



A man moves through the floodwaters in a huge metal dish known locally as a 'karahi'. The dish is used by people in the flood affected province of Sindh to make molasses. Photographed by Donna Fernandes, September 2011.



**CHURCH WORLD SERVICE**  
Pakistan / Afghanistan

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## Editor's Message

Dear Readers:

In this edition of Church World Service-Pakistan/Afghanistan's newsletter, read about communities being empowered to take control over their livelihoods and how CWS-P/A continued to help communities gain access to basic rights including health, education, and food security.

Between September and December, CWS-P/A provided emergency relief to disaster affected communities in Sindh and ensured to uphold its commitment toward international quality standards. Beyond the scope of disaster, intensive work was done to train humanitarians on quality and accountability standards as CWS-P/A also expanded its related services. The 2011 edition of the Sphere handbook is also highlighted in Suggested Reading.

Read about education initiatives from successful school reconstruction to promoting girls' education that are building better educational opportunities for thousands of children. December was a month for health during which CWS-P/A's interventions ranged from emergency mobile health services to awareness of HIV & AIDS.

Thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter. Please send your feedback and suggestions to [commoffice@cwspa.org.pk](mailto:commoffice@cwspa.org.pk)

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## Helping Communities Survive the 2011 Sindh Floods

*September-December*

Immediately following the appeal for international assistance, CWS-P/A initiated its response to the 2011 floods which widely devastated Sindh Province. CWS-P/A was quick to mobilize resources and distributed food, shelter, and nonfood items (NFIs) in the districts of Mirpurkhas, Umerkot, Badin, and Thatta. As of mid-December, CWS-P/A completed its distribution benefiting 52,472 individuals and was operating eight mobile health units and one static health unit. With a network of local partners and existing relationships with the affected communities, CWS-P/A quickly assessed needs and identified the most vulnerable families to receive assistance.

In an area plagued by food insecurity, CWS-P/A's food distribution helped families to not only meet basic food needs but also to meet calorie intake, protein, and fat requirements through food packages designed in accordance with Sphere standards. For many of the families, the food distribution was their only escape from indebtedness as a way of purchasing food to survive. More than 810 metric tons of food was procured, packaged, transported, and distributed. Additionally 3,000 families received NFIs, and 500 families received shelter kits which were also in accordance to Sphere standards.

The mobile health units continue to provide much needed services, health education, and free medicines to some of the most remote areas in rural Sindh. Through this life-saving service, an average of 120 patients receives medical consultations each day. Many of the patients would otherwise not be able to afford or travel long distances to receive the needed care they require through the mobile health units. In Badin District, CWS-P/A continues to provide health services through a community based health center, which was providing healthcare prior to the floods in an area which mainly comprises of a minority Hindu community. The health teams provide a vital source of information and care, particularly for pre and postnatal cases and the prevention of disease through good hygiene practices.

CWS-P/A strongly believes that more than providing relief the way assistance is given matters. The commitment to international standards such as Sphere and Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) is felt within the



communities. CWS-P/A placed significant attention to monitoring distributions and the quality of relief items. It also placed complaint boxes at every distribution point to provide communities a mechanism to express their concerns and have them answered.

While health services continue into 2012, CWS-P/A's emphasis will be on early recovery initiatives. It will help communities overcome the challenges of food insecurity, health, and poverty by providing resources, restoring livelihoods, and building community capacity. It will guide communities to a sustainable recovery and help them realize their potential to reduce risks from future disasters, food insecurity, and other challenges in the area.



### Assisting Afghan Communities Improve Education

*October*

Located in Qarghai District, Afghanistan, Abdul Rahim Zai School has only recently witnessed an increase in the enrollment rates of girls since the school opened nearly a decade ago. Headmaster, Zamir Shah, says, "We have an increase in enrollment of 150 girls, and the process of bringing more girls to schools is ongoing." Zamir Shah acknowledges the active role of the *shura* (religious council) in enhancing enrollment. "The *shura* has purchased between forty to fifty plants and has been improving the school since the last year. Their active involvement is essential, and we have encouraged our students to engage in conversation with them." In further discussion, Zamir Shah shares that the *shura* understands the importance of improving the school because of their coordination with CWS-P/A and its local implementing partner.

