



A displaced boy waits while his family receives a food package at CWS-P/A's distribution point in Landi Arbab, Peshawar District. Photographed by Shahzad A. Fayyaz, June 2012.

Newsletter

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Dear Readers,

This edition of the Church World Service-Pakistan/Afghanistan newsletter highlights the achievements that are possible through education, good health, and capacity building.

CWS-P/A continues its work with communities, youth, and civil society to foster an environment of awareness and knowledge that leads to sustainable development and solutions to local challenges. The news section highlights some of these recent activities.

Read about how one woman and her children benefited from mobile health services in her rural Sindh community and how CWS-P/A responded to the needs of displaced families in Northern Pakistan. Explore the achievements and the gaps in girls' education in Afghanistan from the views of a headmaster.

As always, thank you for reading our newsletter. Send feedback and suggestions to commoffice@cwspa.org.pk

The CWS - P/A team

Option for Pro-Poor Taxation Policy in Pakistan



Muhammad Raza with Mansoor Raza

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The 'Option for Pro-Poor Taxation Policy in Pakistan' research, aims to identify pro-poor tax policy measures, while keeping in view the practical aspects of the complex social and economic system in Pakistan. Furthermore, the research includes recommendations that should be considered by policy-makers to improve tax revenue. It recognizes that the biggest challenge for policymakers is to increase the number of taxpayers rather than rely on regressive taxes to meet the short-term revenue targets. As the research analyzes the tax system in Pakistan to eliminate distortions, it also emphasizes that the recommendations to generate revenue can help eradicate chronic hunger and poverty and would reflect good governance.

The research has been undertaken by CWS-P/A and can be downloaded from: <http://www.cwspa.org/resources/research-and-surveys>

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 enhances their capacities to take control of their lives.

EDITORIAL TEAM : Kelli Siddiqui, Donna Fernandes, Hira Sajjad, Shahzad Ahmad, & Shama Mall

PHOTO CREDITS : Donna Fernandes, Shahzad Ahmad, Junaid Ahmed, Muhammad Nabeel, Lubna Hussain and CWS-P/A Staff

Caring for HIV&AIDS

May



Following CWS-P/A's second youth awareness camp on HIV&AIDS in May, the organization's project staff held a training of trainers (ToT) workshop in Murree. Approximately thirty participants attended the workshop from all provinces across Pakistan. More significantly, six participants at the workshop were HIV positive and their participation in the workshop was viewed as essential to clear misconceptions, social stigma, and myths about HIV&AIDS.

CWS-P/A's project team member, Nabeel shares, "I wanted to bring more participants living with HIV to the camp. In the past, there have been fewer and having more participants means helping others to curb discrimination. I contacted a previous participant living with HIV and working for people with HIV&AIDS; she gave me a contact and it worked out."

Among them was Babar who shared, "In 2004 I was abroad in Oman. My labor card was to be issued and as part of the procedure my medical examination was done. Next day I was asked to give blood for retesting. I was anxious as to why they were retesting my blood. My employer asked me to go back when he told me that I was HIV positive. I cannot say that I was a pious person. I had made some mistakes and now faced the consequences. I came back to Pakistan and did not say anything to anyone. My brother-in-law is a curious person, and he found out about me and announced

it within the family. He instructed everyone to boycott me. I was isolated in a room and became a skeleton. The hospital refused to admit me and so I was eventually admitted in Ghulab Devi Hospital. They, too, kept me in isolation.

I got tuberculosis and suffered from a heart attack. I was discharged and sent back home. Then my younger brother-in-law introduced me to Nasir (also living with HIV who volunteers to help others with HIV). I remember I went to him while taking the support of two men. Now if you see me, I am a healthy person. I am HIV positive, but Nasir showed me the way of a new life."

During the five-day session, participants gained information on core values about dignity, choices, equality, sexual rights, sexuality, sexually transmitted diseases (STIs), and the prevalence of HIV&AIDS. A more comprehensive study included the social and biological risks of transmission of HIV&AIDS for women, and the topics were imparted through various exercises. These included group work, quizzes, case studies, and role-plays among the learning and sharing exercises.

Through these events CWS-P/A continues to promote open discussion with groups across Pakistan. Moreover, the ToTs build the capacities of participants to further spread the much needed life-saving information. All in all, these activities contribute toward making discussions more acceptable within society and ensuring that people with HIV receive the right amount of care, guidance, and attention.



Curriculum Expansion for Schools in Sindh

May

CWS-P/A's Political and Civic Education Program conducted an orientation workshop in Sindh for its newly compiled workbook and manuals on peace and human rights. The books are a revised version of the organization's peace curriculum and as many as 1,135 books have been distributed in twenty-four schools across Karachi, Mirprukhas, Kot Ghulam Mohammad, Khipro, Tando Allah Yar, and Hyderabad.

