



A year after receiving food relief, a woman and her daughters appreciate the assistance they received from CWS-P/A in Thatta District, Sindh Province, Pakistan. Photographed by Jordan McCarthy, August 2011.



CHURCH WORLD SERVICE
Pakistan / Afghanistan

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Editors: Kelli Siddiqui
Donna Fernandes
Shama Mall

Editor's Message

Dear Readers:

Church World Service-Pakistan/Afghanistan's May to August 2011 newsletter highlights recent activities related to improving livelihoods and access to education and healthcare. It depicts the importance of community participation and active involvement in building capacity and raising awareness, which lead to sustainable recovery and development.

CWS-P/A continues to make progress in its efforts to improve the quality of education and healthcare, particularly for women. The feature articles reflect these topics as they are addressed in both Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The news section includes updates on a range of activities from providing skills training to flood affected communities to assessment of Local Capacities for Peace. In Hot Topic, read more about mobile knowledge resource center and how it will make a difference for disaster affected communities in Pakistan.

As always, thank you for taking the time to read our newsletter. Please send your feedback and suggestions to commoffice@cwspa.org.pk

Skills Training Supports Long-Term Recovery

May-August



The devastating flood of 2010 caused significant job losses in vulnerable communities across Pakistan. Tragically, farmers lost their lands, shopkeepers lost their stores, and wheat-grinders lost their machines. The estimates provided by the International Labor Organization reported that the floods cost more than 5.3 million jobs in Pakistan. From relief to recovery, CWS-P/A adopted an approach which ensured benefits to flood survivors while making community participation a vital integration of overall response efforts. As part of the organization's flood rehabilitation initiative, CWS-P/A began operating Construction Trade Training Centers (CTTC) in Thatta and Khairpur, two districts of Sindh Province.

The centers provide opportunities for flood survivors to learn skills including masonry, electric works, welding, plumbing, and carpentry. The project in Thatta continues until April 2012, with trainees presently learning the various skills that will enable them to seek employment opportunities.

Thus far, 148 students passed exams with a cumulative pass percentage of 99.3% following which students received diplomas for successful course completion. The exams were affiliated with the Trade Testing Board (TTB) in Sindh, which adds credibility to their acquired skills and leads to more job placement opportunities. The centers have also linked students with job placements in their trades of choice. In addition, graduates received tool kits which match their acquired skills.

In Masheshwari Molha Village resides Lal Chand, a twenty-two year old student who acquired electrical skills from the CTTC in Thatta. Lal Chand's family was very optimistic that he would have a stable income after becoming a qualified electrician. He eagerly shared that there is no person in his village with the same skills, and he hopes to open a workshop of his own. Further discussions led Lal Chand to reveal his intentions of helping his village which had remained without electricity for a prolonged period after the floods.

Lal Chand is just one among the other trainees who benefits from CWS-P/A's rehabilitation initiatives in skills training and who has hopes to use his skills to provide benefits to his flood affected community. By the end of April 2012, as many as 1,300 students will benefit from the initiative that will help families recover. Moreover, the initiative clearly contributes in assisting the local economy while channeling citizens to be more active in creating positive development.

Worth mentioning is CWS-P/A's integrated approach which includes the employment of graduates from the CTTC for a housing reconstruction project in Thatta. By employing skilled labor from the affected area, CWS-P/A will help the affected communities take ownership over the reconstruction while creating an environment where individuals are aware of their local disaster risks and how to prepare for them. CWS-P/A's comprehensive approach will also include a Mobile Knowledge Resource Center which will bring awareness on disaster risks, safe housing construction, and school safety to the community at large.

Provision of Livestock Supports Livelihood Restoration July

A preliminary damage assessment conducted by the agricultural sector revealed that twenty of twenty-eight union councils in Shangla District, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa were severely affected by the country's devastating floods in 2010. Rare estimates indicated that approximately 1,222 animals died while 69,911 livestock and poultry were indirectly affected. Agriculture and livestock farming are known to be the dominant occupation of the farming community in this northern area.



CWS-P/A economically empowered three hundred affected farming families through the provision of livestock. Additionally, for these communities, CWS-P/A provided training on technical skills in livestock management and production and marketing of dairy products. Sustainability of the intervention was increased through the rebuilding of animal shelters and establishment of veterinary services. The livestock recipients are providing better nutrition for their families as well as earning income from selling dairy products.

