



A three-year old IDP whose parents are missing; beneficiary of CWS-P/A's mobile health unit in Mansehra, Photographed by Saadia Haq

Editor's Message

Dear Readers,

Church World Service-Pakistan/Afghanistan's (CWS-P/A) May to August, 2009 newsletter contains information on our vast scope of project activities which range from girls' education in Afghanistan to the opening of a dairy farm in Pakistan. This four month period was a time of constant change in the region and incredible efforts by our staff.

We give special emphasis to our response to the internal displacement of millions of Pakistanis as well as to our efforts regarding reproductive health in Pakistan. A close look at our health program in Afghanistan displays our strong presence among returning Afghan refugees.

You can read about one of our partners in Afghanistan in our Partner's Profile as well as read about child rights which are featured in Hot Topic.

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



CWS-P/A

Editor's Message	1
News from CWS-P/A	2-7
"Women and their Reproductive Health Rights"	8
Partner's Profile	9
"Providing Health Care to Afghan Refugees"	9
"When Home is Lost — Pakistan's Internal Displacement"	10-11
Suggested Reading	12
Hot Topic	12
Words of Wisdom	12
CWS-P/A's Mission Statement	12

Editors: Kelli Siddiqui
Saadia Haq
Shama Mall

Pakistan's Internal Displacement—CWS-P/A's Committed Response

May-August

The armed conflict between the Pakistani military and Taliban militants resulted in the largest displacement of people since the country's inception; at the beginning of May, hundreds of thousands of people began fleeing the conflict zones on a daily basis. CWS-P/A, along with the government and other humanitarian organizations, anticipated the imminent crisis. As the fighting continued, IDPs entered camps and host communities with little or no possessions. CWS-P/A immediately mobilized resources in order to distribute pre-positioned relief items to the most vulnerable, displaced families.

Between May and August, CWS-P/A distributed relief items including shelter kits, food packages, and non-food items. Initially, the organization distributed 229 shelter kits and 600 food packages. After receiving support from our international partners, CWS-P/A initiated a distribution plan that included targeting 4,500 families over a three-month period, thus, ensuring sufficient food intake over a longer period of time. By the end of August, the second round of distribution was underway and a total of 5,125 food packages reached the beneficiaries. Provision of non-food items also began. Beneficiaries mainly lived in host communities of Mardan and Swabi although some of the initial aid was given to IDPs in Sheikh Yasin and Umeed camps.

Additionally, CWS-P/A's health team immediately began providing services through a mobile health unit to IDPs in Mansehra and Abbottabad. With limited resources of existing staff and supplies, the mobile health unit provided health education, free medicines, and referrals to secondary and tertiary health systems. Covering a gap in the overall provision of services for IDPs, CWS-P/A's female health staff was able to enter residences of IDPs in order to provide health services to women who otherwise would not have sought medical attention or advice due to cultural practices. By the end of August, CWS-P/A geographically expanded its health service to include IDPs living in Swabi.

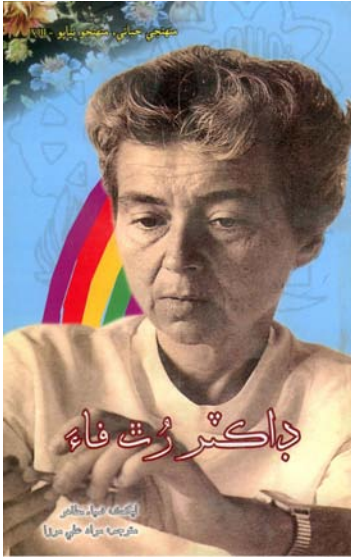
Quality and accountability are an important aspect of CWS-P/A's work. As the Sphere and HAP focal points, the organization followed internationally recognized standards, maintained a high standard of service delivery, and protected the equality and dignity of beneficiaries. CWS-P/A also extended its knowledge and leading role by offering workshops and guidance to other responding organizations through a series of Sphere and HAP workshops.

At the forefront of communication, CWS-P/A regularly collected information on the crisis and shared it with local and international partners and media through updates, stories, photographs, and interviews. In May, CWS-P/A organized an event in Islamabad, "Learning from the Voices of the IDPs," which brought IDPs together to share their stories and needs with representatives from local, national, and international agencies.

Collectively, the teams within CWS-P/A and from our implementing partners worked together in order to develop and operate a comprehensive response to the crisis. The relief phase continues as CWS-P/A plans for long-term rehabilitation for IDPs who have returned to their homes in order to ensure livelihood restoration.