Additionally, the books contain information on peace and human rights, state and politics, child rights, disaster preparedness, quality education, and elections and ballots. While the teachers who participated in the orientation workshop expressed that the sessions were informative and well-organized, they also added that such opportunities were lacking for teachers in Sindh.

As the project continues, CWS-P/A plans to introduce the books in schools located in Laghman Province, Afghanistan. As many as 500 workbooks will be printed in the Pashto language and teachers and students will receive orientation in October 2012.

Through imparting integrated skills to both teachers and students, the project helps to develop civil society in

Pakistan and Afghanistan. To further ensure its long-term sustainability, CWS-P/A plans to include senior teachers and principals in its orientation sessions. CWS-P/A believes that after acquiring knowledge, they will share the learning with less experienced teachers. Furthermore, students will be encouraged to think critically and



develop opinions on social and democratic issues. In May, the project also held two summer camps, where over 140 participants benefited, for students and teachers in Gujranwala (Punjab) and Mirprukhas (Sindh). In addition, CWS-P/A's mobile knowledge resource center (MKRC) was integrated with the summer camp. With two consecutive years of flooding in Sindh, the integrated approach was seen as an essential mechanism through which to equip students with disaster risk reduction education. The inclusion of MKRC, cultural activities, poster paintings, and talent shows truly made it a memorable, educational experience for the students.

increase confidence and respect among community members and curbed violence by promoting peace.

Based on a well conducted identification process, three existing refugee committees and elders from the host community participated in the selection of community members. CWS-P/A's female health supervisor (FHC) working with the MHP was responsible for the establishment of women's committees which selected female community members. The women's committees

Vocational Training Helps Families Improve Livelihoods

May

CWS-P/A has worked for over thirty years to bring essential health services to Afghan refugees in Mansehra District. These health services operate under the Mansehra Health Program (MHP) and have been the only accessible source of primary healthcare for these communities. This year, MHP continues to provide primary healthcare including preventive and curative services and community health education in Ichrian and Khaki Camps. In addition, the health services also focus on maternal and child health in Barari Camp.

To effectively improve the lives of communities in Mansehra District, CWS-P/A first began operating a skills training center for refugee and host communities in 2008. While the training opportunities provided households with regular employment, it also helped



significantly prioritized widows and those affected by gender-based violence to qualify for selection.

Between 2010 and 2012, CWS-P/A through its Construction Trade Training and Skills Development Program (CTT & SDP) trained as many as 600 males and females from both refugee and host communities. A success score of 85% in exams affiliated with the government trade testing board was achieved by male graduates and 82% by female graduates. Furthermore, a post impact survey of the project revealed that 310

male graduates out of 480 increased their household income by nearly 40%. Among female graduates, 98 out of 120 graduates increased their household income by nearly 30%.

During summer 2012, CWS-P/A began skills training in Mansehra for 225 Afghan men and women and 75 men and women from the host community. Based on a survey assessing which skills are most in demand, women were enrolled in tailoring that focuses *Continues on page 15...*

Interactive Learning Improves the Classroom

May

Twenty-eight students and six teachers participated in a transformational learning and development (TL&D) camp that helped improve teacher and student interaction and more specifically, on interaction without fear. Additionally, participants acquired information on learning with fun, building communication skills, enhancing confidence, and exchanging ideas with a freedom of expression. The six days at the camp also taught participants awareness on health, hygiene, first aid, disaster preparedness, child rights, peace education, and composing and developing books to build creative writing skills.

A similar training camp was held in April this year for female students in Qarghai District, Afghanistan. During the training, confidence building sessions were an integral part of the session. Between September and December, CWS-P/A's TL&D staff will enhance the capacities of teachers in Afghanistan. These trainings focus on improving the quality of education in Afghanistan through teaching methodologies that enhance thinking critically and working creatively.

During the TL&D camp in May, Nelson Arif, a student was observed to be an introvert and exhibited much hesitation to participate in activities. As the days passed and sessions proceeded, he gained the courage to share a personal story that he had not shared at home or with his friends. He said, "One day I went to the vegetable and fruit market to earn some money. I remained absent from school and when my father got to know about this I was punished. I wanted to help my parents who were bearing my education expenses by unloading watermelons from a truck." He then added, "My father works for a daily wage and takes care of our family. I have three brothers and two sisters, and it is not possible for my parents to put us all through school. My brothers and I are only fortunate in this regard."

Facilitators at the session noted that the punishment and insults he received instilled in him much fear. "I have developed the confidence to share this story at the camp and have met with new friends that has contributed to my learning." He concluded, "I would like to become an engineer and will work hard for this. I also want to be a good citizen and help children."

