensus guided towards jointness and shared

concerns, leading to forming and strengthening diplomatic alliances that collaboratively fight common challenges.

AIDA is a key component of Azerbaijan's foreign development strategy and soft power (United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs, 2020). Diverse in nature, its activities focus on sectors that are essential to sustainable development, such as disaster assistance, healthcare, education, and agricultural development. The initiatives that AIDA has undertaken in Asia, Africa, and Latin America demonstrate Azerbaijan's dedication to advancing the global development agenda. Additionally, via the operations of AIDA, Azerbaijan may interact bilaterally with a number of nations, fortifying diplomatic ties and creating new opportunities for collaboration. As a result of its successful use of soft power to increase its influence and promote global collaborations, Azerbaijan has been able to strengthen diplomatic ties through its development assistance, particularly with nations with whom it shares strategic objectives (From personal communication, 18<sup>th</sup> of April 2024).

The influence of AIDA's international development initiatives goes beyond improving Azerbaijan's standing abroad and positioning it as a proactive and kind member of the global community. This favorable perception makes diplomatic relations easier and gives Azerbaijan more opportunities in international fora and talks (From personal communication, 18<sup>th</sup> of April 2024). Moreover, AIDA's emphasis on sustainable development is in line with the global agenda, including the SDGs of the UN, presenting Azerbaijan as a responsible global player dedicated to tackling global issues. Azerbaijan's voice is amplified on the world scene, and it can now more significantly influence the discourse on international development thanks to this alignment. The cornerstone of

Azerbaijan's foreign policy approach is its international development program, which is led by AIDA and uses soft power to strengthen bilateral diplomacy (From personal communication, 18<sup>th</sup> of April 2024). By means of its many development programs, Azerbaijan not only helps developing and less-developed nations achieve sustainable development but also deliberately raises its own profile internationally and expands its diplomatic reach. As a result, AIDA is essential to achieving Azerbaijan's foreign policy goals and exemplifies the complex relationship that exists in the modern world between diplomatic influence and global growth.

According to the recent data, Azerbaijan's humanitarian aid to Pakistan accounted 7 million U.S dollars from 2010 (AzerNews, 2023). However, as humanitarian aid is intended to provide short-term benefits, more programs are needed to enhance the long-term and sustainable development.

Moreover, the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) is an important component of Azerbaijan's international humanitarian initiatives. After taking over as NAM chairmanship in 2019 for a three-year term, Azerbaijan made a concerted effort to raise its diplomatic image and support the needs of developing nations. Being the NAM chairman gave Azerbaijan the opportunity to emphasize the importance of solidarity, respect for one another, and the idea of not interfering in another country's domestic issues in its foreign policy, which in turn affected its diplomatic interactions. Azerbaijan's standing as a crucial bridge between the Global South and the West was enhanced by this stance, which also strengthened its ties with member nations (Guliyeva, 2020). Furthermore, the goal of Azerbaijan's foreign humanitarian aid initiatives has been to project the country as an

accountable and proactive player in the world community. Azerbaijan has worked to leave a legacy of collaboration and charity by launching projects to enhance infrastructure, healthcare, and education in developing and less-developed nations. Additionally, Azerbaijan engages in multilateral fora like the NAM, where it actively participates, in addition to bilateral diplomacy. By using these venues, Azerbaijan is able to pursue both its development objectives and diplomatic ties with a wider range of nations, demonstrating the interaction between bilateral and multilateral diplomacy. Even if they are humanitarian endeavors, they also have a strategic component, with the goal of strengthening bilateral relations and projecting a positive image abroad.

Although Azerbaijan is achieving significant progress, it has few difficulties and restrictions in the practicalizes of its international development plan. Political instability, military conflict and resource scarcity are successive issues hampering Azerbaijan's attempt to boost bilateral diplomacy and international cooperation (From personal communication, 11<sup>st</sup> of May 2024).

It is important to note that India that currently has a conflict with Pakistan over Kashmir, is trying to build more connections with Armenia through rivalry background, therefore, leading Azerbaijan's political policies in a more complex way (The Diplomat, 2024). In such a condition, while Azerbaijan is trying to be a middle ground and moderator to be able to sustain bilateral political relations in a multilateral environment, it makes it harder to achieve shared goals and ambitions with Pakistan even in the context of humanitarian aid activities (From personal communication, 11<sup>st</sup> of May 2024). Therefore, the region's geopolitical conflicts and divergent partnerships can negatively influence a

standard development orientation (Mozaffari & Barry, 2022). To handle these issues, Azerbaijan is supposed to apply strategic methods that will boost dialogue, cooperation, and the settlement of conflicts. By solving foundational problems and consulting with central players, Azerbaijan may create synergetic effects in the field of foreign aid and thus promote regional peace and growth.

## *2.2. Lack of Public Awareness of Pakistanis on the Significance of Humanitarian Activities and Insufficient Media Coverage of Azerbaijan's Humanitarian Aid Initiatives to Pakistan within the Context of Soft Power.*

On the basis of research, the huge impact of media coverage defined as the increase the importance and emergency level of humanitarian aid (Scott, Bunce & Wright, 2021). It was widely known that media influences the distribution of the governments in their donor's policy and assessments of need of recipient states.

The purpose of Azerbaijani modernization is achieved using cultural exchange programs, educational initiatives, and a public diplomacy approach to interact with foreign communities and promote cross-cultural awareness (Ercan, 2020). These campaigns include hosting various cultural events, exchanging knowledge, and promoting cultural institutions abroad. Providing chances for individual people to face each other and have a dialogue, Azerbaijan gains the opportunity to have its soft power. It adds positive impressions of the country worldwide.