CWS-P/A Supported an Award-Winning Translation May



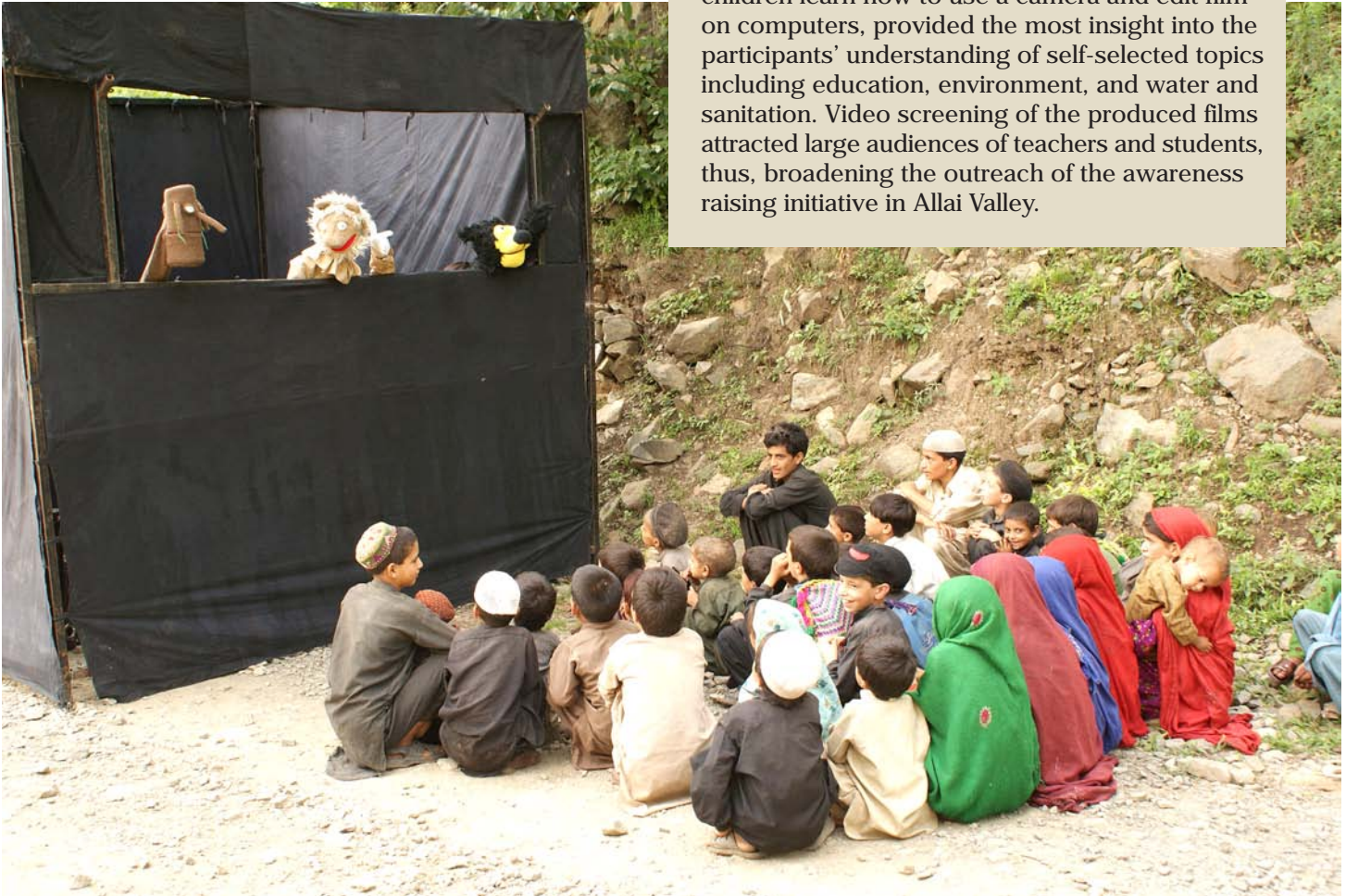
Dr. Zia Mutaher's book, *Dr. Ruth Pfau—a biography*, which was first printed in English in 2004, was translated into the Sindhi language by Mr. Murad Ali Mirza. CWS-P/A supported the printing cost of the translation which received the award for best Sindhi translation (2008). The award was announced by Sindhi Adabi Sangat, Sindh.

The biography looks at the life and profession of Dr. Ruth Pfau who worked for treatment and improving the quality of life of patients with leprosy in Pakistan.

Creatively Educating Children on Key Social Issues August

CWS-P/A's Advocacy Project under Partnership for the Recovery and Development of Allai (PRDA) continued its outreach to children in Allai Valley, NWFP, Pakistan. Using a participatory approach, the project increases awareness of social issues including education, water and sanitation, and the environment. In order to engage the children, CWS-P/A and its implementing partner, Interactive Resource Center, uses various techniques including puppet shows, interactive theater performances, and video documentation and sessions.

During August, students from schools throughout Allai Valley watched puppet shows on environmental and sanitation issues. Additionally, through eight interactive theater performances, the children learned about water and sanitation issues as well as possible solutions. However, the participatory video sessions, during which the children learn how to use a camera and edit film on computers, provided the most insight into the participants' understanding of self-selected topics including education, environment, and water and sanitation. Video screening of the produced films attracted large audiences of teachers and students, thus, broadening the outreach of the awareness raising initiative in Allai Valley.



CWS-P/A Strengthens the Use of Sphere in Pakistan and Afghanistan

July/August

As the Sphere Focal Point in Pakistan since 2006, CWS-P/A regularly conducts Sphere training for humanitarians in both Pakistan and Afghanistan. The Sphere Focal Point Project aims to encourage and provide knowledge regarding the use of Sphere minimum standards during emergency response. These international standards include details for technical aspects related to various sectors including health, shelter, and food. At the same time, the standards also include provisions for maintaining the equality and dignity of beneficiaries.