As the country faces ongoing price hikes in basic necessities, Zamir Shah says, "Books are expensive and people are poor so it is an easy decision to make. They then do not send their children to schools. The difference is being made through the books and school supplies being provided to students. It is motivating the parents and the children."

In further discussion, Zamir Shah narrated his concerns, "With a total of 1,140 students, we have 22 teachers but only 3 female teachers." While cultural barriers often prevent women from working outside the home, an adverse impact occurs in the education sector.

Consequently, parents opt to keep their daughters at home owing to a lack of female teachers.

Recently and for the first time, CWS-P/A held a five days training on 'Classroom Pedagogical Skills' with 31 teachers including female trainers and social mobilizers from its local partner. Introducing various classroom teaching methodologies encourages teachers to strive for improving the quality of education in their classrooms. The training focused on creating child-centered classrooms, including teaching with low-cost materials and involving family members as part of the learning process.

Through capacity building and awareness, CWS-P/A is helping lay the foundation for greater access to quality education. It will take time, but as communities recognize the value of having female teachers in the classroom and the quality of education being provided improves, Laghman Province will be on a track for higher literacy and social development compared to other parts of the country. In order for this to be achieved, it is essential to address other concerns in the community. A concern expressed by both parents and students is the absence of necessary physical infrastructure. Girls share that their parents fear for their safety as schools lack boundary walls, latrines, and additional classrooms to accommodate female students. As attendance rates continue to rise and more girls have interest in attending schools, it is hoped that additional support can be dedicated to addressing existing community concerns.



## From Training to Audits: Quality and Accountability Services Expand

*November-December*

CWS-P/A continues to offer training, technical support, and other services related to quality and accountability. At the end of 2011, CWS-P/A developed new ways of including Sphere into training so that greater outreach is possible. Additionally, CWS-P/A assumed a responsibility that will help increase accessibility and compliance with the Humanitarian Accountability Partnership standard for organizations throughout Asia. The commitment to quality and accountability was the starting point for CWS-P/A; however, the organization is now making opportunities available to thousands of humanitarian workers throughout Asia, guiding and supporting them to mainstream quality and accountability into their organizations.



CWS-P/A through its commitment to promote quality and accountability during and beyond emergency phases recently held two trainings, 'Sphere Minimum Standards in Monitoring and Evaluation' and 'Using Sphere Minimum Standards Edition - 2011'. Approximately 45 participants attended training in Swat and Islamabad to help build capacities while improving understanding to meet quality and accountability standards in humanitarian work.

With an all-inclusive and participatory approach, the training comprised of presentations, case study analysis, role-plays on disaster and emergency situations, group sharing, and exercises. The participants prepared implementation plans to demonstrate their learning. CWS-P/A assured follow-up support with respect to their implementation plans.

Through a practical exercise of monitoring a health project using the Sphere standards, the participants gained an understanding of how to use the Sphere handbook in monitoring and evaluation activities. Participants saw firsthand that by using the Sphere handbook, recommendations on how to improve the project emerged and acquired an overall knowledge on protection principles and core and minimum standards for a range of humanitarian interventions.

In addition to the aforementioned training, CWS-P/A included a session on Sphere during a workshop on Local Capacities for Peace (LCP). Twenty-four participants took part in this landmark training that was the first LCP workshop to include Sphere. Staff members reported that participants welcomed the inclusion of Sphere and the 2011 edition of the handbook. For some of the participants it was also their first introduction to Sphere.

Since the 2011 edition of the Sphere handbook was launched, CWS-P/A has distributed over 1,300 copies to humanitarians in Pakistan, Afghanistan, and in the Asia Pacific region. The Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) is another

global standard for quality and accountability, which also released a revised version in January 2011. The 2010 HAP Standard in Accountability and Quality Management provides valuable guidance for organizations striving to be accountable to those they serve. Thus far, since the start of May, CWS-P/A distributed 280 HAP Standards. CWS-P/A is also actively facilitating the translations of both revised standards into Urdu, which will be completed in the coming months.