Cultural diplomacy is essential globally, so internationals see Azerbaijan as a country with a strong economy and an astonishing land of culture, prosperity, and traditions. Through presenting its cultural contributions to the arts and sciences, as well as an overview of its cultural heritage and traditions to an international audience, the soft power of Azerbaijan will be exaggerated, and international understanding and communication will become deeper (Egamberdiyev & Turgunbayev, 2023). Cultural diplomacy towards publicity of the positive image of Azerbaijan, away from any negative stereotypes and distortions, can also be the goal of this type of diplomacy; therefore, it positively reflects Azerbaijan on the global stage.

Another important part of its foreign development initiatives is funding humanitarian programs and promoting Azerbaijani culture overseas. Azerbaijan takes part in international humanitarian aid programs, supports Azerbaijani diaspora populations, and participates in cultural exchanges.

Cultural exchange programs between Azerbaijan and Pakistan are the key to the fruitful establishment of bilateral relations between the two countries and broadening the web of ties between the people. Simon Niazi (2022) portrays the role of culture as one of the pivotal elements in orchestrating Pakistan-Azerbaijan bonds. These programs are made up of different ventures like cultural fairs, art exhibitions, academic exchanges, and courses in foreign languages designed to encourage relations between people and help them learn more about each other's cultural heritage (Niazi, 2022). Through helping organize interaction and dialogue among the people from Azerbaijan and Pakistan, cultural exchange programs create mutual trust, effective cultural exchange, and public identity. Additionally,

such initiatives could serve as roadmaps for preserving and celebrating the cultures of both countries, with their rich traditions and heritage, giving people from different countries an appreciation of culture and workshops in the various fields.

By implementing soft power via humanitarian aid, Azerbaijan has appropriately used the instruments that influence the opinions of people in Pakistan and established friendly relations with this country. Mammadov, 2022 states that soft power has been used as a tool in Azerbaijan's foreign policy, with the tourism industry as the main emphasis area. Besides ameliorating urgent humanitarian concerns in Pakistan, Azerbaijan's humanitarianism advances its reputation as a humane and trustworthy actor in the global arena. Azerbaijan undoubtedly increases its soft power and appeal by mobilizing its assets to comfort and mitigate the needs of low-income neighborhoods and bringing the threat into abeyance through timely humanitarian aid (Mammadov, 2022). Besides, the cultural inheritance and shared values between Pakistan and Azerbaijan, highlighted through humanitarian assistance, generate trust and develop friendships that eventually open doors to elevate bilateral relations and partnerships on a strategic level in the future.

The impact of Azerbaijan's aid on Pakistan's public opinion is vital regarding bilateral relations since its diagnosis indicates their relations. In her research paper titled "Putting Relations of Pakistan with Azerbaijan in the Context of the 20th Century", Khan (2021) sheds light on the narrative of people toward Azerbaijan. The Azerbaijani humanitarian aid to Pakistan is likely impacted by factors like their history, culture, and geopolitician considerations. News coverage in the media and press statements by Pakistani officials praising Azerbaijan's contributions will help nurture a good image of the role played by Azerbaijan in the events among the people of Pakistan (Niazi, 2022). Furthermore, suppose

the interests and values of Azerbaijan align with those of Pakistan, as Khan (2021) explained. In that case, people's positive attitude towards Azerbaijan's humanitarian operations in the country will continue to rise. It is essential to reveal the public perception of Azerbaijan's aid efforts to recognize how aid is used in advancing bilateral relations and building goodwill between the two states.

Media contributes to the survival of the bilateral affair between Azerbaijan and Pakistan by informing public opinion and influencing their relationship. As argued by Khan (2021), the current political relationship between Pakistan and Azerbaijan in the 21st century is greatly influenced by the media discourse, thus making it quite visible that the understanding and cooperation between the two countries are being fostered. Media attention to Azerbaijan's assistance program in Pakistan shows how people can see confirmed the favorable image of Azerbaijan and consolidate the relations between the countries (Grigoryan & Rzayev, 2019). By tackling the humanitarian assistance provided by the Azerbaijanis and its positive live results for the group of Pakistanis, the media may have done a favor in spreading trust and mutual admiration between both countries. In addition, the media coverage that focuses on shared values and cultural similarities between Azerbaijan and Pakistan, supported by the research conducted by Khan (2021), also helps to sharpen the perception of positive thinking, and make them develop the bilateral relationship.

However, the mediating effect of media coverage on public opinion and the bilateral connection is far more complicated than it appears to be, and external factors or historical incidents also influence this situation. Grigoryan and Rzayev (2019) explain that media covering the Karabakh conflict has already made Azerbaijan's position unclear

through neighboring countries in the historical arena. On the negative side, compelled by the media narratives about the dispute, there will be misapprehensions and antagonism; public opinion and bilateral relations will likely be affected. Accordingly, media organizations must consider ethical journalism and present unbiased coverage, facilitating discussion and dialogue instead of separating and uniting the two countries (Grigoryan & Rzayev, 2019). In assisting the objective and truthful coverage of the issues deemed necessary by the parties involved, the media can perform the role of mediator and promoter of the Azerbaijan's humanitarian aid assistance to Pakistan that solidifies bilateral relations and contributes to the region's peace and stability.

### *2.3. Lack of Monitoring and Assessment in Humanitarian Aid Activities of Azerbaijan in Pakistan.*

Pakistan remains ridden with socioeconomic problems, and the ongoing political instability is equally responsible. As Bhowmick (2024) stresses, the nation struggles with economic hindrances such as inflation, unemployment, and fiscal impasse. Political turmoil and problems with governance make a difficult situation even more unmanageable, impeding the deployment of efficacious policies and the pursuit of economic reforms. Furthermore, prosperity is also marked by income inequality, poverty, and insufficient access to services like healthcare and education. Likewise, the World Bank (2023) stresses the need to deal with these challenges to foster inclusive and

sustainable development growth. Despite attempts to improve the economy by providing jobs and social welfare services, millions still live in deprivation even after the efforts to raise living standards and grow the economy (World Bank, 2023). Therefore, Pakistan's social and economic situation is of great importance. At the same time, the result of the interaction with external factors, including development aid, is evaluated, and the best approaches are chosen to face the urgent socioeconomic issues.