During July, CWS-P/A conducted two Training of Trainers workshops in order to strengthen the capacity and help meet the demand for more Sphere trainers. In Pakistan, the workshop catered to organizations responding to the current IDP crisis. The second workshop, which was conducted a week later in Afghanistan, attracted participants from INGOs, local organizations, UN, and the government. In total, thirty-eight Sphere trainers received training through CWS-P/A's latest opportunities. All of the participants, in small groups, contributed to the workshop by conducting a session related to various sections of the Sphere Handbook; by watching their recorded training sessions, the participants were able to witness how they are as facilitators. This technique, used by the facilitator for both workshops, Annie Lloyd, aims to prepare the participants for their future roles as Sphere trainers.

CWS-P/A also played a significant role in the current revision process of the Sphere Handbook for which a revised handbook is expected by the end of 2010. Various



stages of revision are underway; CWS-P/A's role has been to conduct two revision sessions. In each of the revision sessions, one in Pakistan and one in Afghanistan, group work and discussion were used to provide humanitarians who actively use Sphere an opportunity to suggest modifications in qualitative and quantitative indicators and guidance notes. Based on their experiences in the Pakistani and Afghani contexts, the participants provided specific and justified reasons for changes to the 2004 edition. The output from the two sessions, also facilitated by Annie Lloyd, was submitted to the Sphere Geneva office for further consideration during the revision process.

Shabana Bhatti, Sphere Focal Point, shared her enthusiasm, "I am happy to be a part of revision process of the Sphere Handbook 2009-2010. Since using it for the last three years, it's so exciting to see its next, new version. I think the handbook revision should not make it even thicker and lengthier; it should be the same—precise and targeted."

Summer Camps Attract One Hundred Twenty-Five Students in Sindh

June

The Capacity Building Program's Sindh Political Education Project annually hosts summer camps for students from interior Sindh, Pakistan. Two camps held from June 16-21, 2009 attracted one hundred twenty-five students and nineteen teachers from twelve schools.

The CWS-P/A facilitators engaged the enthusiastic students in open discussions, group work, presentations, and role plays. Topics of the interactive sessions ranged from human and child rights, political education, and the electoral process in Pakistan to gender discrimination. CWS-P/A consistently incorporates gender into its projects; targeting youth helps establish the groundwork for lessening the persistent gender gaps in Pakistan. During the summer camp, the animated story, Meena ki Kahani (A Girl's Story), displayed gender disparities in a creative and interesting way. Positive comments were shared regarding the experience; one participant shared, "Gender issue is very common in our community; this is a very positive step to change our minds at a younger age." Another student expressed, "Political education, especially the voting process, is a very wonderful process."

Selected participants belong to highly vulnerable segments of society, lead lives without access to basic life necessities, and reside in homes that lack electricity or gas. The summer camps were many of the students' first experiences discussing sensitive social issues among their peers. CWS-P/A also used the opportunity to provide students with school and hygiene kits in order to promote better practices and awareness.

Child Rehabilitation Centers –Building a Stronger Future August

In preparation for a new phase of CWS-P/A's successful project, Child Rehabilitation Centers, the Social Development Program team visited Bamyan, Afghanistan in order to analyze lessons learned from the previous year's project. Focus group discussions with parents and teachers from the previous CRC provided informative feedback. Additionally, a SWOT analysis with the teachers led to recommendations and lessons learned that will be incorporated in the new phase.



The visit also included coordination with CWS-P/A's implementing partner, Cooperation Center for Afghanistan. The CCA participants contributed to a SWOT analysis exercise which opened discussion for challenges and ways to overcome them. CWS-P/A and CCA also discussed ways to improve implementation, communication, and monitoring of the project.

The new phase will continue regular CRC activities that strive to increase the children's awareness of child rights, health education, hygiene, environmental education, peace building, mine awareness, literature and arts, and computer learning. CWS-P/A envisions that addressing the children's nutritional, educational, recreational, intellectual growth, and health needs will help Afghanistan build a stronger future of leaders and citizens. The children selected for CRC come from families who suffer from the social and economic backlash from decades of war, drought, famine, and tyranny.

Interactive Learning Visit Offers Firsthand Opportunities May

Through its program, Promoting Good Governance, CWS-P/A created an opportunity for its partner, Thardeep Rural Development Program, as well as for four other partners. Using a methodology that combined field visits, techniques sharing, and networking, the Interactive Learning Visit enabled the participants and host organization to interact and showcase successful, innovative project initiatives within the local community.

CWS-P/A's objective was to create a learning environment that offered participants an understanding of issues including education, community mobilization, advocacy, human and child rights, and health. Additionally, the organization aimed to demonstrate skills used for promoting community participation and for creating an enabling environment for various stakeholders; this was achieved by using TRDP's approach as a practical example.



Participants took keen interest in several initiatives related to water conservation techniques and a health insurance scheme for community members. CWS-P/A selected TRDP as the host organization because of its successes within the local community and its comprehensive, innovative program. The visit, which took place from May 27-29, 2009, allowed participants and the host organization to network and strengthen professional relationships that could prove beneficial for other communities in which the participating organizations work.

Special Visits by CWS, Inc.

June

During June, CWS-P/A staff benefited from two visits from colleagues from CWS, Inc.

During June, CWS' Executive Director, John McCullough visited the CWS-P/A staff in Pakistan as part of his commitment toward staff care. Meetings with managers as well as a separate meeting with CWS-P/A's female managers provided John and the staff the opportunity to discuss solidarity between CWS, Inc., CWS-P/A, and other regional offices, changes and roles in CWS, and the challenges women deal with during their work in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Working on opposite sides of the world often makes it difficult to make a connection with colleagues; John's visit provided some staff the opportunity to meet him for the first time as well as for other staff to reconnect. John also met with pastors and church leaders in Pakistan.