In December, CWS-P/A signed a Memorandum of Understanding with HAP to undertake a pilot of its accreditation process. Presently, four CWS-P/A staff members are undergoing intensive training to become certified HAP auditors, and once these staff members are successful, CWS-P/A will begin offering organizations in Asia new services, including Certification Audits against the 2010 HAP Standard. This collaboration with HAP will allow for the first time hundreds of organizations based in Asia to access HAP Certification at a regional cost and help promote quality and accountability throughout the region.

In the coming months, Strengthening Humanitarian Assistance (SHA) and Humanitarian Accountability and Quality Assurance (HAQA) unit, two internal departments of CWS-P/A, will continue to engage in enhancing accountability and improving the delivery of services across Pakistan and Afghanistan.

## More than just Medicines *October*

In Afghanistan CWS-P/A continues to provide comprehensive health care to communities through curative, preventive, and reproductive health care. This approach is achieving successful results as communities gain access to improved health care while the dedication of health staff members helps in bringing positive change. Since the start of the year, CWS-P/A health staff reached well over 13,000 women through 216 breastfeeding, 288 nutrition, 245 family planning, and 135 mental health sessions.

Communities benefit from health services including mental and dental health care and awareness education on topics including child spacing, nutrition, and hygiene from a range of others. Among the 171 health staff members assisting communities is Dr. Sami Ullah who joined CWS-P/A's Nangahar Laghman Health Program (NLHP), a year ago. The doctor shares his experience of treating a community member, "Said Waheed, a thirty year old man was mentally depressed and consequently was turning aggressive and violent. He would walk about in the market place and start quarrelling with people and his family. He was brought to our health center, and for two months I treated him. The process was not easy, it began with counseling which sometimes would result in Said giving up. With time he gradually got better, and now, he is working as a carpenter through a referral that I provided."



The dedication and commitment of doctors and other health workers positively impacts the lives of marginalized communities in Afghanistan. With regular follow-ups being practiced by communities, the comprehensive health care approach goes beyond providing medicines so that communities can make better choices to improve their social and economic well-being.

Health staff including Dr. Ferozan, Mother and Child Health Coordinator, share that regular follow-ups are being practiced by women and through improved health awareness at the community level. The doctor expresses her concerns about women's health and the frequent choice to have as many as seven children. "With low levels of literacy and limited access to electronic media, the only source is delivering health messages verbally and facilitating talks on health education. Several steps are being taken to build the capacity of health staff and community workers to improve and raise awareness."





### Safeguarding the Rights of the Marginalized

*September*

CWS-P/A continues to uphold its commitment to work for the most marginalized groups by addressing their development needs and promoting their rights. In a collaborative effort with local partners, CWS-P/A is implementing the second phase of its project, Strengthening Democracy: Mainstreaming Marginalized Groups. The project aims to motivate local youth to play a proactive role in promoting tolerance within society. Furthermore, it facilitates the participation of marginalized groups in electoral processes and advocates for their democratic rights. As of September 2011, more than one hundred adolescents and young adults participated in training on interactive theater which they are using to raise awareness on issues in their communities. An additional forty have joined two established youth groups which engage in education and awareness.

A research titled 'Electoral Participation of the Marginalized in Pakistani Politics' is underway. When finalized, the research will provide information on the degree to which marginalized groups participate in democratic processes. The results should be published during the first half of 2012. Although it is already known that participation is extremely low, the statistics and baseline survey will promote decision making at the community and policy levels that enhances marginalized groups' participation.

All in all, CWS-P/A's efforts in encouraging the participation of minority groups in open discussions and democratization is helping create a platform for projecting the voices of marginalized communities.