CWS-P/A's staff shared his example to highlight why children need a secure environment to share their emotions. They stress that the classroom is an important place where children must gain confidence.

Moreover, with TL&D's comprehensive plan to ensure that both students and teachers benefit, families have been integrated into activities that help promote education. In October, the team will gather in Mirpurkhas to involve families and communities after a teacher and student camp takes place. The awareness session aims to encourage parents to dedicate time and skills to their children and their school activities. Furthermore, regular visits by parents to schools are encouraged to further promote community development, improve classroom learning, and children's involvement.

CWS-P/A remains grateful for the international support that is making classrooms more than just a place where teachers teach and students learn. The support is transforming traditional teaching to help students stay in school and engage in interactive learning.



Strengthening Accountability and Assistance

May - August

To continue to ensure that humanitarian aid work is delivered with a conscious regard for quality, accountability, and upholding the dignity of vulnerable communities, CWS-P/A provides technical support and professional services in the form of trainings, assessments, and approved certification audits. Various local and international organizations benefit from the trainings that raise awareness on important principles, practices, and policies. With improved coordination of aid work, guidance on complaints handling mechanisms, and monitoring and evaluation using available tools, CWS-P/A works to build capacities internally with its staff and externally with other organizations.

Additionally, through the dissemination of Sphere and HAP books, CWS-P/A adheres to its commitment in promoting quality and increasing accountability. The organization continues to mainstream quality and accountability with its staff using HAP, Sphere, People in Aid, and CWS-P/A's Accountability Framework. More information regarding trainings and services, Accountability Learning and Working Group (ALWG), advocacy, and upcoming training opportunities are as follows.

Technical Support and Trainings

With specialized and tailor-made trainings that suit organizational needs, CWS-P/A trained over 120 participants to ensure quality and accountability, HAP, and Sphere standards in all activities during emergency and non-emergency phases. Furthermore, trainings were conducted for staff and partners of World Vision International-Pakistan and HelpAge International-Pakistan on Sphere Minimum Standards (2011). A total of sixty-five participants benefited from the training workshops that included interactive discussions, group work, case studies, reflections, and lectures as part of the learning techniques.

A participatory approach was used at workshops that helped to mainstream quality and accountability with CWS-P/A's program and projects. Team members reviewed

their roles and responsibilities to integrate HAP and Sphere and to uphold the organization's accountability commitments. Approximately fifty-seven staff members benefited from the activities that promoted an improved understanding regarding monitoring and evaluation using standards in place and particularly to be accountable to the humanitarian community.

Noteworthy is the fact that CWS-P/A's SHA staff members have enhanced their skills to effectively deliver training to people with disabilities. The orientation helps staff members to include the needs of people with disabilities during all aspects of trainings.

Coordination and the Accountability and Learning Working Group

The ALWG as a forum to strengthen the quality and accountability in humanitarian aid development and management within Pakistan has been operational for two years. In June, CWS-P/A in collaboration with Oxfam organized a meeting to establish a sub-ALWG in Sindh. Over sixty organizations participated in the meeting which was held in Hyderabad to promote coordinated humanitarian response with emphasis on interventions that are of highest standard and accountable. Moreover, its establishment will assist peer to peer learning among aid organizations operating in Sindh.

Advocacy, Awareness, and Certification

Until recently, approximately 180 Quality and Accountability Workbooks in Sindhi were distributed. The new workbook which was launched this summer is available in three languages including English and Urdu. It serves as a useful tool for organizations in Pakistan with its focus on implementing transparent humanitarian assistance. CWS-P/A continues to raise awareness on international standards and works with the HAP Secretariat for the provision of cost-effective services to organizations in Pakistan. Among these is the HAP certification audit, HAP mid-term audit, accountability assessment, and base-line analysis (HAP Standard).

Mainstreaming Local Capacities for Peace and Do No Harm

Following training in Nepal in mid-June, CWS-P/A will work to build the capacities of its staff members. While CWS-P/A continues to implement Local Capacities for Peace (LCP) and Do No Harm (DNH) principles as an integral part of project implementation, internal collaborative efforts have led to its incorporation into CWS-P/A's monitoring and evaluation manual. To further build the capacities of staff, LCP and DNH will be combined into periodic monitoring, therefore, ensuring gender sensitivity and stakeholder involvement.



HAP Executive Director's Visit to Pakistan

In late August, CWS-P/A hosted Marian Casey Maslen, Executive Director of HAP for her first visit to Pakistan. During a consultative meeting, participants from HAP member organizations were able to share their firsthand

experiences regarding issues faced by their organizations and humanitarian aid in Pakistan. The active participation of member organizations demonstrated the progress that is being made to provide assistance that respects dignity of the people they serve and ensures the highest quality of programs. This main event of the visit also enabled HAP members to receive information and share input on the latest efforts and work coming through the HAP Secretariat.