The second visit, which took place a couple weeks later, involved linking communication between CWS-P/A and the CWS New York office. Matt Hackworth, Communication Officer, visited the Islamabad and Karachi offices, providing training on communication skills and tools to CWS-P/A staff. In addition, the training included in-field experience and practical application with visits to IDP response areas and the Mirpurkhas Food Security Project. The visit also allowed communicators from CWS-P/A to meet, discuss, and work toward enhanced linkages between the two offices.

Water and Sanitation Project Initiated in Rawalakot

August

CWS-P/A initiated its component of the project, Water Quality Improvement & Promotion of Hygiene (WAQIPH), which is being implemented in ten districts of North West Frontier Province and Azad Jammu Kashmir by a consortium of organizations. Aiming to minimize the risk of water and sanitation related diseases, the project contributes to the development and protection of regions affected by the 2005 earthquake.

On August 7, 2009, representatives from UNICEF, AJK's Disaster Response Unit, the local government, District Education and Health Departments, Rural Development Departments, NRSP, and UN-Habitat actively participated in an inauguration ceremony. A project briefing was also given by Imran Munir, CWS-P/A's Project Coordinator, to the participants. At the end of the event, the stakeholders assured the team of complete support to make this initiative successful.

Since then, in line with the aim for formation and strengthening of Water Management Committees (WMCs) for enhanced water supply systems and hygiene promotion for the local communities, a pre-KAP survey and assessment of WMCs have taken place. A total of two hundred eleven villages of Poonch and Sudhnoti Districts in AJK will benefit from CWS-P/A's WAQIPH component.

Promoting Girls' Education in Afghanistan

July/August

Hoping to bring effective change in education in Laghman Province, CWS-P/A directly addressed the community on the present challenges for girls' education in Qarghai District. Through meetings with local *shura* (religious leaders), teachers, and community members, attention to issues related to girls' education reached the forefront of the community's focus ahead of the new school year.

Prior to the opening of schools, which is expected in September, CWS-P/A provided forty-four teachers training on modern pedagogical methods for primary school. The participating teachers learned techniques that will assist them in engaging students in the education process. The teachers received packages of stationery and training material to assist them practically apply the newly learned methods. Dedicated to educating the girls in their community, the teachers' commitment appeared high during the workshops.

The Enhancement and Enrollment of Girls and Quality Education Project uses a comprehensive approach to promote girls' education in Afghanistan. Through this project, capacity building initiatives will continue, girls' enrollment will increase through community mobilization, and reconstruction and rebuilding of schools will occur; all activities not only promote but improve the quality of education available in the targeted areas.

CWS-P/A Opens a Model Dairy Farm

June

On June 23, 2009, CWS-P/A and its implementing partner, Hashoo Foundation, opened a model dairy farm in Boli Balakot. The dairy farm is part of CWS-P/A's Expanded Dairy Development Program which is supported by Evangelischer Entwicklungsdienst-EED. This project is a continuation of livelihood rehabilitation efforts in response to the 2005 earthquake in Pakistan.

Through one hundred seventy-five planned training sessions, approximately three hundred farming families, a majority of which are female-headed households or from vulnerable segments of society, will learn scientific techniques in livestock management and dairy farming. Sessions will cover topics including livestock management, animal housing, animal disease management, feed and fodder development, breed improvement, and dairy product development and marketing.

Currently, female-headed dairy farming families rely on minimal daily output of approximately five liters per day. By using the modern techniques, these families are expected to at least double the daily milk output.



Additionally, the training center will educate and provide the women with skills to expand their dairy products to include cheese and yogurt. Increased output combined with new marketing skills will enable the women to generate more income for their families. Increased income will improve quality of life and enable them to send their children to school and also afford medicines and other food items.

Local Capacities for Peace Initiatives for Staff

July/August

As an implementer of Local Capacities of Peace, CWS-P/A recently took the initiative to educate all staff on LCP concepts in order to effectively promote its practice. Mahnaz Rehman introduced the concept of "Do No Harm" and encouraged her fellow colleagues to incorporate it into daily work and organizational activities. The main idea is that tension and conflict may often be generated unintentionally among beneficiaries and that tact must be used to prevent it.

Thus far, training sessions were conducted for staff in two CWS-P/A locations, Karachi and Islamabad. Through a participatory approach, Mahnaz emphasized that all humanitarian work should be undertaken with sensitivity to culture and situation, proper work ethics, and responsibility. The climax of the session showed every participant that a multitude of solutions may be available for even the most difficult situations.

Participants felt an added value and understood the importance of LCP after attending the sessions. The plan, to fully adopt the concept of "Do No Harm," increases the probability of effectively serving the communities with whom CWS-P/A works.

