

Field Update – Baluchistan Earthquake 2008 (Pakistan)

HAP Field Staff
(Baluchistan, Pakistan)

Lack of quality leads to death and hard reactions by disaster-survivors

On 15th November, while en route to monitor a distribution centre in Warchoom, HAP field staff, along with other travellers, were held at a blockade in the road near the village of Wam. Villagers had blockaded the road in protest over the lack of appropriate shelter. It came to light that the community's frustration and anger was exacerbated in recent days by the death of a young boy. A family lost their 8-year-old boy after they resorted to lighting a fire for heating purposes in their tent to keep warm throughout the night. In the night winds, the fire quickly got out of control engulfing the tent, killing the boy and severely injuring another. Non-winterised tents have been distributed by numerous I/NGOs and local authorities are inadequate for the bitterly cold and snowy winter with temperatures plummeting to -13°C and lower.



Facing continuous after shocks disaster survivors take refuge in non-winterised tents.

This community is one of many affected following the earthquake on 29th October,

which resulted in devastation and the displacement of more than 10,000 households. A number of HAP member agencies responded to the disaster and continue to provide immediate relief and distribution of emergency aid and shelter. In order to assist member agencies in their continual improvement and promotion of quality and accountability, HAP has deployed staff from the Islamabad office to Baluchistan province. Despite the challenges of access, HAP member agencies are employing a number of strategies to implement their commitment to the



HAP staff listening to and taking feedback from the community in the village of Spayzandi in Ziarat District

Principles of Accountability; from staff inductions to ensure that deployed staff and partners understand the basics; to speaking with local communities on needs and complaints; to integrating quality and accountability initiatives into the emergency response strategy. But most importantly, HAP agencies are committed to making sure that the survivors are receiving adequate and appropriate humanitarian aid so as not to suffer more avoidable deaths. Together with agencies and community members HAP worked across the province to help realise accountability principles in real time, while identifying accountability successes and points for improvements.

Highlighting issues of accountability at the General Coordination Meeting

During the 14th November General Coordination Meeting held in Ziarat at the District Commissioner's Office, HAP staff raised a number of issues that came to light after consultations with members of affected communities across the province. Firstly, as an accountability improvement mechanism there is a need for the coordination meetings to include representation from disaster survivors, giving them a voice on par with local authorities and humanitarian agencies. Secondly, an improved plan so that disaster survivors receive timely and effective information regarding the strategies and plans agreed upon. As a result of this lack of information, along with the expectation of further assistance, there is delay in the traditional climatic migration of some members of the community, leaving them to suffer the current harsh and cold weather. Finally, it was recommended that an information desk be established allowing people access to updates and relevant information thus alleviating concerns and uncertainties around current and future assistance plans. The District Commissioner and District Nazim (Mayor) of Ziarat welcomed all the recommendations.

Fast Facts

Fatalities: 163
Injured: 175
Displaced households: 7000-10,000
Houses damaged: 9,000
Villages affected: 281
Source: National Management Authority (NDMA) of Pakistan

Member Activities Update:

1. Muslim Aid

- Distribution sites visited in Wam, Khanwari Baba: District Ziarat
- Discussions have been held with disaster survivors regarding the quality and service of aid, information and transparency. Other topics explored with the community included, beneficiary criteria and participation along with possibilities of improvement to complaints and response mechanisms. As a result of these community-based consultations and feedback sessions a transitional shelter kit model (made of CGI sheets) has been developed addressing the needs of the community (and individuals families). The construction has been started on over 1000 such shelters. HAP and Muslim Aid are jointly monitoring associated field sites to improve levels of accountability to beneficiaries within Muslim Aid projects.

2. Church World Service (Pakistan/Afghanistan) working through their partner, Strengthening Participatory Organization (SPO)

- Distribution sites visited in Spayzandi, Warchoom: Union Council Khawas- District Ziarat.
- Prior to the earthquake, local disaster response volunteer teams had been already identified and trained by SPO. These local volunteers and SPO emergency response teams reacted quickly to the disaster and undertook swift assessments and began their beneficiary selection processes within hours of arrival. The rollout of CWS winterised tents and food items to the affected areas are near completion. Disaster survivors outside of CWS P/A & SPO distribution sites have reportedly said, "You can take 10 of the other tents distributed and give us one of your winterised tents."

3. Care International

- Care has completed its distribution of 500 winterised tents along with other aid. It continues to work with partners in the affected areas on follow up and monitoring activities.

4. Concern Worldwide

- Concern completed its aid distribution within the first 3 days of the earthquake response. On 18th November Concern hosted a half-day orientation session on HAP Principles of Accountability for the humanitarian community working in Baluchistan at its Quetta office.

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