Upcoming Events

In the coming months, CWS-P/A's SHA program will conduct trainings on quality and accountability in Afghanistan. Other trainings planned during the year include complaints handling mechanism and response and Sphere Minimum Standards (2011). More updated information about these trainings can be accessed at: <http://www.cwspa.org/resources/training-calendar>

Cooperation Promotes Peace and Interfaith Harmony in South Asia

August

In August, youth from Pakistan and Nepal participated in CWS-P/A's first Local Capacities for Peace (LCP) camp in Murree, Pakistan. CWS-P/A's participation in LCP initiatives in South Asia and its partnership with the United Mission to Nepal (UMN) encourages greater coordination among other regional members to promote peace and an exchange of participants.

Twenty-five participants were sensitized on the importance of LCP and Do No Harm principles. In addition, awareness sessions were held on human rights, democratization, and interfaith harmony. While encouraging tolerance, sharing, and learning about cultures, the camp also motivated students to become ambassadors of peace.

Overall, the workshop included a participatory approach through which participants received training on making videos using mobile phones. The participants also developed actions plans on individual and collective levels. This ensured the commitment from participants to advocate on important issues and the practical implementation of the training on advocacy. More specifically, participants emphasized their actions plans on theater performances, theater training workshops on the theme of peace, interfaith harmony,

advocacy through research, and short documentaries among other activities.

As a crucial step, this initiative will also include an exchange of participants nominated as peace ambassadors from Pakistan to participate in a similar event next year in Nepal. During this time, CWS-P/A through its partnership with UMN will receive regular updates on the activities performed by participants from Nepal.



CWS-P/A continues to work in the region to promote a culture of tolerance and equality. The camp is among the interventions through which the organization builds capacities within societies. These capacities help inculcate essential values for the development of improved relations on the basis of mutual respect and rights for all.



A lab expert performs a tuberculosis test in CWS-P/A's health facility in Afghanistan.



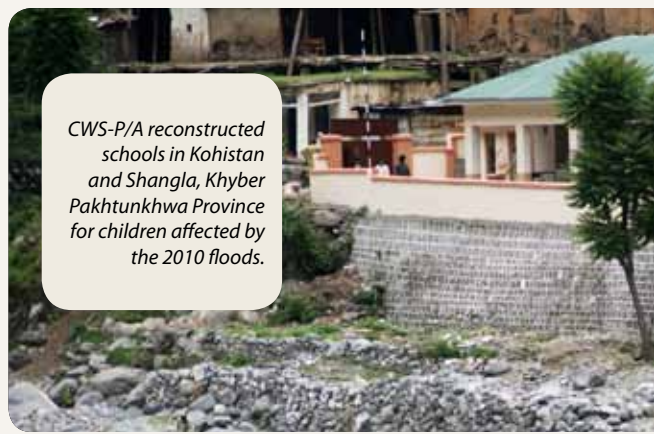
Students participate in CWS-P/A's summer camp in Mirpurkhas District, Sindh Province.



Students in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa receive school kits in their newly reconstructed classrooms.



CWS-P/A assisted displaced communities in Landi Arbab, Peshawar District with food supplies.



CWS-P/A reconstructed schools in Kohistan and Shangla, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province for children affected by the 2010 floods.



A woman works on a hand-made roof for her house in Thatta District, Sindh Province.



CWS-P/A's health services continue for IDPs in Peshawar District, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.