In accordance with CWS-P/A's selection criteria for assisting vulnerable disaster affected families, women-led households, households with no or extremely low income, minority households, women with a disabled family member, and female orphans with younger siblings ranked as priority. The designed selection process for the provision of livestock coincides with the role of women in taking care of livestock and domestic chores.

Successfully in late July, the organization concluded the final distribution of three hundred milking cows and calves in the district. The distribution carried out through six rounds assisted farming communities residing in the union councils of Damori, Pirkhana, Shahpur, Kuzkana, Ranial, and Opal. In further helping families with lowering their total rearing costs, specific trainings addressing the importance of urea-molasses and curative measures were held with practical demonstrations. Families also received a fodder and toolkit package with contents including cotton seed cake, wheat bran, salt, milking jar, watering bucket, feeding mix tub, cleaning spade, and sand pan.

Ensuring the entire intervention adhered to standards only selected animals which received certification by the veterinary officer were distributed. A resident of Damori Union Council shared, "Cows and calves are much better than our expectations, and all of us are thankful to CWS-P/A and hope you people will continue good practices in the future as well."



Helping Children Stay in Schools

May-June

Literacy has been low in Pakistan, and alarmingly the ratio of improvement between 2007 and 2011 was lower than the earlier period of 2002-2006. Dropout rates are also high with only about 30% of Pakistanis completing secondary education and approximately 20% receiving upper secondary education. For Afghanistan, the statistics are no better with an adult literacy rate of only 28.09%. Clearly, a direct correlation between rising costs of living and education and the increasing dropout rates exists.

With sufficient evidence, children have been observed leaving schools to supplement family income and in the case of the death of a parent often to become main bread-earners and caretakers of younger siblings. If this choice was not availed, after completing their education, these children would contribute to the overall affirmative development of communities.

CWS-P/A works to promote education, increase literary rates, and bring children back to classrooms. It also, however, acknowledges that financial implications are a real issue for families. In order to lower the costs and prevent the substitution of education for work, CWS-P/A has distributed school kits to children in both Pakistan and Afghanistan. As many as 26,100 school kits containing notebooks, pencils, color pencils, easers, sharpeners, and rulers were recently distributed to children.

In CWS-P/A's new initiative, the early childhood education project, thirty-eight school kits benefited approximately 3,642 students in Sindh and Punjab. The kits included items in varying quantities including poster paints, crayons, pegs, patterned blocks, tape, string rolls, thread, scissor, storybooks, and wall clocks among others. Students at the thirty-three schools where the kits were distributed will benefit from a diversified learning environment and from being able to explore their creativity and add to classroom decor.

By reducing some of the financial burden and by creating an improved learning environment, the provision of school supplies helps keep children in school. Although it cannot prevent all children from dropping out, it does increase children's motivation and joy of attending school, which may make them show their parents that education matters. CWS-P/A appreciates the support from the international community in providing learning materials that help pave the way for longer-term benefits and development.





Sharing Learning among Regional Members *May-June*

In recent times, both Pakistan and Afghanistan have witnessed an increased scale of disasters and challenges to humanitarian work. However, in prioritizing the needs of communities and assuring quality assistance, CWS-P/A has continued to make Local Capacities for Peace (LCP) and Do No Harm principles an important part of its service approach.

Joint assessment activities were carried out during the months of May and June in Kathmandu and Karachi through sharing, learning, and exposure visits among the South Asia network of member organizations as decided by the LCP Secretariat. The objectives of the assessment included assessing the conceptual knowledge of LCP and Do No Harm among CWS-P/A staff members, the observance of institutional capacity in mainstreaming the approach and among programs within CWS-P/A. The Peace Building Advisor for United Mission to Nepal (UMN) conducted the assessment. The assessment demonstrated CWS-P/A's conscious efforts to mainstream LCP even at the field level despite its diverse projects.

CWS-P/A continues to contribute in the LCP regional network and shares learning among network members. Within CWS-P/A, Do No Harm approaches are constantly mainstreamed as the organization complies with standards while placing communities first in decision-making processes during service delivery. Additionally, staff hiring, gender equality, and procurement processes are guided by the Do No Harm approach as an existing part of effectively serving communities.