## **HIV & AIDS: More Information, Less Risk** *December*

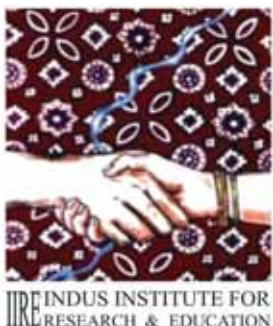
This year's World AIDS Day theme is 'Getting to Zero' — zero new HIV infections, zero discrimination, and zero AIDS related deaths.

Taboos and often the lack of open dialogue related to sexuality inhibit youth in Pakistan from gaining accurate information pertaining to such issues and particularly, HIV & AIDS. Approaches including education programs at all levels and youth friendly services are a step in the right direction. These if taken will help youth to make informed choices about their health and well-being.

CWS-P/A over the years has been working to make information available to community members. Recently, project staff conducted a series of one day workshops in Okara, Sahiwal, and Lahore. Eighty-seven adolescents took part in poster competitions and gained essential information on HIV & AIDS. Participants received information on discrimination and an understanding of the negative impacts of stigmatization against HIV positive people.

The organization frequently holds awareness sessions, trainings, and poster and speech competitions on HIV & AIDS. This helps make the information widely available to youth and encourages open discussions, with social acceptability as an important attribute of the dialogue.

## **Partner's Profile**



### **Indus Institute for Research and Education (IIRE)**

Indus Institute for Research and Education (IIRE) is a non government and not for profit network. The network was formed ten years ago and is engaged in development activities in Sindh, Pakistan. It has a vision for creating a vibrant civil society based on universal values for peaceful coexistence. IIRE works on thematic interventions including: water and food security, institutional development of partners, climate change and disaster risk reduction, and rights based issues.

Along with CWS-P/A and thirteen other partners, IIRE works in sixteen districts in Sindh. Currently, CWS-P/A and IIRE operate a community health center in Badin District. The health center has been providing essential health service to flood survivors displaced from neighboring Thatta District in the 2010 floods and families affected by the recent floods in 2011.

Executive Director, Dominic Stephen shares, "The project has been working well in the rural area of Badin District, and with an average of seventy patients per day the need for such health services is visible."





# Building Back Better Schools

■ By Alison Sneddon

On **October 8, 2005**, an **earthquake** measuring **7.6** on the Richter scale struck northern Pakistan, resulting in the **deaths of around 80,000 people**, injuring more than 300,000 and leaving **3.5 million homeless**.

Following the initial quake, the focal depth of which was an estimated 26 km, a further 2,033 aftershocks, some measuring as high as 6 on the Richter scale, compounded the devastation. Homes, land, livelihoods, and schools were destroyed across the provinces of Gilgit-Baltistan and Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. Given the time of the earthquake, 9 o'clock on a Saturday morning, classrooms were full with students and teachers attending to their lessons. This resulted in not just the loss of school buildings but also the lives of thousands of children and teachers alike. An estimated 19,000 children were killed, most of them due to the collapse of 5,578 school buildings. Around 900 teachers were also killed.

The impact this disaster had on education cannot be overestimated. Together with the severe psychological trauma faced by survivors, the communities were confronted with a considerable loss to their educational infrastructure and resources. The scale of the disaster and the consequential

loss of class time have been detrimental to students in the affected areas.

In situations of such terrible devastation, the importance of education becomes even more pronounced. The re-establishment of schools provides not only the practicalities of classrooms for regular lessons and forums for sharing lessons on present and future risk reduction with community members but also safe spaces to assist with the fundamental psychological support to those suffering from severe trauma.

School classes occupy children and relieve parents, giving them some time away from their responsibility for their children in impossibly harsh environments; they can also provide a comforting sense of structure and return to normalcy, which is crucial for helping a community to cope with such life-changing events. Yet in such a situation, when education becomes increasingly vital to the life of the community, fears





can arise as to the consequences of a return to school. Parents, students, and teachers are afraid of the possibility of another earthquake and the dangers they could face in a school building. Coupling these considerations, CWS-P/A was faced with a multifunctional task, one that would recognize that it is not enough to simply rebuild schools. The organization endeavored to 'build back better' and provide communities with higher quality school buildings than previously existed.