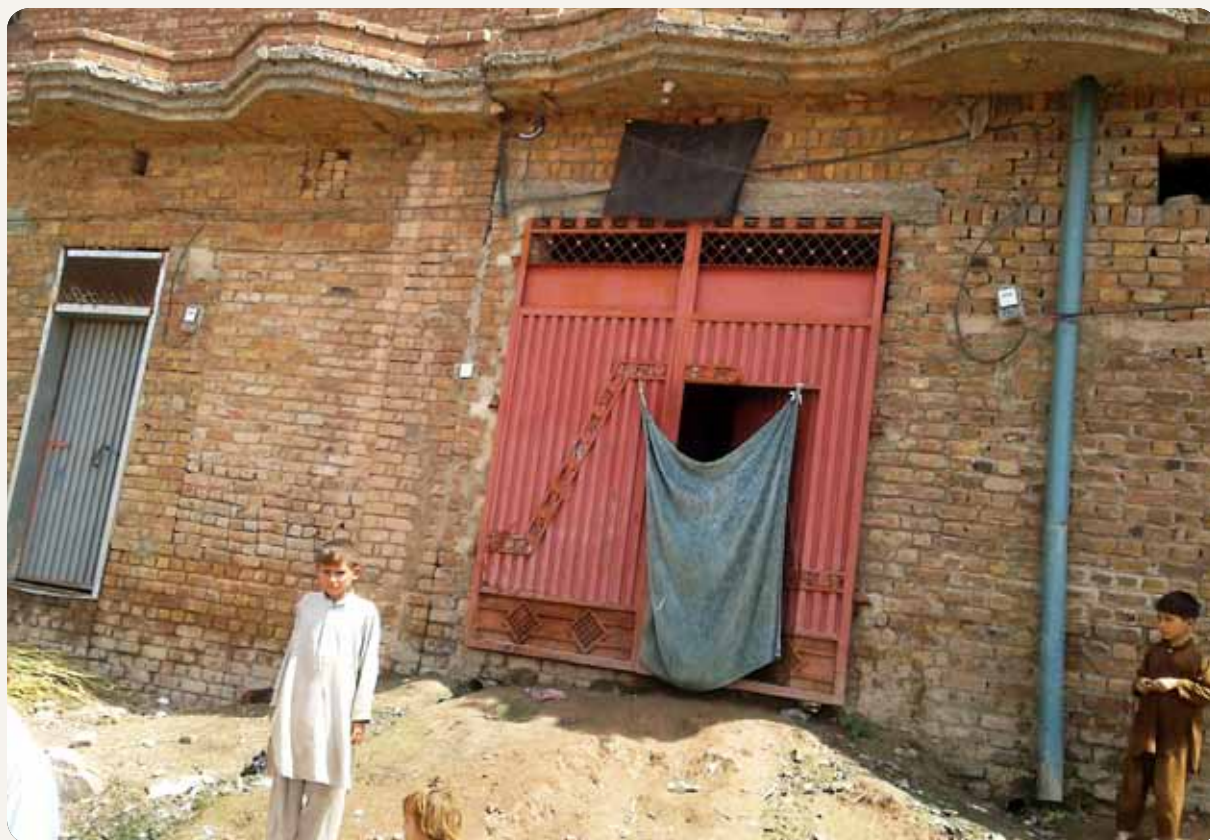
CWS-P/A's CIP held training for organizations across Pakistan on the Effective Use of MS Excel in June 2012.



A doctor at CWS-P/A's health center places vaccines for newborn babies in a cool box in Afghanistan.



CWS-P/A works in Afghanistan to promote education for girls.



A Bleak Future for IDPs

By: Daniel Winstanely

outskirts of Peshawar. He was responding to the question of when he might be able to return home. Zahir is among many others who have been displaced from their homes in Khyber Agency, Pakistan. He explained that he has not just lost his home but also all of his assets and livelihood. Truly returning home would mean the restoration of all that he lost. Upon understanding that explanation, twenty years now makes sense. In the meantime, the families which have been displaced are thankful for support they received through CWS-P/A's interventions.

Presently, thousands of displaced families live in and around Peshawar and in places such as Jalozai Camp. CWS-P/A's response to the situation included food distributions and an ongoing mobile health initiative.

The initial food distribution, which took place in May, was supported by DanChurchAid enabling CWS-P/A to be one of the first INGOs to respond to the needs of families displaced from Khyber Agency in 2012 and residing outside Jalozai Camp. Enough food for one month reached 1,090 families. The second food

“The situation is too complex to predict. Maybe fifteen to twenty years.” The person behind this stark outlook is Zahir Shah, a Pakistani living on the

project was funded by Canadian Foodgrains Bank (CFGFB). Beginning in late June, 2,000 families received one food package, followed by one more each for July and August. The latter distributions also timely supported the displaced families during the month of Ramadan. Overall, 3,090 families received 1013 metric tons of food. By adhering to international standards, specifically Sphere and Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP), and by working with relevant agencies, CWS-P/A was able to support some of the most vulnerable families with much needed food and nutrition. It was a particular help to extended families living together with minimal access to basic needs, employment, or aid assistance. As of late August, CWS-P/A began implementing a health project in and around Peshawar. The assistance includes two hydraulic mobile health units (HMHU) that are currently positioned on the outskirts of Peshawar where a concentration of displaced families reside. A mobile health unit (MHU) and a mobile laboratory unit (MLU) provide additional services. In order to reach the most vulnerable IDPs, often women and children, CWS-P/A has both male and female doctors and nurses available to assist the affected communities. The entire CWS-P/A health team, comprising of sixteen qualified men and women is committed to serving community members with the utmost respect, dignity, and proficiency.