Azerbaijan's humanitarian aid is of great importance for solving multiple socioeconomic issues in Pakistan because various authors have previously mentioned it. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2020) explains that international development cooperation is crucial for countries facing hard economic and political times like Pakistan. Bhowmick (2024) brings out Pakistan's pervasive economic problems from the perspective of political turbulence. External aid, implies the author, is worth against the effect of these problems on the country's stability. Azerbaijan humanitarian aid is the solution to the prominent socioeconomic problems of poverty, inequality, and the accessibility to essential services. Through the support of aid programs in the fields of disaster relief, healthcare, education, and infrastructure development, Azerbaijan creates conditions for immediate problem-solving (Bhowmick, 2024). It strengthens the country's socioeconomic capability to repel external shocks. The World Bank (2023) also identifies the critical role of external support for the cause of inclusive growth and development in Pakistan. Through development aid, Azerbaijan assists Pakistan in building up the means to fight socioeconomic problems and create infrastructure for sustainable growth. This way, Azerbaijan helps Pakistan achieve a better life for its people.

However, the viability and influence of the humanitarian development aids carried out by Azerbaijan are still among the main topics for discussion among the public. Even though these charities have paid billions of dollars to their donors, there needs to be more research and statistical data proving their efficacy and long-term effects. The need for sound measurement systems is also a challenge, as the processes of assessing the impact and sustainability of Azerbaijani humanitarian aid projects are further impeded. Additionally, the limited duration of most assistance programs involves problems of uncertainties concerning the prospect of direct donations and undermining their firmness. This could mean that their contribution is not significant in the long run. Moreover, functional complications add to the actual challenges in implementing and managing the development programs, which may hamper their efficiency level and coverage.

An integrated assessment of various development efforts in Azerbaijan, including their appropriate lines of action for displaying hard and soft power via the broader political geography and economic goals, poses the key issue. The assessment of humanitarian aid and bilateral relationships between donor and recipient countries becomes an important matter. Nevertheless, it is one of the areas which still needs to be researched within the ongoing research. Moreover, the dearth of transparency rules and information around Azerbaijan's development efforts further proves why transparency and institutionalized accountability measures should be reinforced. The framework of transparency and accountability is two of the main expected outcomes of new ownership of development work in the 1990s (Carothers and Brechenmacher, 2014). It takes a combined effort of plugging gaps in the information and instruction, getting effective monitoring, and fostering

cooperation and collaboration among the relevant stakeholders to respond to these challenges.

This factor emphasizes the great importance of the humanitarian aid of Azerbaijan, as well as the lack of monitoring and assessment to tackle socio-economic issues, yield positive perceptions from the private sector, and improve bilateral relationships. On the one hand, provision of humanitarian aid is one matter and another factor to be examined is the longevity of the influence of targeted economic policies and other factors like bilateral, regional and multilateral geopolitics. The viability of such projects and the means to establish durable cooperation schemes is inadequate to address such important activities. Furthermore, the monitoring groups are not existent to endeavor to promote humanitarian aid as the fundamental mechanisms to boost relations between Azerbaijan and Pakistan considering interchange principles, understanding, and collaboration in the secretariat of affairs between countries can tighten bilateral relations. In addition, regular dialogue and cooperation on topics of common interest are critical to earning the desired collaborative and sustainable partnership among the two countries.

From transitioning from an aid recipient to a donor country, Azerbaijan has achieved a resembling accomplishment, but at the same time, it has also been confronted with underlying issues and complexities. The monitoring slack, sustainability consideration, and project handling are the significant issues in serving the Azerbaijani humanitarian aid activities with the Pakistan for more effectiveness and impact.

## CHAPTER 3. POLICY OPTIONS

Since the previous chapters have discussed problems encountered in the humanitarian aid sector, this chapter outlines policy recommendations meant to tackle these issues meaningfully. Solutions for each situation and innovative policy options are offered to accelerate progress and promote permanent global impact, including Pakistan.

### *3.1. Establishment of Comprehensive Global Humanitarian Policy Strategy between Azerbaijan and Pakistan.*

Establishment of Comprehensive Global Humanitarian Policy Strategy between Azerbaijan and Pakistan could serve as a platform to strengthen Azerbaijan's diplomatic ties with Pakistan by promoting collaborative responses to mutual challenges in the region. The prominent feature of humanitarian conflicts is a strong demand for an internationally integrated political reaction that outruns the national limits. Nevertheless, the existence of a single action strategy towards these world contagions was marred by political differences that worsened national divergent interests. The difference between large, prosperous countries and the rest of the world is bridged (Liao, 2023). A more unified and responsive global community becomes a reality when collaborative policy measures under global governance are implemented to distribute the effort and resources between nations. Developing a Global Humanitarian Policy Framework is one of the most critical strategies,

focusing on democratizing the international system. This model will be the fundamental tool for cooperation, guaranteeing that all rescue efforts through humans converge in the same direction to ensure success and adhere to universally accepted standards and protocols. Such a scheme shall encompass comprehensive procedures to resolve conflicts; hence, the countries will have the appropriate means of managing disputes before they escalate into bigger ones. Additionally, it should build a resource share system so that the priority will be to quickly provide the essential materials and funds to those in deep need.