Correction

In the January-April 2009 edition, "Children Give Passionate Performances at the Youth Festival in Mirpurkhas" names the implementing partner as Parkari Community Development Project; however, the implementing partner was Society for Safe Environment and Welfare of Agrarians. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Women and their Reproductive Health Rights

■ Written By: Beenish Hashwani

"I dream of Pakistan, an Asia, of a world where every pregnancy is planned and every child conceived is nurtured, loved, educated, and supported." Benazir Bhutto, ICPD (1994)

With an approximate population of 170 million, Pakistan is currently the sixth most populous country in the world. Projected estimates suggest that at the current rate, by 2050 Pakistan's population will explode to be around 295 million making it the fifth most populous country globally. Demographically, the country has a huge youth population, with 41% below fourteen years of age.¹

Judging by these figures, one would expect excellent infrastructures, policies, and procedures to help promote health rights for the Pakistani population. However, this dream is a far cry from the actual situation. Sadly, Pakistan has some of the worst health indicators in the world. Narrowing down the health indicators to reproductive health, the situation grows dimmer.

Pakistan's Infant Mortality Rate (IMR) is 78 deaths per 1,000 live births, while the less than five year mortality is 94 deaths per 1,000 live births. Even more shocking is the Mother Mortality Rate (MMR) which is 276 deaths per 100,000 live births. The figure of 276 is an average; the actual MMR in rural areas is as high as 319 MMR deaths.

Only 34% of births take place in health facilities while the remaining 65% of births take place in homes; 35% of pregnant women receive no prenatal care. Considering another aspect of reproductive health, on average every Pakistani woman will experience abortion or miscarriage at least once in her lifetime. Despite a high prevalence of abortion, only 4-7% of women go to trained service providers for the procedure.

Family planning and contraceptive use have always been highly controversial, and fundamentalists have always chosen to claim illegality under the name of religion. Therefore, the use of modern contraceptives by married women is 22% while an unmet demand of 25% exists. Contrary to Pakistan, other Islamic countries such as Bangladesh and Iran have implemented highly successful family planning models in their respective countries.

Poor reproductive health indicators in Pakistan can be attributed to many reasons, but by far, the single, most determining issue is the lack of empowerment of women. It is traditionally deep-rooted in the culture to treat women as second class citizens. With a prevailing degree of poverty in Pakistan, women frequently make do with less food to ensure that the male family members receive enough nutrition. As a result, only four in ten women take iron or calcium supplements during pregnancy, which ultimately results in the poor health of both the mother and child.

In addition, the common desire to have more male heirs results in subsequent, multiple pregnancies and severely affects women's health. In this highly patriarchal society, men make all the decisions. Men typically decide how many children a woman should have and if their wives can visit a trained health service provider to seek medical attention during the crucial pre and postnatal periods. Thus, the chance for a woman to decide whether to use contraceptives or not is extremely unlikely. Ultimately, men literally control the reproductive health of women.



In order to combat such a complex situation, it is imperative that policy makers, especially parliamentarians, are approached and updated with regard to the situation. While the government has access to the funds needed to implement large scale advocacy campaigns needed to bring about change, it is the civil society who has access to the on-ground situation and information. Therefore, strong synergies and collaborations need to be developed between the government and civil society.

Such a synergy was formed by CWS-P/A and the Health Standing Committee. On August 5, 2009, a one-day seminar attracted parliamentarians, National Standing Committee for Health members, health experts, and donors working on reproductive health issues in the country. Organized under CWS-P/A's project, Euroleverage Pakistan, the seminar, co-chaired by Dr. Mehreen Razzaq Bhutto (MNA and Parliamentary Secretary for Health) and Dr. Nadeem Ahsan (Chairman National Standing Committee for Health), addressed new initiatives taken by the Ministry of Health for reproductive health issues and the expected population boom that threatens Pakistan.

During the meeting, a call for action was drafted and some of the recommendations made include the consideration of reproductive health as a national priority with a rights-based approach. It was also strongly recommended that efficiency and coordination between various ministries and departments need to be increased, a culture of responsibility and accountability needs to be developed, and strong monitoring mechanisms need to be in place to reduce the infant, child, and maternal mortality. Additionally, review of the progress of the ICPD Plan of Action was suggested. Gender sensitive policies and programs regarding reproductive health also need promotion, and meaningful participation of stakeholders needs to be encouraged in order to address specific needs and enhance ownership. The event's outcome was inline with the aim of Euroleverage Pakistan, which is to address the issue of assessing and mobilizing resources for reproductive health in Pakistan

Pakistan needs to ensure that its promises to the international community, especially the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) and Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), do not become mere aspirations; concrete steps need to be taken toward the realization of giving women in Pakistan access to better and informed choices regarding their reproductive health.

¹ Statistics used in this report come from the World Population Fund, January 2009 (workshop in Islamabad)

Providing Health Care to Afghan Returnees

■ Written by: Saadia Haq

Church World Service-Pakistan/Afghanistan's Nangahar and Laghman Health Project is working to improve overall health and health delivery systems for the Afghan returnee population living in both provinces. According to the 2008 estimates of Afghanistan Central Statistics Office, Nangahar Province has a population of 1,334,000 people, and among them, 845,000 are under the age of eighteen.

The need for health care and health care systems after the Afghan War was observed, and CWS-P/A initiated its Nangahar Health Project (NHP) in 1997. Due to many reasons, Afghan refugees have also migrated back to Afghanistan, and in 2007 alone, UNHCR estimates show that 742,000 new refugees returned to the province. The influx of returnees increased pressure on the existing health care systems in the region.