Area residents can come to the health units for free consultations and health checkups. Critical medicines identified by the World Health Organization (WHO)

are also available free of charge at the health units. The mobile laboratory moves between these units to provide free lab tests and screening of diseases and infections as well as other services including ultrasounds. Each health unit provides health assistance to approximately 300 patients a day. Since the majority of displaced families cannot afford the direct medical costs of private clinics, let alone the cost of traveling, the CWS-P/A health units provide individuals a safe, free, and professional alternative.

The health project is a vital aspect of CWS-P/A's response. Is it important to emphasize that the families often face issues including overcrowded living conditions and poor water and sanitation, which put them at greater risk for health related problems.

One of the hydraulic health units is located in Hazar Khwani, a small district on the outskirts of Peshawar. That is where 35 year old Hikmat Khan currently lives with his wife and seven children. In this area, most displaced families are living in abandoned buildings or the remains of the buildings. Inside, the floor is the earth and the ceiling is the sky. Makeshift tents are scattered throughout in an attempt to limit the scorching effects of the sun.

During the evacuation of his home in Khyber Agency, Hikmat was injured, causing some loss of eyesight. His doctor told him that it could take more than a year, if ever, for his eyes to fully recover. "My family is totally dependent on my driving." With his ability to drive compromised, the family has no income since they arrived eight months ago.

Hikmat is young and willing to work, but many days there is no one offering daily work. When work is available, there is not enough for everyone. Hikmat is grateful for the support that CWS-P/A provided. The food helped meet his family's survival needs; however, he acknowledges that his family faces many more challenges. Hikmat notes how the entire situation has affected his family, "This disaster has brought psychological issues to my children." Aside from the trauma of leaving their homes, the daily activities for the children are limited.

Some displaced children can attend school when it is in session. However, the government schools cannot accommodate all the children and private schools charge as much as 400 rupees (USD 4.44) and more a month per child. Therefore, for most displaced children, their schooling will remain disrupted until they can return home or until alternatives are available.

The displaced residents of Hazar Khwani who were recipients of the CFGF food distribution emphasized the difference it made in daily life. Any income that they generate through daily labor jobs goes toward the rent, which ranges between 3,500 and 15,000 rupees (USD 38.9 – 166.7). Hikmat's place, similar to the one in the photo, costs 3,500 rupees even in its current state.

Families with ten or more members have had to find larger accommodations. The food packages provided some relief on their economic strains.

Their sources of power, electricity and gasoline, are further costs that most cannot afford to bear. Most families have managed to obtain one fan which is not enough for the entire family. For residences such as the abandoned buildings, the water and sanitation situation is of immense concern. Open pit latrines in most cases are the only option for families here. This proves to be specifically challenging for women, who need to have absolute privacy.

Bhadur Khan, aged 69, is the head of his household. He has four sons and eight grandchildren for a total of eighteen individuals comprising the family. Most of the income generated by Bhadur and his sons goes toward rent. He described the food packages as making a significant difference in reducing their expenditures on feeding such a large family. He asked, "Kindly do not stop the food because this food assistance plays a wider role in our life." The need of support for families like Hikmat's and Bhadur's is real and still relevant today. The IDP situation has not changed and families like these need to be remembered.

While the health services continue until November, CWS-P/A's efforts are only one piece of a larger humanitarian response to the IDP crisis. Until recently, the UN Refugee Agency reported a total of 160,063 IDP families of which 12% reside in camps and 88% in host communities. Continued humanitarian assistance is needed for all displaced families. The recipients of the food packages identified food as their top priority.

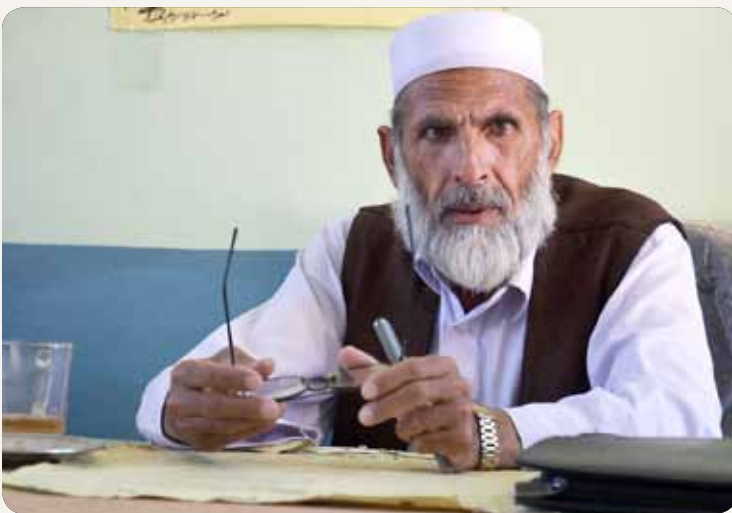




On Education: Despite Support, More Female Teachers Needed

By: Donna Fernandes

CWS-P/A works in Laghman Province, Afghanistan to help bring more female students to the classrooms. The efforts to help increase enrollment include the formation of parent-teacher committees (PTCs), the establishment of school supporting committees (SSCs),



