



Hearing & Speech Centre

Managed by
Alhoda- The Hearing Impaired Education & Rehabilitation Association ®
www.hearingschools.com

Earthquake Relief Report and Appeal

On October 8th 2005, a powerful earthquake with a magnitude of 7.6 struck Pakistan. Four days later, I left for Pakistan upon my task to mobilize our team already in operation to initiate relief work for country's worst natural disaster. The devastating earthquake that struck Azad Kashmir and NWFP caused widespread damage, killing and injuring thousands and leaving over 3.5 million homeless in the bitter cold.



graveyards City of Muzaffarabad and adjoining villages disappeared in landslides

It has been humbling experience for me to utilise our human resources during this difficult time. During my visits to Muzaffarabad and other mountainous areas of Pakistan we have distributed relief goods weighing around 20 tons. It has been a privilege to hand out the relief items give a sincere message of sympathy of our Habib Bank AG Zurich team to the injured and starved.

During the course of our relief work. We have had to drive along dangerous roads exposed to landslides covered by stones and rocks from the aftershocks. This had made it extremely difficult to reach the needy people and delayed our operation. We travelled day and night to reach the earthquake stricken people but goods could only be distributed in the night with the help of our volunteer team. In some cases, we also received help from the Pakistani Army and Police Force. Though devastated, the poor victims always said to me "Allah bless you and may you live in peace "



The dead bodies in front of MC Hospital Muzaffarabad

During my visit to the devastated areas, God Almighty gave me the opportunity to send out a message from eyewitnesses to our president, Mr. Hyder M. Habib for desperately needed help for the earthquake survivors at risk from the cold without any shelter. As there was shortage of such relief items in the local market he was kind enough to organise promptly a large consignment of suitable tents for winter and blankets from Switzerland for earthquake victims.

In Muzaffarabad city, we saw mothers with injured children suffering through the cold nights as we covered them with blankets. In addition the families of the thousands who were buried alive had been waiting patiently for any kind of help. Over 90% of the houses had collapsed. The earthquake killed 43,399 people and injured 31,069 in Muzaffarabad, Neelum, Bagh, Rawlakot and Palandri districts of Azad Jammu and Kashmir.



Quake survivors reach out for badly needed food and

In the aftermath of the quake, we wish to continue our humble duty to mobilise more kind hearted people and to serve orphans and to give them a complete program of accommodation, education and rehabilitation in an organized manner. The Hearing & Speech Centre in Pakistan is equipped with 30 dedicated (female) Staff Members.



Balakot City, NWFP



Landslides near Nawazabad, NWFP

Our school and hostel building in Abbottabad was damaged in the earthquake. Currently, we have resumed our operation outside these buildings following a week's disruption and will continue our operation in tents for the hearing impaired. Our Halli School (170 students), which is approximately 30km north of Islamabad, is still intact and will be utilised for accommodation and rehabilitation for orphans and the homeless while the primary hearing impaired lessons continue to run here as well.



Students burial at Degree College Muzaffarabad



Near Nawazabad, NWFP

The need for decisive action in the face of this emergency is tremendous. An area of about 25,000 square miles with a population of 6 million has been affected. We should not turn our faces away when we know we can save some children from starvation in cold mountains without shelter. We believe, together we can rebuild a better future for the survivors to witness the next generation to come.

Children were the foremost victims because they were in their classrooms at the time; a full generation has been lost. Most of the survived children lost at least one parent in the massive and deadly earthquake. There is no clear figure on how many children are displaced. The total official death toll stands at around 74,000 people, but international donors estimate that more than 86,000 were killed in Pakistan alone half of those killed in quake were children under 18. There is no place for them to go to play, no real counselling and no education system left.

There are also a huge number of children who had body parts amputated and who would likely be marginalized in an impoverished society not trained to deal with people with disabilities.

Tremendous efforts are required towards rebuilding the educational system from scratch. It is thought that most schools were destroyed and hundreds of teachers were killed. The few schools that are still standing have been declared risky and unusable.



Helpless parents atop the school house in Muzaffarabad



Mansehra, NWFP

Many quake victims from Kaghan and Allai valley have been shifted to Mansehra and other areas. Our first school started its operation on November 25, 2005 for 250 displaced children in Mansehra in a temporary shelter. As winter approaches, earthquake victims from the mountainous areas are expected to rush down to seek shelters from the frosty season. To confront such challenge, we need support of our friends to open more tent-schools and supply learning material and train teachers.

Major long-term commitments will be needed for orphaned children and rebuilding the communities. While going through increasing pains, it will be interesting to look at the affected families sometime from now on. We may have to convert the temporary shelter-schools into properly built school. We will continuously create a mechanism for keeping discussion and coordination on a regular bases. In this way, we have an opportunity to record baseline information and compare it with our expectation to see whether questions have been answered, and the services have progressed effectively.

Beside our ongoing humble services to deaf and hard of hearing and non-hearing-impaired children, as we witnessed the overwhelming opportunity to help suffering families. We have added this educational program for the displaced children to continue our relief work in the earthquake affected areas. The additional service is aimed to educating the quake survivors and to put together hearing impaired children and orphans for long term obligation of education and rehabilitation program. Helping hands has promised to facilitate us re-establish their future. This indeed is a major challenge.

Thanking you,

Manzoor Ahmed

Banking information:
Förderverein für die Erziehung und Rehabilitierung Schwerhöriger
FERS - „Orphan-Project“
Swiss Post Bank account: **85-292144-6;**
BIC: POFICHBE; IBAN: CH480900000852921446