A comprehensive package including reproductive health services, immunization, TB and malaria control, mental health, child spacing, health care awareness sessions, and health and laboratory facilities were provided to the people. CWS-P/A built the capacity of local people; seventy-nine men and women received training and became part of the project initiatives. Apart from the regular project staff, the Nangahar Health Project was able to also rouse large public interest and commitment to its cause; 483 local Afghan volunteers also joined hands to become Female Health Workers and Community Health Workers. Such contributions have added to the success of the health program; community elders also mobilized the local

people in different villages and supported the project initiatives.

CWS-P/A's Mansehra Health Program provides preventive and curative health care services to the Afghan refugees through its network of three basic health units (BHUs) in Barakai, Inchrian, and Khaki. Over its thirty year experience, the Mansehra Health Program successfully trained a large number of refugees. Thus far, seven trained refugees who returned to Afghanistan joined the Nangahar Health Project. This has added to CWS-P/A's overall goal of strengthening the health care for the Afghan people.

As a continuation, in 2008, CWS-P/A initiated the project with support of Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (BPRM) and now operates in two provinces, Nangahar and Laghman.

In addition to the activities mentioned, vaccination campaigns were able to provide 79,266 children less than 5 years of age with polio drops. The TB control activities continued in collaboration with our partners; NHP is the only program or health service in the area which has implemented the TB component effectively with the help of 255 field team members. Thus far, fifty-eight pulmonary and three extra-pulmonary patients have undergone treatment for TB in the Comprehensive Health Centers (CHCs).

Lina Khan, a resident of Surkhrood District, Nangahar Province, Afghanistan, was diagnosed with TB at the Comprehensive Health Center (CHC). Dr. Safir, CWS-P/A's Clinic Manager, assisted Lina for the complete treatment and provided her timely medical advice. After eight months of treatment including chemotherapy, Lina was able to recover from her chronic TB sickness.

A healthy Lina said, "I am really thankful to CWS and Dr. Safir who helped me get better and regain strength. Before, I was not able to take care of my small child because of being sick with TB. Since we returned from Pakistan, life had been very tough; both my husband and I work as daily wages laborers in a local factory, but with my illness, I was not able to even get up from bed to do household chores let alone work. I was not able to cope with TB; however, CWS has been a godsend, and they helped me and so many other sick people to get better."

"CWS-P/A should continue providing health assistance to poor and needy people like us, and I hope that the health center project does not end. I am up on my two feet with their help and also request them to keep working for Afghan people's welfare," expressed Lina.