The structure can create a situation and platform for improving the levels of humanitarian action in the countries. At the same time, it can increase the speed of action in delivering humanitarian aid directly without wasting time. Within the structure, possible limits and obstacles can be eliminated. Mutual base cooperation and collaboration between countries can show their contributions in all aspects of humanitarian activities as well as development activities. The relations among countries can move to a new level and create a new platform for future perspectives. The sharing of practices and resources among countries via structure can define the potential of the state for internal and external development in its policies. The delivery and acceptance of materials such as food, water, shelters, and emergency tools can be more systematic and well-coordinated within the activities of the structure. Common response training, exchange, and capacity-building programs not only improve the basic and professional skills of the staff but can also teach them to adapt to the area, cultural diversity, etc. The capacity-building program can be held within the education part of the structure, which is implemented for all ages, genders, and citizens to increase awareness and response skills for common action (From personal communication, 18<sup>th</sup> of April 2024).

The UN, NAM and other international organizations are essential in this situation. With its global leadership role and authority, the UN can help improve negotiations and draft conclusions so that the agreement will be adopted by countries and effectively implemented. This way, the framework can unify the entire process of crisis management responses, thereby making the UN react in one voice during humanitarian emergencies. Apart from simplifying the relief systems, this architecture will also help establish solid global governance structures, often called upon to respond to crises jointly and impeccably (Milliken & Krause, 2002). Besides the existing international framework, it is imperative to include the local specificities inherent in humanitarian crises by forming regional response teams. These coalitions, formed as regional pacts, would carry operational responsibilities under the roof of the global framework while having the incentives to solve their specific crises, which are contextualized to the geography and culture. Teamwork regional partnerships devote the teams to running fast so new ways can be implemented and the local emergencies are responded to more effectively. We can use the width of resources available in Regional Response Teams to their best advantage as they can help us with the needed knowledge and abilities during the crucial initial stages of the crisis response. These teams can trim the operations level communications and implement policy actions, a shortcoming of global centrally directed response, which is often superficial to regional nuances. Furthermore, regional teams can serve as early reaction forces, undertaking confinement responsibilities and providing immediate relief and stabilization until decisions for additional international support are taken.

One of the examples from the world could be noted as the Grand Bargain agreement. The Grand Bargain is a unique collaborative effort that unites local and

international non-governmental organizations (NGOs), donors, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, and United Nations (UN) agencies that was launched at the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016 (European Commission, 2023). Its aimed is to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of humanitarian action by fostering structured cooperation among these stakeholders between 2016-2021. The Grand Bargain 2.0 was launched for 2023-2026 to address humanitarian activities focusing specifically on the political field. Additionally, it suggested creating National Reference Groups (NRGs) led by local and national entities to facilitate funding access and offer increased assistance to local responders. The European Commission (2023) mentioned that this initiative currently has 68 signatories and is effective in overcoming challenges.

Based on the above-mentioned facts, the Establishment of Comprehensive Global Humanitarian Policy Strategy between Azerbaijan and Pakistan will help to include many parties and will decrease any threat of political hurdles raised by the strong bilateral ties of Azerbaijan and Pakistan to tackle one united goal: humanitarian assistance. Given the complex political landscape in the region, a bilateral strategy is deemed more suitable for this research than a regional approach.

### *3.2. Launch of a Bilateral Media Collaboration Initiative between Azerbaijan and Pakistan.*

The Launch of a Bilateral Media Collaboration Initiative between Azerbaijan and Pakistan could significantly improve the public image of Azerbaijan in Pakistan by highlighting Azerbaijan's commitment to humanitarian support and its positive impact on Pakistani communities. The image or the view of humanitarian assistance as perceived by the public and viewed by the media extensively encompasses the extent of the effectiveness and the rapid relations of the donor and recipient countries. The media also play a significant role in determining the success of aid initiatives. A hostile media narrative can either whip up the public or be a disincentive to the programs (Liao, 2023). Consequently, creating and implementing the policies that boost the media space around and society's perception of humanitarian efforts is essential since it allows appreciation through soft power and helps create a positive international image. The use of all tools and features of media can show its contributions to public relations and raise awareness in terms of the activities of the state in humanitarian policies. Mutual exchange of information and practices among regional, local, and global media channels can contribute to common improvement and quality of work.

Launch of a Bilateral Media Collaboration Initiative between Azerbaijan and Pakistan would serve as a first step towards improving media coverage of humanitarian aid, is a network that joins all the media organizations as one unit to reach the audience on a significant scale. This initiative will establish critical partnerships with media networks worldwide to create a media narrative with broader and in-depth coverage of humanitarian efforts. This initiative can effectuate the process of direct cooperation with the media by letting its reports go beyond the mere news feed headlines and move into the realm of thorough investigations and narratives of the successes of these initiatives. The manner of

implementation is to persuade media partners not only to work together to reproduce good news from global humanitarian cooperation but also to cover positive stories and outcomes. Displaying this, for example, depicts how help has been demonstrated that pity in crisis zones can change the public view and increase support for these initiatives or even more (Liao, 2023). In addition to informing the public, it plays a significant role in initiating a plot that bolsters international aid to be regarded as essential and influential. Besides, this attention enables nations to foster more excellent soft power status as they are compassionate and mature in fulfilling such critical global issues.

Public campaigns aimed at the masses should be a necessary addition on the other side of the media partnership effort. These campaigns should be held with governments and NGOs. They should be concerned with employees' understanding of humanitarian aid programs' aims, methods, and outcomes (Liao, 2023). These campaigns will get more people's attention due to the fusion of traditional and digital media and various outlets such as social media, which can help the information easily be understood and shared with the communities. The campaigns could put forth different mediums such as infographics, podcast documentaries, interactive live webinars, and live feeds from the sites for aid to show the complexities and the logistics of delivering aid and the concrete benefits that the populations in affected areas get from the aid (Milliken & Krause, 2002). This is done with educational efforts, which make it possible to demystify the processes behind humanitarian assistance and will thus make it more relatable and supported by the public. Also, there can be campaigns to refute any misleading or dishonest information that creates the perception of how the aid works, its result, and why it is necessary.

