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CHRISTIAN REFORMED  
WORLD RELIEF COMMITTEE

# Geo and Toni in Pakistan

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CRWRC Disaster Relief Pakistan Flood Project



Since our last newsletter, I-LAP has been able to complete the food distributions in the Punjab Province. CFGB is an important partner in the Flood Relief Project here in Pakistan. Not only were they able to fund (donations and CIDA - Canadian International Development Agency

matching dollars) food distributions for 5,500 Households (44,000 individuals) in the Punjab Province and for 8,000 Households (64,000 individuals) in Khyber-Pukhtunkhwa Province (KPK) for two critical months right after the floods but are also funding the Food distribution and Seed Program for Phase II. Besides seeds, CFGB/CIDA funding will assist farmers by supplying them with fertilizer, small farm tools and rental of power tillers to prepare their land.



George and Aamer Wilson, Programme Manager, helping to hand out blankets/quilts.

Phase II is concentrated in the Nowshera region where CRWRC/CFGB through the I-LAP team is working in 8 Union Councils and will be assisting 4,000 flood affected households which is about 32,000 people as most families have an average of 6 children. A couple of weeks ago, George visited the area to witness the distribution of blankets which were the last part of the Winter NFIs which were distributed to these families namely mattresses, winter jackets for children, chadors/shawls for the men and women,

blankets and fuel for heaters that had been distributed previously. It was important to deliver these items as quickly as possible as the winter night temperatures were around the freezing mark.



Bunari Yousafzai is a farm labourer who was working for a local farmer before the flood. He and his wife, six children and widowed mother live in the village of Mughalkiu in KPK. The farmer Bunari was working for is also a beneficiary since the flood ruined much of his land, irrigation canals, crops and seed. When the floods came Bunari and his family found refuge with friends in a neighbouring community that is situated on higher ground. The flooding severely damaged his three room house and its contents and the family is

currently living in a tent on the site of their destroyed home. During the past six months, Bunari has been earning some income as an occasional labourer in the construction area that pays a daily rate of 250 rupees or \$3. His hope is that his employer, with the assistance from I-LAP/CRWRC recovery project, will be able to re-establish the farming operation so that he can support his family through his pre-flood livelihood of farm labourer. Bunari expressed genuine and unreserved appreciation for the emergency food, shelter (tent), winter non-food items (blankets, jackets, bedding) and replacement of lost kitchen utensils and stove with fuel. He pointed out that currently his most pressing needs include food, money for house repairs and assistance with farm rehabilitation that includes land clearing and ploughing, irrigation system repairs and seed replacement.

*The family on the right is wearing the jackets and chador but notice that in this chilly weather they have no footwear.*



## Living in Pakistan

The Pakistan government is not as much concerned with an overthrow of government than what to do with Davis, an American who shot two Pakistanis a few weeks ago. There is a dispute about whether he has diplomatic immunity or if he should stand trial for murder here in Pakistan. Each day the local papers and news are filled with this story as well as sparking a number of demonstrations. There also appears to be more activity by Pakistan, Afghan and American forces on the PKP border and recently a number of families fled from this area to join the many war displaced people from Afghanistan and Pakistan. Mindful of the need to be on alert, we still manage to walk to the nearby markets, shops and parks. We have found coffee shops that make great coffees, an enormous bookshop, some good restaurants and a Christian Church. The Anglican Church is about a 15 minute walk from our guesthouse and offers an 11 am English service. To enter the building one has to go through a check stop where we are frisked and our bags checked - a precaution to avoid any extremists from entering. Load-sharing or loss of power has become quite common but is not preventing us from watching the World Cricket Series. In Islamabad, a number of large TV screens have been erected on buildings and in plazas as the country rallies round its national team.



Some of the 6,000 colourful quilts donated by Mennonite Central Committee.

## Food Distribution in Nowshera



Waiting for blanket distribution - this male dominated society with its many cultural customs and rules makes it unusual for a woman to be present so arrangements are made for women to be in a different line or space to receive their donation. These rules are an integral part of their lives and difficult to change.



Flour, rice, cooking oil, lentils



Wilson presenting a blanket to one of the few women who were identified as the head of household



While traveling in KPK we always have an armed police escort as the government wants to ensure the safety of international relief workers.



One aspect of Phase II are food distributions for 4,000 households in KPK. This time half rations would be distributed for the next four months and intended to help the families until the next harvest and/or opportunity to again be employed. (Half rations are meant to supplement as it is important not to create a dependency on aid) Last week George traveled to Nowshera to the village of Zara Miana (population 10,000) to witness the first of these food distributions. As the villagers stood in line to register and to receive their food, George was able to speak to Inayat Khan.

INAYAT KHAN is a forty year old farmer and labourer, who, along with his 35 year old wife and six children ranging in age from 2 to 18, grew up in the village of Zara Miana. Before the flood, he crop-shared a three acre farm of which 50% of the harvest went to the landlord. He was also working as a labourer earning 200 rupees/day.

Inayat's village is located in the North Western Province of PKP on the banks of the Kabul River. The Kabul River is one of Pakistan's three major rivers and an important part of what is known as the world's largest contiguous irrigation systems. Since Pakistan's economy is almost exclusively dependent on its agricultural produce, water remains its most important resource. Developed over the last 140 years, the system has the capacity to deliver 195 billion cubic metres of water annually to over 16 million hectares of farmland and includes four major storage reservoirs, numerous barrages, head works, canals, distribution channels as well as three large and eighty five smaller dams, the total length of the canal system exceeds 58,000 kilometres with another 1.6 million kilometres of farm and field ditches. With over 75% of all Pakistan's agricultural land dependent on the irrigation system, it is perhaps its most important and valued infrastructure.

Along with unusual monsoon rains, systematic long term and illegal deforestation and fraudulent water management practices, serious problems related to the irrigation system design resulted in the unprecedented and disastrous flooding during the months of July and August last summer. The crisis resulted in more than 20 million people being affected through injury and loss of life, through loss and damage to homes and belongings including livestock, seeds and crops as well as the damage and destruction of farmland and the irrigation system. Millions of livelihoods in all sectors especially farming were affected and 20 million people in thousands of villagers looked for assistance. The resilience of the people is amazing as they returned to their villages once the water receded to start rebuilding their lives.

Last summer the flood waters inundated the village of Zara Miana and Inayat and his family 'ran for their lives' to a neighbouring village with only the clothes they were wearing. Here they stayed with friends until the waters receded. They then returned to their village only to find that their simple three room home was damaged beyond repair. The family is currently living in a tent provided by I-LAP/CRWRC and are thankful for the blankets, bedding and jackets that were made available during the emergency response phase. He indicated that at this time (six months after the flood) his most urgent needs include help with restoring the land and damaged irrigation canals, money for house repairs, seed for planting his next crop of maize and food assistance until the next harvest. Inayat concluded the interview with a sincere and heartfelt expression of appreciation to the donors of North America. He asked that we let the donors know that he now has renewed hope in the possibility for him and his family to be restored to the life they had before the floods came.

Yes, Islamabad has a McDonald's! On Valentines Day, the girls in the I-LAP Office went off to celebrate with a sundae. To drive into the parking lot you have to stop at a barricade and have the car inspected by a hand-held gadget which we are sure cannot detect anything! To enter McDonald's you have to pass through a metal detector run by security agents with shotguns—middle of the picture. Once inside you could believe you are in America - even the prices are similar to that back home and you know only the rich or middle class can afford this menu. The sundaes taste the same and although it was chilly out we sat on the terrace with a great view of the Muree hills. And on the way back to the office we stopped at the grocery store to buy the men at the office ice cream.