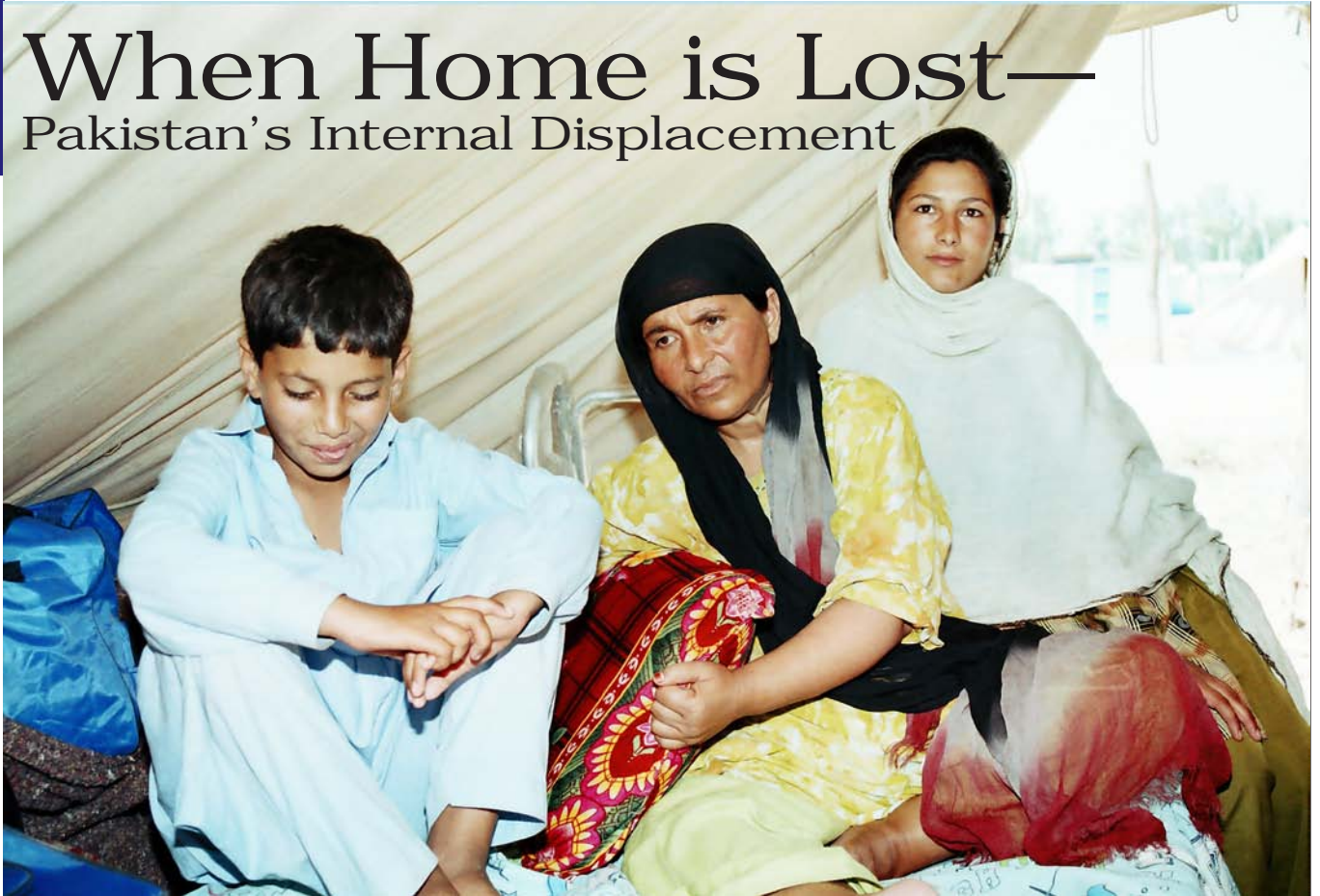
Partner's Profile



Cooperation Centre for Afghanistan (CCA) was established in 1990 and, since then, has promoted human rights, the rule of law, democracy, and sustainable development in fourteen provinces of northern and central Afghanistan. CCA works for and with women, children, returning refugees, disabled individuals, displaced families, and victims of human rights violations. CCA also aims to strengthen the capacity of public service providers, community workers, and development practitioners through its capacity building programs.

CWS-P/A first worked with CCA during an emergency response to an earthquake that devastated parts of Takhar Province, Afghanistan in February 1998. Over subsequent years, CCA implemented other CWS-P/A emergency response initiatives. In 2002, CWS-P/A partnered with CCA in order to implement its Child Rehabilitation Center in Kabul; the partnership continues as a new phase of CRC is beginning.

When Home is Lost— Pakistan's Internal Displacement



■ *Written by: Kelli Siddiqui*

“We lost our paradise,” shared Junaid*, an IDP who previously lived comfortably in Swat and who was coping with his temporary life in a crowded farmhouse in Swabi. **Junaid escaped Swat with his mother and sister** during a three-hour break before a twenty-two day curfew.

Fortunate to have their own vehicle, the family traveled the fifty-six kilometers in seven hours due to over-congestion of the roads; others from their community, including pregnant women, who joined them in Swabi had to travel the same distance by foot. Junaid expressed an overwhelming degree of apprehension about their situation, and yet, at the same time, this computer science teacher was composed as he discussed the violence he had witnessed at the hands of Taliban, the challenges of being an IDP, the burden he felt he placed on his host, the inaccessibility to his funds, and the aid he had received from humanitarian agencies including CWS-P/A.

Similar in many ways, IDPs' stories often reflected saddening accounts of violence, loss, and uncertainty. Every story also contained its uniqueness. Although every voice could not be heard, a sense of the life-altering transition and adjustment to living as an IDP can be extracted from the words of a few.

Questions existed in everyone's mind. Why? This seemed to be the most prominent question of all. Due to the international fight on terror, the militant presence in Swat and surrounding areas, the Pakistani government's agenda to rid its country of the enemy, and perhaps, a few unknown reasons as well, millions of Pakistanis became displaced in a matter of days and weeks, the majority during May. Fleeing for their lives with little or no possessions or cash, they reached camps and host communities during the onset of the sweltering, summer heat.

**A pseudonym is used to protect the real identity of the beneficiary; included photos are not of any person mentioned in this story.*



UN agencies, INGOs, other organizations, and the government almost instantaneously began distributing tents, food items, and other basic necessities; however, for many IDPs, these goods were inaccessible. For unaccompanied women, elderly, and other vulnerable individuals, standing in lines dominated by men was unthinkable. The extremely conservative people from northern Pakistan, who segregate men and women from childhood, suddenly were living in exposed proximity and unfamiliar surroundings. Women, scared to leave their tents, often did not receive food or medical attention for days on end. Even women accompanied by male family members suffered as they remained isolated in crowded, improperly ventilated, hot tents and small rooms. A lack of female doctors added to the misery; reports of unexamined wounds, unattended childbirths, and untreated illnesses flooded the news. Concern for the well-being of children touched the local and international communities; torn from their homes, schools, and friends, children, traumatized by violence and war, stared out of tents with blank faces and then, suddenly cringed and hid at the sound of overhead helicopters, a poignant reminder of the last images of home.

A new question arose. To what home will the displaced families return? Rumors and confirmed reports of destroyed homes, agricultural lands, schools, and health facilities added to the uncertainty that plagued the IDPs who waited for the opportunity to return to their homeland and to reclaim their lives. Unfulfilled promises and slow receipt of funds from the international community prevented organizations from fully serving the displaced population. Host communities, willing but unable to sufficiently support the influx of people, faced the dire situation of helping their fellow Pakistanis while experiencing the depletion of meager resources. Talks of military success and the approaching time for return ignited questions of security, vulnerability, and doubt.

In a compelling, one-hour, follow-up interview with a then ill Junaid and his sister on June 24, 2009, the two siblings expressed the needs of the IDPs and host communities and the uncertainty of return. Junaid pleaded for assistance for young IDPs as he compared the days when children from Swat played cricket and hockey instead of the current infatuation with imitating war and violence during their recreation. He claimed a great loss for the future because of the difficulty to recover the minds of these children once they reach teenage or adult years. Junaid sounded more solemn and dejected, although not at his personal situation, at the future for all IDPs. On his mind were the lack of facilities in Swat; no electricity, drinking water, food, and other basic necessities provoked the question of what the IDPs will do when they return.