Moreover, while some news regarding the degree of need in humanitarian aid to some countries are highly indicated by the news outlets, others are simply “forgotten” due to the interests of the parties (Geneva Centre of Humanitarian Studies, 2022). The portrayal of humanitarian activities in the media plays a critical role in raising awareness on a global scale. However, diverging interests between humanitarian media and state-controlled media often create distinct realms for humanitarian media coverage (Girardet et al., 2002). Therefore Girardet et al. (2002) highlights the importance of skilled media workers in a collaborative environment to address the humanitarian challenges and to raise awareness with the degree and use of aids to tackle the difficulties.

As for instance from the world practice, it is crucial to note that media plays a big role in representation and country image through humanitarian aid. Azerbaijan was the first nation to dispatch a search and rescue team following Turkey's declaration of a fourth-level alert, which called for international aid in response to the earthquake zone (Azerbaijan Becomes First Country to Send Search and Rescue Team, 2023). According to UTWM (2023), Azerbaijani teams, comprising 899 personnel and 8 search and rescue dogs, conducted operations in Kahramanmaraş. Furthermore, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan reported that from the first day of the earthquake until February 17, Azerbaijan provided humanitarian aid to Turkey via 15 planes and 350 trucks. Additionally, state institutions, private companies, and individuals contributed a total of 21 million 367 thousand Manat (236 million 667 thousand TL) in financial assistance. Azerbaijani municipalities also played a significant role by organizing aid campaigns and delivering the collected supplies to Turkey (Azerbaijan Becomes First Country to Send Search and Rescue Team, 2023).

Therefore, based on the above-mentioned facts, Launch of a Bilateral Media Collaboration Initiative between Azerbaijan and Pakistan will help to include the exchange of knowledge between diverse media outlets and will increase the awareness in the global arena by strong representation of humanitarian aid activities of Azerbaijan to Pakistan.

### *3.3. Establishment of Monitoring and Assessment Group to evaluate Humanitarian Aid Activities provided by Azerbaijan to Pakistan.*

Establishment of Monitoring and Assessment Group to evaluate Humanitarian Aid Activities provided by Azerbaijan to Pakistan would boost up the transparency, responsibility, and joint measures between the countries in the global context. By instituting robust monitoring tools and independent audit bodies, Azerbaijan can demonstrate transparency and effectiveness in its aid efforts, bolstering trust and cooperation in its bilateral relations with Pakistan. An efficient monitoring and analysis process should be a priority for ensuring the credibility and efficacy of the aid operations. Through these processes, organizations ensure that aid is delivered as close to the recipients as possible, of high quality, and effectively. Two key policy options are proposed to strengthen these aspects: the development of standard monitoring tools and independent bodies to audit. This strategy aims to improve the global humanitarian operations' probity, responsibility, and responsiveness to meet global challenges, including those in Pakistan.

The first measure to improve the oversight of humanitarian activities is to make intuitive and standardized monitoring tools in prevalent use worldwide. These methods are critical for irreplaceable system performance regarding aid efforts, logistics control, and delivery to those needing dire help. The standardized toolset by the organs offering aid to people will play a key role in gathering, analyzing, and exerting critical data more efficiently. Such monitoring tools should possess the power to grant the obtention of real-time data, from the logistical challenges to the active results of the aid given. Timely data is precious because it permits just-in-time adjustment if adverse changes emerge during the implementation process or inefficiency increases (Milliken & Krause, 2002). Consequently, it helps make the activity more effective. Add to this the systems that make monitoring accountability possible—probably with systems that allow for tracking by all sides - donors, implementing organizations, and even beneficiaries, whenever possible. Similarly, the standardization of these controls offers a basis for better replication and suitability with other projects and regions. Thus, organizations can share success stories and use similar methods for successful companies. It facilitates a culture of constant improvement and the adoption of results-driven and data-driven thinking across the humanitarian sector. Beyond the conventional means, a reliable verification mechanism with an impartial oversight committee is also needed to bring justness and a line of responsibility to humanitarian actions. Such organizations will be assigned the duty of checking the projects and programs periodically, trying to estimate their efficiency financially and technically simultaneously. At the international level, these governmental institutions will allow them to give fair, impartial reviews on the aid programs, thus assisting the process by ensuring that corruption rumors and mismanagement are not there.

The purpose of such an autonomy and various institutions would be different. They not only meet the application of international standards and donor requirements but also assess aid effectiveness and impact. Such evaluations are instrumental in pointing out efficient approaches and problematic areas to local and global actors by providing feedback recommendations to enhance practice. Additionally, the reports from these audits can inform and prompt stakeholders who will reward agencies with responsible use of funds and achievement of humanitarian goals with trust and support of aid activities. The audit agencies should have the mandate of giving suggestions for advancements and, at times, instigating changes to ensure that humanitarian works strictly comply with the highest standards of accountability and effectiveness. Their reports must be open to publicizing. This will create transparency around stakeholders' responsibility. An essential step towards improving the way humanitarian aid is delivered is to introduce these two mechanisms – the development of standardized tools for monitoring and the existence of independent audit bodies. As such, these measures not only accomplish the direct goal of humanitarian aid but also enhance international public approval and appreciation of this paramount endeavor (Milliken & Krause, 2002).

Referring to the world practice regarding this example, it is of a high importance to note Joint Monitoring of Humanitarian Aid in the Asia-Pacific Region between United States and Japan (FACT SHEET: Japan Official Visit with State Dinner to the United States, n.d.). In the framework of the strategy, US and Japan puts joint measures to recognize the global challenges related to humanitarian perspectives and try to enhance the commitments. Moreover, examples regarding the joint monitoring could be defined as their total contribution to Ukraine adds up to \$12.1 billion. Furthermore, both of the countries have

provided humanitarian support to Gaza, respectively, Japan providing approximately \$107 million and the United States providing \$180 million since October 7, 2023 (FACT SHEET: Japan Official Visit with State Dinner to the United States, n.d.). Joint Monitoring enables countries to enhance data collection and fortify the measures to be implemented in global contexts by systematically evaluating and identifying critical situations.