and the involvement of the shura (religious council). These groups play a vital role in the success of the girls' education project in Laghman, and it is their commitment and acceptance that enables an environment where positive change can come to education in the area. CWS-P/A also provides training to female teachers on improving classroom teaching and learning methods. While the training aims to improve education, CWS-P/A hopes that efforts, such as those by Headmaster Naseer-ullah-Khan, result in overcoming one major challenge: the need for more female teachers.

Headmaster Naseer-ullah-Khan is nearing his sixties and recalls serving as headmaster for as long as thirty-three years. "It has been three years since I have been headmaster at Gulghandai Girls Middle School," describes Naseer-ullah-Khan as he shared his views about education. "Education is important; it is the way forward and everything depends on education. We are working to improve the education structure, and I have written several letters to the Director of Education (DoE) to request for more female teachers."

Gulghandai Girls Middle School like many other schools in Afghanistan lacks female teachers. Sharing the female to male teacher ratio at the school, he adds, "At present we have only two female teachers and ten male teachers. I received an answer from the DoE that many other schools are also facing the same issue and that it is an overall problem."

DoE, Mr. Assadullah Roya says, "About 30% of students from teachers' training college apply as teachers in schools once they graduate. Many others opt to work elsewhere, for example, in non-governmental organizations because of a lesser salary at schools." In further discussion he shared that the ratio between female and male teachers in Laghman Province stands at 322 and 3,911, respectively.

While it appears that Naseer-ullah-Khan and the DoE have concerns about the number of female teachers that are available to teach at the schools, Naseer-ullah-Khan remains pleased with active involvement of the shura (religious council) and parent-teacher committee (PTC) at the Gulghandai Girls Middle School. Because of the initiatives of CWS-P/A, 250 girls newly enrolled at the school since 2010.

Naseer-ullah-Khan says, "The shura (religious council) has been here for us, regardless of whether it is day or night. When we have concerns about security, they are present. They have a fund through which we now have furniture and we have a leveled yard around the school building." He further shares, "The shura is involved when children leave schools and the PTC wants their assistance."

There is no doubt that the relationship between the school's administration, parents, and shura is good and their regular meetings to discuss improvement and issues exhibit this cordial relationship.

As parents have continued to show eagerness and greater acceptability to send their children to schools, the school must be made a second home to children. This can be done with resources directed toward improving the school's infrastructure and investing in educational materials for all children. At present, Gulghandai Girls Middle School requires a boundary wall and electricity, while books remain among other unfulfilled needs.

The boundary walls protecting the school are essential to make both parents and children feel secure, especially in the case of female students. Gulghandai Girls Middle School is among the many other schools in the provinces of Laghman and Nangahar that have infrastructure needs. These include adequate classrooms, sources of clean drinking water, and latrine facilities and often it is a lack of such facilities that prevent parents from sending their daughters to schools. Moreover, the focus to protect children and reduce vulnerabilities should be made the core of the plan that eventually leads them to become proactive members in society.

With a classroom that it is welcoming, children will be motivated to stay at school. CWS-P/A's teachers' training continues to ensure that quality education in a friendly environment becomes part of the school's mandate. In an environment that is comfortable, friendly, and like home, children will be able to develop in ways that reflect positive mental, emotional, and social growth.





Finding Hope

Collected by Khadija Saif

In Singaro Village, Umerkot District lives Nattu Mai. Circumstances leave her widowed with six children, three of which are physically disabled and one mentally challenged. She married just after reaching puberty and has yet to reach her 30th birthday. Having an early marriage, six children, and coming from a poor Hindu minority community was difficult enough for Nattu. However, the 2011 floods worsened her plight by making her a widow.

With damp eyes and broken words Nattu recalled the pre-flood times, "Although we had problems before as my two kids were disabled, I had my home and my husband with me." A relative shared that Nattu's husband suffered from tuberculosis and died during their displacement.

"The disastrous flood caused by heavy monsoon rains swept everything we had away. It was so sudden that we remained in water for the whole night, keeping our children along. We remained without food and water for several days in the direct exposure without shelter."

It was also during the days following the floods that she gave birth to her youngest child on the roadside near Hyderabad Bypass. The unhygienic conditions resulted in complications for both mother and child. Following an eye infection, the infant is now blind in her left eye. "We had no hospital, no health unit facility here."