Junaid's outspoken, confident sister talked of her education and questions of being able to complete her PhD; she shared her opinion of how the educated people of Swat could be useful if employed in technical and professional jobs that could work for the progress and development of host communities such as Mardan and Swabi. She insisted that the government's guarantee of security must accompany the push for IDPs to return home. In the background, their mother's pleas for them not to divulge information persisted; she feared retaliation from Taliban if her children's identities became known.

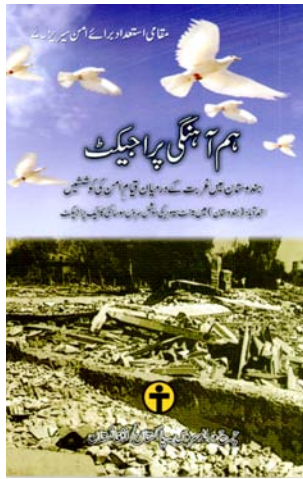
Slightly delayed from its initial plan, on July 13, the government began the repatriation of thousands of IDPs amidst the uncertainty of continuing conflict in some areas, the acute shortage of food and services, and the loss of property and livelihood. IDPs, whether remaining in host communities or having returned, faced a similar dilemma; life was neither easy nor the same as it once was. A façade of normalcy developed as schools and courts reopened in Buner and Swat in early August; however, the reality included limited, student attendance in makeshift classrooms outside of fallen school buildings. For IDPs who remained in host communities, the opening of school signified the possibility of their children missing yet another year of education. August passed as more and more IDPs returned home and new IDPs arrived after the military started operations in Waziristan and other areas.

Attempts to contact Junaid were made but to no avail; have he, his sister, and mother returned to their lost paradise? Has Junaid returned to his teaching post in a government school near Mingora? If he returned, could he salvage his possessions, access food, and feel safe? Junaid's is only one journey. The hoped for happy ending remains a mystery against the backdrop of the uncertain future for millions of Pakistanis whose desire to reclaim their homeland must persevere despite the unimaginable struggle to find the phoenix among the loss and devastation.

“The Harmony Project: Peace Building amid Poverty in India”

CWS-P/A, as part of its Local Capacities for Peace initiative, produces a series of Urdu translations of related publications. The seventh booklet and first of 2009 is a translation of a case study written by Joseph Bock, which is included in Mary B. Anderson’s book, *Do No Harm*.

The case study looks at the variety of ways that a social service project started by a Jesuit community of Catholics in the 1970s aims to promote interfaith harmony between Muslims and Hindus in Ahmedabad, India.



This publication is available through CWS-P/A.

HOT Topic

Child Rights

Child Rights refers to the notion that every child is entitled to human rights including civil, cultural, economic, political, and social and also requires special care and protection. Nearly two decades have passed since the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child was ratified by world leaders. Committed countries strive to ensure that every child has the right to survival, to develop to the fullest, to protection from harmful influences, abuse, and exploitation, and to participate fully in family, cultural, and social life.

On November 12, 1990, Pakistan ratified the Convention, and it entered into force on December 12, 1990. At the time of ratification, Pakistan made a general reservation that the provisions of the Convention shall be interpreted according to the principles of Islamic Laws and values. The reservation was withdrawn on July 23, 1997. However, unlike some of the other countries of the world, conventions are not enforceable in Pakistan until an enabling legislation makes them law of the land. Pakistan has yet to introduce the required law.¹

child rights

In 1994, Afghanistan ratified the Convention. However, it was in August 2009 that the Afghan Ministry of Foreign Affairs issued a report which recommends how the judicial and legal systems and how Afghan laws can be reformed to be compliant with the Convention.²

Despite the commitment to child rights, Pakistan and Afghanistan fail to protect the rights of every child. Violence, child labor, and forced, early marriages are issues that negatively affect thousands of children in both countries. Families are increasingly more vulnerable to traumas arising out of incidents of child sexual abuse, mainly due to conservative structures and low priority given to sexual education. In many parts of Pakistan and Afghanistan, where significant numbers of children are orphaned or come from families who live close to or below the poverty line, the children cannot afford to go to school and instead opt to find work in garments’ factories, sports equipment manufacturing industries, or simply resort to selling merchandise in the streets.

CWS-P/A incorporates education and protection of child rights in its projects. In Pakistan, the Capacity Building Program operates several projects which include education and awareness of child rights within targeted communities. Children learn about their rights and are encouraged through theater performances, youth festivals, and youth groups to transfer their knowledge to their peers and the wider community. In Afghanistan, CWS-P/A’s Child Rehabilitation Centers provide a safe environment for vulnerable children to learn, play, and receive required nutrition and psychosocial support. Following emergencies, CWS-P/A has worked for reconstruction of schools and promoted school safety in order to provide a brighter, educational future for disaster-affected youth.

¹ Society for the Protection of the Rights of the Child < www.sparcpk.org > 6 September 2009.

² UNICEF “Historic milestone for children’s rights” 18 August 2009.

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 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.

Words
of
Wisdom

“If we cannot end our differences, at least we can help make the world safe for diversity.”

John F. Kennedy (1917-1963)