Therefore, based on the above-mentioned facts, Establishment of Monitoring and Assessment Group to evaluate Humanitarian Aid Activities provided by Azerbaijan to Pakistan will facilitate knowledge exchange among data providers by joint measures and enhance global visibility through robust statistical evidence of Azerbaijan's humanitarian aid activities in Pakistan.

The present chapter pinpoints three signified measures to overcome the listed problems in addressing impact of Azerbaijan's the worldwide humanitarian aid system, especially on bilateral relations with Pakistan. By adopting this plan, parties can cooperate for better output, enhance public opinion, and guarantee that humanitarian assistance is delivered without waste. Apart from that, these programs would improve the system of accountability and transparency across all different echelons of humanitarian activity, which ensures the support of the public and the efficiency and sufficiency of international relationships (From personal communication, 18<sup>th</sup> of April 2024). Moreover, the systematic use of exogenous equipment (the ones that the native organization does not make) and independent inspections are likely to improve the adaptability of humanitarian agencies and make them react faster to fresh issues. The fourth chapter of the essay will assess the exact policy options using criteria to evaluate their success rate and practicability.

## CHAPTER 4: EVALUATION OF POLICY ALTERNATIVES

In Chapter 3, we suggested developing a strategy of three options that are expected to improve the efficacy of Azerbaijan's humanitarian aid activities and reinforce Azerbaijan's bilateral relations with Pakistan. The evaluation of policy options in the chapter assesses them against five standards, Effectiveness, Efficiency, Equity, Feasibility, and Flexibility, to determine their success and practicality of implementation. Through a thorough examination, we intend to present a complete assessment report that will, in turn, assist by enlightenment in developing the most outstanding and beneficial strategies to help achieve optimum outcomes.

Regarding the first policy option, the *Establishment of Comprehensive Global Humanitarian Policy Strategy between Azerbaijan and Pakistan*, to a significant extent, it is intended to promote unity among countries with the specific purpose of providing a support system at the political level among these countries, particularly between Azerbaijan and Pakistan. Such a structure would form a basis for standards for resolving conflict, sharing resources, and a coordinated response environment, enhancing the overall prevention of humanitarian crises (Barakat & Milton, 2020). The effectiveness of policy shows itself in the fact that the structure can educate people on how to respond to a humanitarian crisis via educational programs and training. Capacity-building programs for the staff can prepare them for academically high-level education. Practices based on real data or real situations will help improve staff mental and physical health. This framework seeks to put efficiency first, and its efforts aim to contribute to the reduction of overlaps where duplication of

efforts is observed through collaboration, resulting in a better cost-benefit ratio as aid becomes more efficient since resources are pooled for maximum impact. Increasing cooperation and common actions leads to a decrease in waste and the development of quick responses as a means of delivering materials, sharing, and exchanging information, which is one of the main points of the recommended policy. In all probabilistic cases, simplifying procedures will reduce bureaucracy and improve the speed and quality of aid delivery.

This policy model will be significant in equity and involve sharing responsibilities and resources among all parties. This will be achieved by establishing a council to create and monitor the policies to ensure that each nation is equally involved in the process without being overburdened. In terms of equity, while the structure defines the common platform, states will benefit from common approaches and ways for development. The common platform also created benefits for states to make new relations or develop their relations with other countries. The relations among countries will define the preparedness and response to humanitarian issues, which is another factor for feasibility. Regarding feasibility, political will is the primary thing that needs to be considered when creating such a system. Countries' existing political relationships with each other would also greatly influence the feasibility of such a task. It would necessitate strong determination and collaboration between all stakeholders, including governmental institutions and non-governmental groups, to integrate into the current systems (Kobierecka & Kobierecki, 2021). The exchange of data, practices, and joint programs will lead to an increase in the capacity of states to take humanitarian actions, which can be an example of flexibility. In terms of flexibility, the policy is capable. It can adapt to the nature of humanitarian crises and can evolve along with a changing political landscape, which is one of the most critical

factors, as the situations might differ from one crisis to the next as well as between countries, namely Azerbaijan and Pakistan, where affected countries might have needs that are different from one another.

Regarding the second policy option, the *Launch of a Bilateral Media Collaboration Initiative between Azerbaijan and Pakistan*, the international media collaboration initiative allows news outlets to share resources and work together to cover a particular story and benefit audiences across the globe. This Media Collaboration Initiative for International Humanitarian Aid seeks to improve the public perception of the two countries' humanitarian efforts, focusing on media dissemination that is equal and inclusive. The effectiveness is measured by the initiative's ability to shift public opinion toward humanitarian activities, increasing the level of awareness and support by working strategically through storytelling to represent successful interventions (Babister, 2019). In terms of efficiency, this measure-up policy option covers judicious resource use, which should be directed to the partnerships with the most critical media outlets and the deployment of highly targeted campaigns using digital platforms for maximum reach and effects (Barakat & Milton, 2020). Through collaboration with many media platforms, the initiative also involves active efforts to bring equity and fairness to how humanitarian stories are told. It ensures that diverse voices and perspectives are heard, which is done in turn, preventing bias that could come into play and trick people into making a good decision.

The project's feasibility depends on the organization's ability to build and maintain successful collaboration and interaction with media networks in different networks through the various platforms they employ. This is proving to be very difficult because there are

many different working styles and aims among various media organizations worldwide. Organizational sustainability relies on acting as diplomatic liaisons, negotiating, and realigning the priorities of these institutions with the poorest population to be effective; therefore, being an expert communicator and diplomatic tactician is paramount (Babister, 2019). Flexibility, meanwhile, is an essential element, for the initiative would have to be ready for adjustments to address the geopolitical events, which may alter the coverage of media and the depiction of the public's attention. Besides that, it is fundamentally important to be dynamic across technological changes and the trends in media consumption, which will entail that the systems of engagement be responsive to the changes, which will help them remain effective and engage the public in their activity diversely.