"I attended LCP application workshop at Bangladesh in March 2010. Before attending the workshop, I was a bit reluctant and wondering that it's not relevant to my program and projects. However, when I participated and learnt about the concept and framework, it was easy to link with my projects' activities. Though we already were following some connectors and dividers by default but now we deliberately are using LCP tools especially when working in conflict areas and when providing aid in kind or in terms of capacity building. Now, by practicing terminologies very frequently with field team, I've become very sensitive while designing and implementing projects and proposals," shares Nazakat Bibi, Project Coordinator for CWS-P/A's Transformational Learning and Development project.

Moazzam Ali, focal person for LCP in CWS-P/A and Project Coordinator of Peace Education for Primary Schools, shares, "It has taken almost one year to identify the partner school to implement the peace education program. As such most of the schools of the ongoing project area were keen to implement. However, we couldn't start the program unless we completed the depth analysis of local context." Explaining the need of depth analysis he further shared, "Local elite and landlords don't want these sorts of support to the schools nearby to them and their locality. They always perceive the interaction and linkage of locals with the outsiders particularly with nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) people as fear and threat over their monopoly. Thus, it requires depth analysis of local context, consultation with school teachers, guardians, community leader and local elites, and landlords. We spent almost one year on aforementioned aspect and now this program is being implemented very smoothly."

Empowering Youth for Positive Change

June

This year's summer camp in Mirpurkhas District welcomed sixty-three students from various locations in Sindh. Like every year since 2003, the camps have helped to enhance the students' knowledge, teaching them important messages of child and human rights, democracy, electoral processes, and quality education among others. These messages are passed on through a range of teaching methodologies involving significant amounts of participation from students.

The students also participate in a cultural and talent night during the three-day camp. CWS-P/A's staff members involved in empowering youth place emphasis on the inclusion of the cultural and talent night in the camp's agenda. The staff members believe that the cultural and talent night plays a vital role in contributing towards increasing students' confidence levels. At the same time, they acknowledge the positive contribution of the event in uniting students from diverse backgrounds while the students together perform tableaux, dramas, songs, music, and poetry. Lastly, they recognize the importance of creative expression and art as a tool for nurturing the youth of the country.

Earlier during the year, the staff held a similar camp with forty-three students in Punjab Province. While the camps continue to bring students residing in far-flung areas closer, a trickle-down effect is created. The knowledge gained at the camps is reportedly transferred to parents and community members. Moreover, the camps bring a long-term benefit providing a platform to marginalized groups in Pakistan to project their voices and understand their rights, roles, and values. At a fundamental level, the camps enable students to gain skills and knowledge that foster conscious choices, decisions, and actions that students may take to promote peace, interfaith harmony, and justice in their communities.





Setting the Trend for Curbing Taboo Discussion and Discrimination

May-June

CWS-P/A has repeatedly highlighted the difficulties faced in discussions on sexual health, sexual rights, and HIV & AIDS in Pakistan among community members as well as adolescents. These challenges have been expressed not only by project staff but by trainers who actively participate in CWS-P/A's training of trainers (TOT) workshops.

Recently and for the first time, the organization held a youth camp with adolescents from Punjab and Sindh that focused on increasing awareness of HIV & AIDS. To help spread awareness, some of the methodologies used were plenary discussions, group presentations, role plays, and a poster making session.

Project Coordinator, Beenish Hashwani, shared, "It was interesting to note that during sessions and information sharing, participants were hesitant in comfortably using terms such as 'condoms' or 'sexual transmission.' This just goes to show that even for young adults, discussion on sexual health is considered highly taboo and sadly the discomfort often tags along into adult life." CWS-P/A took the youth camp as an opportunity to help remove prevailing misconceptions related to HIV & AIDS.

The power of raising awareness through training comes from the increased capacity of participants to share information and facts with peers and within their communities. In June, twenty-one individuals participated in a five-day workshop (ToT). ToTs are an integral part of the project because they equip participants with knowledge and skills to raise awareness and to address stigma and discrimination.