The hard terrain of the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa region caused many difficulties and challenges in the implementation of the project. The hilly roads hampered access to the building sites, often resulting in a reliance on donkeys and jeeps to transport the construction materials, which when coupled with the absence of water and electricity considerably slowed down the process. Seasonal weather created additional obstacles as subsequent landslides postponed construction for six months and the risk of further land erosion forced the relocation of one school, thus, adding a further two months to the timeline as the team sought to acquire an appropriate plot of land.

In spite of these challenges, the project was able to meet its initial targets; the construction of ten schools, each containing two classrooms along with hygiene and safety facilities was completed. In total, 700 students in seven union councils benefited. The schools were designed to facilitate education from two perspectives: safety and effective learning. They were constructed with the natural environment in mind and followed the recommendations of surveyors to limit the impact of future natural disasters on the buildings. Features such as reinforced concrete cement frames and run-off water drains strengthen the school structures and enhance their safety.

The learning environment was also a major consideration for CWS-P/A, for which the result was clean, bright, spacious child-centered facilities that encourage children to attend school. Not only are they able to learn in a safe environment, but in a pleasant one, with new playground facilities in addition to improved classrooms. Confidence in safety is compounded with interest and enjoyment in learning, enhancing the appeal

of education to parents, teachers and, most importantly, the children. In order to fully assure communities of their safety, disaster risk reduction (DRR) trainings have educated residents on courses of action to take in the event of another emergency and enabling participation in the protection of their community.

Re-establishing education is crucial to healing a community in the aftermath of such a destructive event. Nonetheless, it is not simply the school structures that must be rebuilt. Teachers must be trained, quality curricula must be implemented, and equality in education must be supported in order for the education system to have a meaningful, lasting, and sustainable impact. CWS-P/A acknowledges that a school is more than a building; it is a fundamental part of any community and requires full participation from everyone involved.



During the months between September and December, students in these schools also received school kits. The kits contained school supplies which more than being an appreciated gesture makes a difference in their ability to stay in school. School kits distribution has been a part of CWS-P/A's strategy in assisting families with reducing the economic cost of sending their children to schools. Together with rebuilding these schools, CWS-P/A has laid the foundation that helps in restoring education for these communities.





## Addressing **Food Insecurity** in Afghanistan

■ *By Donna Fernandes*

Affected by war and drought, Laghman in Afghanistan is one of the country's most severely affected provinces.

Livestock and agriculture are the main sources of income for the primarily agrarian communities. However, this livelihood has suffered significant infrastructural damage caused during decades of war and drought, resulting in widespread food insecurity. A lack of resources, unfavorable weather conditions, and limited farming expertise worsens the outlook for farming families. This coupled with the lack of marketing knowledge and techniques and poor coordination among farmers places them in an extremely vulnerable position.





Acknowledging the requirements of food insufficient farming communities in Afghanistan, CWS-P/A, in partnership with the Presbyterian World Service & Development (PWS&D) and through the generous funding support of the Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGB), initiated its Laghman Food Security Project aiming to alleviate the food shortages of close to 20,000 individuals in thirty villages. Across the four districts of Qarghai, Alingar, Alishang, and Dowlat Shah, 1,200 farmers and 360 females will benefit through improved agricultural inputs, trainings, and income generating interventions.

In June 2011, a baseline survey was conducted to identify families in need of livelihood assistance. The assessment indicated that widow-headed families within these districts had partial ownership of agricultural land. They leased their land to members within the agrarian community.

As of December 2011, the project has successfully completed the distribution of agricultural inputs in the districts of Qarghai, Alinshang, and Dowlat Shah. Farmers in these districts received sixty metric tons of certified seeds, sixty metric tons of urea fertilizer, and sixty metric tons of Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP) fertilizer. Through the intervention 240 women will receive livestock, feeding packages, and training on animal husbandry. An additional 120 women will receive poultry training and poultry kits. While creating new opportunities and economically empowering women in Afghanistan, the project also aims to improve families' nutrition, food security, and health status.