CWS-P/A was the first to intervene in the area, giving a little hope to the disaster-affected family. The mobile health unit was a real source of help for the community. "When we heard about the mobile health unit facility, I took a sigh of relief as now I had not to travel a long way carrying my disabled kids along for health concerns." She was also grateful for the non-food items she received from CWS-P/A.



Describing the services she received from CWS-P/A, Nattu shared, “The doctors are good. They give us free medicines and above all respect which we can’t get from elsewhere. They never feel bad while checking my kids. Rather, they ask me to take good care of them by keeping them clean.” She plans to follow regular immunizations for her children and good hand washing practices.

In addition to needing basic WASH facilities and shelter, Nattu’s prime concern is the potential for floods during the 2012 monsoon season. She worries what would happen if she faces any more losses.



Nattu lives with her extended family of in-laws. She is accustomed to working in the fields alongside the other women, but the floods also took this only source of income away from them. For millions of people affected by floods, recovery is still about basic survival, needs going unmet, and unimaginable challenges. However, for Nattu’s and other families from minority communities, the challenges multiply as they were the most marginalized before the

floods and continue to be following the widespread disaster. These communities remain in extremely vulnerable conditions ahead of this year’s monsoon season. The significant changes required to ensure their safety and survival have not yet been made, and they are truly at the mercy of the rains.

The mobile health unit services were possible with support from the European Commission through DanChurchAid.

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Vocational Training Helps Families Improve Livelihoods...

on children’s clothing, beading, and embroidery. For men, the skills include auto mechanics, welding, and electrical work. In addition to reflecting the community’s preferences, these trades are in demand of approximately 85% of the respective employment market.

As these trainings continue for four months, CWS-P/A works to develop market linkages for the graduates. More specifically, trainees benefit from exposure to prospective employers during their training duration.

At the same time, additional training and skills building will be offered to selected graduates with short-term employment opportunities as co-trainers of future vocational training and skills development courses.

Noteworthy is the fact that 109 graduates upon their return to Afghanistan were able to secure jobs. Based on the efforts of CWS-P/A’s social mobilizer working with the project, fourteen employers were identified during a visit to Afghanistan. A significant number of job opportunities were obtained in construction

companies, shops, and at the household level. The reported monthly income stands between 15,000 and 25,000 afghani (USD 294 – 490).

Another remarkable fact includes the signing of thirteen cooperative agreements with various vendors, buyers, boutiques, women entrepreneurs, and organizations. These agreements aim at helping women from the refugee community to improve access to customers within the local market as they highlight the provision of services and responsibilities between the respective entities.

Meanwhile, CWS-P/A will continue to work with refugee committees and elders from the host community to increase awareness about the training programs and identify opportunities for graduates to apply and effectively utilize their newly acquired skills, especially for community development activities. By ensuring participation from the community, CWS-P/A is also able to achieve its overarching goal of serving communities accountably and in ways that always respect and preserve the dignity of individuals and the community.



Words of Wisdom
Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal.

Martin Luther King, Jr. (1929 - 1968)

Hot Topic

Urban planning in developing countries:

Urban planning—also considered as an engineering intervention—is a process involving a practical and political approach to outline an environment for the orderly development of communities. Economic and cultural circumstances, social awareness, state policies, availability of transport and health facilities, education, and safety and security are some factors which need assessment for strategizing an urban plan.

In developing countries urban planners structure the land in such a way which should improve the long-term social and economic impact. It is essential to realize how globalization impacts the local space of individual cities. As the city continues to evolve over time, innovative policies and practices are needed for sustainable development.

Afghanistan is one developing country that requires comprehensive urban planning and implementation, where expeditious efforts are needed to cope with the rapidly changing situation in the country.

The city of Kabul covering an area of 4,462 km² suffered destruction for many years, not permitting for consistent urban plans to develop. In the recent past, the government established different policies to control housing in Kabul by undertaking low-cost building projects. However, due to the regular changes in the system there are some concerns directly influencing the development such as the high population density due to the return of Afghan refugees from Pakistan and Iran and rural to urban relocation. Estimates on the current population range from just over 4 million to 6 million, while the World Bank's 2010 figure was 3.73 million. Other factors include the natural underground water source feeding the city which is insufficient to serve the population's needs and the effect of poverty on worsening living conditions.

To solve the present problems and allow Kabul to grow adequately, it is necessary to improve the conditions of existing urban districts as well as carry out the planned development effectively. It is essential to identify a comprehensive master plan for urban planning based on a long-term vision that not only addresses structural needs but also the social, economic, and environmental challenges. Skills and literacy training to improve employability, the promotion of good health and hygiene practices, and improved knowledge of the right to access basic rights would benefit the most vulnerable families.

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