The third policy option: *Establishment of Monitoring and Assessment Group to evaluate Humanitarian Aid Activities provided by Azerbaijan to Pakistan*, aims to help establish the efficiency of monitoring and assessment in the humanitarian aid operations between Azerbaijan and Pakistan. In terms of effectiveness, the goal of the methods here is for knowledge tools to produce accurate, up-to-date data within a short period that help the authorities in their decision processes so that donated aid reaches the right hands at the right time. Cost and energy intensity are critical issues in this proposal, and they involve a large capital outlay in developing technology and training (Kobierecka & Kobierecki, 2021). However, there are long-term gains in terms of efficiency thanks to the reduction of waste, and the less mistargeted budget could go a long way to pay for this in a few years. Equity is the top emphasis for this initiative because the tools must be broadly usable for all pieces of projects, without any regard for the location or scale, and all projects should have the same high standards of transparency and accountability.

The feasibility here is the condition of implementing the standardized monitoring tools: the technological capacity and infrastructure in the particular regions. It involves access to skilled staff who can manage and maintain these gadgets and technological infrastructures to uphold their performance. Dispersion hinders can occur if there are areas with limited connectivity or other resources such as training materials. The monitoring tools' flexibilities matter profoundly because they should be adjustable to different field conditions and be modifiable or amendable according to the developing demands of humanitarian operations (Kobierecka & Kobierecki, 2021). Such action aims to ensure that the assistance tools will be effective in stable and unstable conditions. Equity should be a central concern as the tools must be designed to be universally applicable across all operations, regardless of location or scale, to ensure that all projects adhere to the same high standards of transparency and accountability. These changes may occur due to a natural disaster, displacement of people, and the prediction, adjustment, or even switching of the objectives of humanitarian aid.

The evaluations confirm that each policy initiative has value; however, the Global Humanitarian Policy Framework has been the most accepted by both countries, especially in having a pivotal role in strengthening the bilateral relations between Azerbaijan and Pakistan. One can single out two crucial elements of this activity: "Media Collaboration Initiative" aims to improve public opinion, whereas "Monitoring Tools" will boost operational transparency. Therefore, combining the abovementioned tactics will bring about more efficient Azerbaijan humanitarian aid and well-mannered bilateral relations with Pakistan.

Below table summarizes all the findings and shows the evaluation of each policy option based on 5 criteria: Effectiveness, Efficiency, Equity, Feasibility and Flexibility.

Solutions/Criteria	Effectiveness	Efficiency	Equity	Feasibility	Flexibility
1) Establishment of Comprehensive Global Humanitarian Policy Strategy between Azerbaijan and Pakistan	+	+	+	+	+
2) Launch of a Bilateral Media Collaboration Initiative between Azerbaijan and Pakistan	+	-	+	+	+
3) Establishment of Monitoring and Assessment Group to evaluate	+	+	+	+	+

Humanitarian Aid Activities provided by Azerbaijan to Pakistan					
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To summarize, in Chapter 3, 3 policy options are proposed to address the challenges related to political dynamics, media representation, and monitoring and assessment associated with Azerbaijan's humanitarian aid activities to Pakistan and their impact on bilateral relations. Those policies are the following: Establishment of Comprehensive Global Humanitarian Policy Strategy between Azerbaijan and Pakistan; Launch of a Bilateral Media Collaboration Initiative between Azerbaijan and Pakistan; Establishment of Monitoring and Assessment Group to evaluate Humanitarian Aid Activities provided by Azerbaijan to Pakistan. Later, in chapter 4, all proposed policies are evaluated based on 5 criteria which are effectiveness, efficiency, equity, feasibility, and flexibility. Ultimately, two policy alternatives, Establishment of Comprehensive Global Humanitarian Policy Strategy between Azerbaijan and Pakistan, and Establishment of Monitoring and Assessment Group to evaluate Humanitarian Aid Activities provided by Azerbaijan to Pakistan, are chosen as the most recommended ones to implement immediately in the country. The reason is that if all strategic and operational issues are firstly solved in the country through these policies, then dealing with other problems of the field would become easier. Moreover, those options provide direct and practical solutions to enhance the long-term and sustainable results while meeting all required evaluation criteria.

## CHAPTER 5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In conclusion, the intricate interplay between international development activities and bilateral diplomacy underscores the multifaceted role such initiatives play in enhancing political, economic, and social landscapes across the globe. By focusing on the humanitarian aid activities of Azerbaijan, particularly in the context of its relationship with Pakistan, this capstone project has illuminated the profound impact these endeavors have on forging stronger bilateral ties, advancing mutual interests, and promoting regional stability and security. The provision of timely and effective humanitarian assistance by Azerbaijan to Pakistan in the aftermath of the severe flooding not only reaffirms the solid bonds of friendship and cooperation between the two countries but also showcases Azerbaijan's commitment to international solidarity and its willingness to take a proactive role on the global stage. The discussions and analyses presented reaffirm the significance of adopting a multifaceted approach towards humanitarian aid, one that encompasses both bilateral and multilateral engagements to ensure impartiality, effectiveness, and long-term sustainability. This approach is crucial for Azerbaijan in maintaining its reputation as a reliable partner in international development, promoting its soft power, and strengthening its diplomatic relations, particularly with Pakistan. However, the challenges highlighted throughout the project, including the need for unbiased humanitarian actions, the assessment and enhancement of the sustainability of aid activities, and the creation of a positive global image, indicate that there is a considerable path ahead for Azerbaijan. To navigate these challenges effectively, it is imperative for Azerbaijan, through the MFA and AIDA, to engage in comprehensive research, policy formulation, and implementation strategies that are responsive to the changing dynamics of international relations and humanitarian needs. In the capstone project leveraged a qualitative research methodology, incorporating

interviews and a wide array of secondary sources, to delve into Azerbaijan's humanitarian aid activities in Pakistan and their influence on bilateral relations. The project not only contributes to an understanding of the specific case of Azerbaijan-Pakistan relations but also offers insights into the broader implications of humanitarian aid in international diplomacy. This in-depth exploration not only highlights the critical role of Azerbaijan's humanitarian endeavors in its relationship with Pakistan but also contributes valuable perspectives to the discourse on the strategic use of aid in global diplomacy for sustainable results.