"I do not have money to buy certified wheat seeds, and it is not easily available," said Noor-ul-Haq, a forty-nine year old farmer in Qarghai District. "These are high yield seeds, and this helps us." The project's interventions also include the rehabilitation of 5,900 acres (2,950 geribs) of agricultural land and the improvements of karees and canals.

Noor-ul-Haq added, "We practice canal irrigation, and this year we have not had much of water either. We worry about the shortage of water." Since early 2000s, Afghanistan faced consecutive years of drought which affected its rural population by depriving them from potable water. Owing to this natural calamity crop diversity was reduced by 71% and productivity by over 50%.

Crop management training will help farmers maximize the benefits from the improved seeds fertilizers, and tool kits. Through this comprehensive approach, small-scale farmers will gain an enhanced capacity for managing their livelihood. As the project continues, approximately 4,600 animals will be vaccinated and sixty basic veterinary workers (BVWs) will receive training. Interventions that help protect livestock animals and train residents for their care have proven invaluable for communities struggling with food insecurity and where unfavorable climate or a breakout of animal disease is a constant threat to community livelihood and survival.

Along with other selected farmers from Qarghai District, Noor-ul-Haq understands the importance of assisting farmers like himself through sustainable initiatives like the seeds bank. He shared, "I know that 90% of production will be consumed within my house; I might be able to sell the remaining 10% in the market." Describing his hope to be able to contribute to the seeds bank, he said, "I also know I have to allocate half of next year's cultivation to another farmer to increase this kind of yield."

With rising food prices in Laghman Province and frequently occurring droughts, farmers including Noor-ul-Haq expressed an appreciation for this support. CWS-P/A with support from CFGB through PWS&D will continue to help farming communities in Laghman find sustainable solutions to immediate livelihood challenges and for longer term food security.

# Suggested Reading

## The Sphere Handbook 2011 Edition

### The Sphere Project

#### *Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response*

The Sphere Handbook 2011 edition (English version) was launched in April 2011. The new edition promotes standards to the global community to respond to the plight of people affected by disasters. It provides a Humanitarian Charter, protection principles, and the inclusion of core and minimum standards for various life-saving humanitarian sectors. These include water supply, sanitation, and hygiene promotion; food security and nutrition; shelter, settlement, and non-food items; and health action.

CWS-P/A is coordinating the translation of the Sphere handbook into Urdu, which will become available in 2012.



## CWS-P/A's Mission Statement

CWS-P/A as an ecumenical organization will struggle for a community based on social justice, regardless of class, religion, gender, and culture by assisting marginalized communities in an accountable manner to achieve economic prosperity and improve human and social capital through participatory endeavor, which liberates people and enhances their capacities to take control of their lives.

## HOT Topic

### Community Participation

CWS-P/A defines participation as 'an informed and empowered involvement of beneficiaries during all stages of the project cycle to the greatest extent possible in a given context.' Moreover community participation takes into account the fact that local people are central to humanitarian and development response rather than passive recipients. The organization recognizes three approaches towards participation. These include: instrumental approach, collaborative approach, and supportive approach.

While community participation enables local communities to engage and take ownership of development initiatives, it also promotes sustainability. Furthermore, CWS-P/A's practice of community participation is essential to its commitment toward quality and accountability. Participation is also an integral part of Sphere and Humanitarian Accountability Partnership standards. Therefore, without participation, accountability at the community level would be undermined by its absence.

Within the organization, CWS-P/A has also devised a checklist to ensure community participation at various phases of a project cycle. The checklist also helps to maintain records when projects are either directly implemented or indirectly through a local partner. CWS-P/A continues to work on projects which focus on community participation through its thematic interventions ranging from disaster response to health to education.

<http://www.cwspa.org/resources/community-participation>

Words  
of  
Wisdom

"Knowledge must continually be renewed by ceaseless effort, if it is not to be lost. It resembles a statue of marble which stands in the desert and is continually threatened with burial by the shifting sand. The hands of service must ever be at work, in order that the marble continue to lastingly shine in the sun. To these serving hands mine shall also belong."

*Albert Einstein (1879-1950)*