At the workshop, Nayyer Mujeeb, a participant, shared that she learned a lot from the workshop and was glad to know that there are many working for people with HIV&AIDS. She decided to share that she is HIV positive and testified in her own saying, "People look at me and then ask who I have had sexual relationships with. I do wish that the attitudes of people change especially when they seem interested to know the cause." Nayyer presently works as a volunteer and provides counseling for people living with HIV & AIDS and conducts awareness sessions at various schools in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. She was quick to share that spreading awareness on the topic of HIV & AIDS remains a challenge where she resides.

In conclusion, CWS-P/A through its publications, awareness raising, trainings, and poster and speech competitions on HIV & AIDS continues to pursue its aim of making discussions on the topic more receptive given social and cultural constraints.

Leading the Way in Quality and Accountability

June

Through CWS-P/A's Strengthening Humanitarian Assistance (SHA) unit, CWS-P/A is working to ensure that the latest edition of the Sphere Handbook 2011 is being widely applied. Overall, CWS-P/A remains committed to providing technical support to humanitarian agencies on Sphere and Humanitarian Accountability Partnership (HAP) in Asia. The organization specializes in training and orientation workshops to meet the specific needs of organizations and to help sensitize staff on quality and accountability. Over 290 participants received training with more than 50 agencies benefiting from these orientations since the beginning of 2011.

During this same period, over 135 Sphere Handbooks and 120 HAP booklets were distributed while quality and accountability management workshops were held in Sri Lanka and Laos with a focus on HAP. As part of the workshops, various learning

methodologies allowed participants to reflect on quality and accountability issues while engaging latest editions of HAP and Sphere standards. CWS-P/A conducted an exercise for Lutheran World Relief (LWR), which gauged the quality and accountability needs in Asia. More than 100 organizations in twelve Asian countries directly and indirectly participated in the exercise assisting LWR in its support toward promoting quality and accountability in the region.

CWS-P/A understands the crucial need to ensure the promotion and application of quality and accountability during and beyond the emergency phase. Together trainings and orientation workshops with a range of teaching and learning methodologies help organizations to continually improve humanitarian response and provide quality services in the most accountable way.

Partner's Profile



Interactive Resource Center

Interactive Resource Center (IRC) is a nonprofit organization working to build awareness among marginalized communities in Pakistan on basic rights including social and economic justice, democracy and citizenship rights, and gender equality. IRC has a vision for a peaceful, democratic, and just society and continues to explore new avenues for community mobilization and dialogue.

CWS-P/A has worked with IRC since its inception in December 2000. Recently the award-winning documentary, 'Burning Paradise,' developed by CWS-P/A and IRC was viewed at international screenings. CWS-P/A is currently in partnership with IRC in its new interactive community television network project known as Maati TV (Music Art and Technology Informatrix). The initiative provides a medium for youth to engage interactively, using videography and other forms of expression on issues they face and those by communities.

Executive Director, Mohammad Waseem, shares, "It always is a pleasure to work with CWS-P/A as it provides an opportunity of learning while allowing IRC to do those experiments which are now the best practices in Pakistan like interactive theatre and community filmmakers initiative."



Revealing **Nutritional and Health Status** of Pakistani Women

■ *By Donna Fernandes*

Recent development sector health literature demonstrates that anemia and malnutrition have commonly been known to affect Pakistani women and girls. For these women and girls the problem begins in childhood and worsens as they age. UNICEF (1998) identified anemia as a cause of the high maternal mortality rate in Pakistan. While anemia has also been known to lead to increased risk of miscarriage, stillbirth, premature birth, low birth-weight, and prenatal mortality, the factors contributing to high rates of anemia come as no surprise. These include early marriages and childbearing, lack of child spacing, frequent pregnancies, and malnutrition. The latter often generates from an unequal food distribution to girls and women at home. Evidence further shows a strong gender bias in access to healthcare for females. Gender differences in nutrition and health owing

to poverty and social mindsets place constant strains on the reproductive health of women with long-term impacts on their lives and their children. This has consequences particularly on the health of women whose access to essential services is denied based on their low decision making ability within the household, limited mobility, and cultural restrictions in Pakistani society. Factors that inhibit women's and children's good health are preventable; therefore, steps such as improving access to health services, raising health awareness, and providing basic health care can drastically improve the quality of life for women in Pakistan.