The strategic development of two policy options lays the foundation for enhancing the efficacy of Azerbaijan's humanitarian aid efforts while simultaneously strengthening bilateral relations with Pakistan. The first policy, Establishment of Comprehensive Global Humanitarian Policy Strategy between Azerbaijan and Pakistan, emphasizes unity and humanitarian support among countries, particularly between Azerbaijan and Pakistan, aiming for efficient aid distribution and crisis prevention. Its focus on reducing bureaucratic hurdles and pooling resources showcases a path towards more effective and equitable aid delivery. The second policy option, Establishment of Monitoring and Assessment Group to evaluate Humanitarian Aid Activities provided by Azerbaijan to Pakistan, focuses on improving the transparency and accountability of aid operations through technological advancements and consistent evaluation tools. While offering long-term efficiency gains, this option must overcome technological and infrastructural barriers to ensure equitable and flexible implementation across varying operational contexts.

As this project concludes, it behooves policy makers and stakeholders in Azerbaijan to consider the recommendations and insights provided to refine and bolster the country's approach to international development and humanitarian assistance. Doing so will not only aid in solidifying Azerbaijan's bilateral relations with countries like Pakistan but will also affirm its stance as a key player in the pursuit of a more equitable, stable, and prosperous global community. The journey of Azerbaijan's diplomatic engagement, underscored by its humanitarian initiatives, stands as a testament to the power of development aid in bridging divides, fostering understanding, and creating opportunities for peace and shared prosperity.

### **Recommendations**

Based on the analysis of the impact of Azerbaijan's humanitarian aid activities on bilateral diplomacy with Pakistan, to tackle the above-mentioned challenges in this sector, following recommendations should be implemented jointly:

1. Establishment of Comprehensive Global Humanitarian Policy Strategy between Azerbaijan and Pakistan.

The humanitarian and strategic significance of Azerbaijan's humanitarian aid to Pakistan extends beyond mere philanthropy, deepening the bilateral ties between the two countries and influencing regional geopolitical dynamics. The mutual benefits arising from this cooperation highlight the intricate interplay between humanitarian aid, diplomatic strategy, and regional politics. Azerbaijan's endeavors, particularly through its international development arm, AIDA, underscore its commitment to global development goals while simultaneously pursuing its foreign policy objectives. This strategic approach, aligned with

sustainable development objectives and bolstered by participation in multilateral fora, allows Azerbaijan to enhance its diplomatic reach and influence on the global stage. However, challenges such as political instability, military conflicts, and regional geopolitical tensions present obstacles to Azerbaijan's ambitions in terms of policy structure for adhering to the ongoing challenges. Azerbaijan's provision of humanitarian aid to Pakistan is not merely an act of solidarity but a strategic maneuver that reinforces bilateral relations and influences regional geopolitics. By leveraging its developmental initiatives and humanitarian assistance, Azerbaijan aims to position itself as a responsible global player and a proactive contributor to regional peace and stability.

2. Establishment of Monitoring and Assessment Group to evaluate Humanitarian Aid Activities provided by Azerbaijan to Pakistan.

The primary initiative to enhance oversight of humanitarian activities involves implementing intuitive and standardized monitoring tools widely used in the global humanitarian sector. These tools are crucial for optimizing system performance in aid efforts, logistics management, and delivering assistance to those most in need. By standardizing the toolset used by aid organizations, it becomes easier to gather, analyze, and utilize critical data efficiently. Real-time data availability is particularly valuable as it allows for timely adjustments during implementation, improving overall effectiveness. Additionally, implementing systems that enable monitoring accountability, involving donors, implementing organizations, and beneficiaries where possible, enhances transparency and accountability across the humanitarian sector. Standardization

of these controls facilitates replication and adaptation of successful practices across different projects and regions, fostering a culture of continuous improvement and data-driven decision-making. Furthermore, establishing a reliable verification mechanism with an impartial oversight committee is essential to ensure fairness and accountability in humanitarian actions. These oversight bodies play a critical role in periodically evaluating projects and programs for financial and technical efficiency, providing feedback and recommendations for improvement. The ultimate goal of such mechanisms is to meet international standards, enhance aid effectiveness, and build trust among stakeholders. By adopting these, Azerbaijan aims to publicize audit reports, foster transparency, and accountability, and encourage responsible use of funds and achievement of humanitarian goals.

By adopting these recommendations, Azerbaijan can significantly contribute to shaping a more responsive, efficient, and coordinated international humanitarian system, benefiting not only itself and Pakistan but the global community at large and produce an adequate impact on its bilateral diplomacy with Pakistan.

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## APPENDIX

### *INTERVIEW QUESTIONS*

1. What is humanitarian aid for you and is it an effective tool for bilateral diplomacy?
2. What do you consider about the Azerbaijan's humanitarian aids globally, especially, in the case of Pakistan?
3. How do you consider about the impact of such activities on Azerbaijan-Pakistan bilateral relations?
4. What are the challenges in implementation and evaluation of the impacts of humanitarian aid activities?
5. What is your advice and recommendations on how to increase the impact of such actions to develop relations?