Recognizing prevailing gender disparities along with the country's worst flooding a year ago and the previous year's internal conflict, CWS-P/A conducted a needs assessment which revealed the nutritional status of vulnerable women and children in Swat District, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa Province.



The nutritional status of flood affected families including children and pregnant and lactating women indicate an immense need for the provision of food supplements for both women and children. Affected women and children face iron deficiency anemia, folate deficiency anemia, and worm infestation. The assessment of the situation included 150 women and 150 children in a random selection from CWS-P/A's Basic Health Units (BHUs) located in union councils of Gulibagh, Dairy, and Manyar. The overall result revealed that 47% of women and 40% of children had the above mentioned deficiencies including intestinal worms.

CWS-P/A's doctors believe that supplements and health education together can help assist with stated deficiencies to prevent disorders like marasmus, anemia, and blindness. In the coming months, through CWS-P/A's intervention essential supplements to 12,000 women and adolescent girls and 15,000 malnourished children will be provided to cope with deficiencies. Additionally, the organization has adopted an all-inclusive approach to address the plight of women caused by low levels of awareness, barriers to healthcare, and decision making.

CWS-P/A provides awareness sessions on proper nutritional intake among at least seventeen other topics conducted by the organization's trained health mobilizers. By August 2011, CWS-P/A has conducted over 4,000 health sessions with more than 36,000 community members in Khyber Pakhtunkhwa. During the same period the health staff provided 2,523 antenatal and 769 postnatal consultations to 3292 women. Well above 800 reproductive health consultations directly related to family planning were provided to women.

CWS-P/A's Health Specialist, Dr. Qamar Zaman shares that along with the flooding catastrophe and conflict in the region a third contributor to the emerging health problem of malnutrition among women and children is the rise in basic food prices. In Pakistan, as food prices sky-rocket the allocation to women and female children diminish in a conscious choice made within the household.

UNICEF (1998) identified **anemia** as a cause of the high maternal mortality rate in Pakistan. While anemia has also been known to lead to **increased risk of miscarriage, stillbirth, premature birth, low birth-weight, and prenatal mortality**, the factors contributing to high rates of anemia come as no surprise. **These include early marriages and childbearing, lack of child spacing, frequent pregnancies, and malnutrition.**

As women suffer the most in the province of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, CWS-P/A faces the challenge of hiring female doctors and staff to work in the region. Female health workers often face restrictions from family members in traveling to remote locations. These cultural sensitivities and difficult terrain add to the hardships in providing healthcare to vulnerable women and children. Despite these hardships, the organization has been at the forefront with its strategic health interventions to ensure that vulnerable community members receive the healthcare they need.

While CWS-P/A and other humanitarian agencies continue to help communities access their basic right, much needs to be done throughout the country to address health and nutrition deficiencies. The right approach requires a focus on mother and child healthcare, the promotion of healthy practices within the household, and supplements and nutritious food to severely anemic children. Taking steps in this direction will help decrease the health risks and improve the health status of the most vulnerable women and children.



Addressing the Need for Girls' Education

By Donna Fernandes

"Woman must not accept; she must challenge. She must not be awed by that which has been built up around her; she must reverence that woman in her which struggles for expression."
Margaret Sanger

Rising insecurity in both Pakistan and Afghanistan is a major obstacle to education, particularly toward girls' education. A shortage of female teachers and a lack of essential facilities also limit the number of girls in schools. Noting the number of attacks on girls' schools with dramatic impacts on children's education and well-being, CWS-P/A is at the forefront in increasing attendance rates and bringing children back to the classroom. More specifically, the classroom is the place where they belong as they develop into young adults.

While the challenges continue in Swat District, Pakistan and Qarghai District, Afghanistan so do the efforts by CWS-P/A staff members, social mobilizers, partners, local authorities, dedicated teachers, and willing parents. CWS-P/A is currently implementing the second phase of its girls' education project in Afghanistan aiming to increase girls' enrollment and retention in fifteen primary schools. The project maintains a focus on improved health, hygiene, and sanitation through the introduction of health components such as improved nutrition.

CWS-P/A's strategy depends greatly on the participation of the community. Parents, through the parents and teachers committee, have visited approximately 300 homes to promote and encourage female education. In addition, 219 community members received training on child rights and gender; some trained community members went on to provide training to the local shura (religious council).

In Swat District, to further ensure quality education, the organization recently held summer sessions on 'Cooperative Learning' with students and 'Disaster Preparedness and School Safety' with teachers. The sessions focused on nurturing among students the ability to increase their creative and critical thinking skills while working together and increasing confidence levels. In helping dozens of school teachers reduce the risks of hazards and disaster related incidents, their capacities were built to take necessary steps and handle emergency situations.

Girls' education aligns with CWS-P/A's overall strategy to empower women. In this regard, an adult female literacy center is also assisting women with reading, writing, and tailoring skills in Afghanistan. The increased participation and role of women outside the household forms the very basis of reducing poverty and contributes to economic and social development.

From Abdulrahim Zai Girls School in Qarghai District, Zaiqa, a sixteen year old girl received encouragement for participating in meetings with the local shura and Community Development Council. She shared that the encouragement has helped her present the challenges faced by girls and appreciates the opportunity in the intervention for open discussion.

The new intervention involving the inclusion of students helps the local shura relate to issues faced by students and in particular, those faced by female students. Zaiqa is a bold young woman who also has past experience in middle school facilitating the concerns of students among the directorate. The parent and teacher committees which assist in keeping girls in school hope to train new students after graduation to be part of their committees. The gradual increase in women's participation within the community will not only continue to improve girls' education but can also lead to improving women's access to other basic rights and decision making.

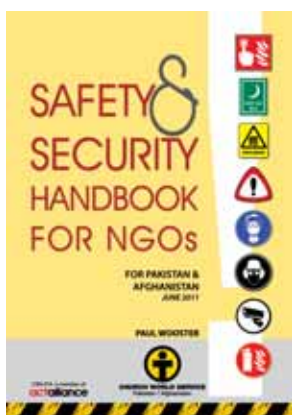
Senior Program Officer, based in Afghanistan for CWS-P/A, Qais Fazli shares, "The community has an improved awareness about the importance of education. There is increased support for education activities in the region from communities." Working for the betterment of communities, the ongoing support will unquestionably help to give girls and women in Afghanistan a better and brighter future—one which allows for more independence, development, and stability.

Safety & Security Handbook for NGOs

For Pakistan & Afghanistan

By Paul Wooster

CWS-P/A's publication, *Safety & Security Handbook for NGOs*, is a comprehensive and user-friendly guide specific to the Pakistan and Afghanistan context. The book has been developed taking into account recent developments in safety and security for nongovernmental organizations. It provides general safety and security guidance to help organizations develop their own safety and security plans. The book is also designed with an Area-Specific Information Annex that allows organizations to fully benefit from it as security context changes occur. Organizations can further complete and update the annex on a regular basis and share it with staff.



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

Mobile Knowledge Resource Center

The Mobile Knowledge Resource Center (MKRC) is a unique method of imparting disaster education and information to vulnerable communities through a mobile unit. The mobile unit travels to remote communities and includes visual and audio educational materials to effectively teach disaster education and risk reduction. This is the first time the initiative will be implemented in Pakistan as a collaborative effort of Church World Service-Pakistan/Afghanistan (CWS-P/A) and SEEDS Asia. The first piloted MKRC was in Myanmar in close coordination between Church World Service, Seeds Asia, and the Myanmar Engineering Society.

The more comprehensive approach of this intervention is the presence of trainers to conduct training of trainers (TOT) and workshops with both community members and school-going children. Community members will benefit from trainings on the construction of safer houses while town watching exercises will be conducted in twelve villages. Moreover it is expected that the improved ability to forecast future hazards and disasters will lead to effective early warnings that will help communities to minimize their losses. In addition, the mobile unit will ensure sustainability of the intervention while anticipating to attract the interest of community members in Sindh. At the same time, masonry graduates from CWS-P/A's Construction Trade Training Center (CTTC) will also benefit from trainings on the construction of safer houses.

Between January and March 2012, the MKRC will begin operating in Sindh for communities affected by floods.

Words
of
Wisdom

"The whole idea of compassion is based on a keen awareness of the interdependence of all these living beings, which are all part of one another, and all involved in one another."

Thomas Merton (1915-1968)