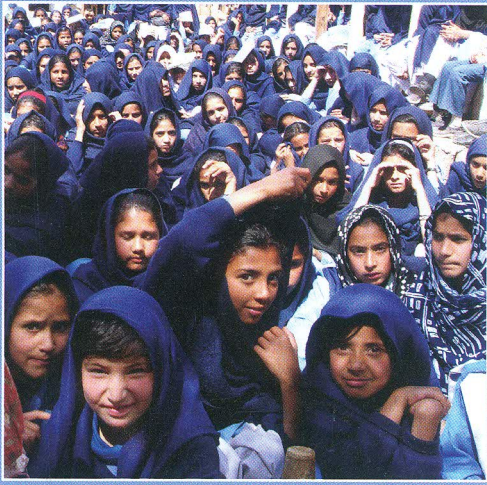


HRD COMMUNIQUÉ

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Resilience to Rise



Smiling faces hide the horrors of 8/10 when 80 bodies of classmates were pulled from the rubble — Govt Girls High School Bagh (Azad Jammu & Kashmir)

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Editor's Note



Dear Readers,

We are delighted to resume the publication of HRD Communiqué after a gap of almost two years.

Our first issue is primarily focused on the multi-dimensional efforts of recovery and reconstruction that are underway in the serene northern valleys of Pakistan which were devastated by a catastrophic earthquake in October 2005.

In the aftermath of the worst natural calamity to have hit the country, NRSP-IRM geared into action to partner in one of the largest relief operations that the country has ever seen. In view of the immediate need for human resource development and in line with its mandate, the organization imparted skills to staff and development practitioners to enable them to work efficiently and effectively in stressful disaster situations. At the same time, community members were equipped with skills to survive physical, financial and psychological losses caused by the disaster.

Although it was not an easy task to have put in place training plans on a short notice, NRSP-IRM was able to cover wide-ranging subjects that were relevant to relief, recovery and reconstruction phases in the earthquake-affected areas. The organization immediately trained 1042 community volunteers to provide paramedic attention to thousands of injured in the affected areas where

public health delivery system had completely collapsed. Moreover, these volunteers were given necessary skills to pre-empt and prevent the outbreak of winter-related diseases and epidemics.

Reviving education to bring normalcy to the lives of children and engaging them in educational activities was logical, but it was an arduous challenge, as children, teachers and parents were traumatized by memories of the fateful day that devoured more than 30,000 children in schools. All needed expert handling to enable them to overcome the trauma, encouraging them to resume life. NRSP-IRM, therefore, invested much time on psycho-social care of communities to rebuild their confidence.

Equally important was the organization's work with women, particularly the households headed by women, imparting basic livelihood trainings to them in a bid to allow them to become productive members of the society. NRSP-IRM along with hundreds of other organizations could not have accomplished much without the resilience of the affected communities. The earthquake brought ruination to vast areas but what it could not break was the will of the steadfast people who quickly garnered energies to rise from the rubble.

We would like to thank our readers for their patience with the lapse in publication and welcome any comments and recommendations for its improvement.

An Injection of Health & Hope

October 8th is an unforgettable day in the history of Pakistan; it brings haunting memories for the survivors of the earthquake as they helplessly watched their loved ones perish under crumbling structures that were once safe havens. An immediate and urgent need was to treat injuries, but the advent of winter, lack of hygiene awareness and deteriorating sanitation conditions in the tented camps was resulting in outbreak of diseases like acute respiratory tract infections, cholera and skin ailments. Abating such epidemic outbreaks and

the provision of health care was the most urgent call for volunteers and humanitarian organizations.

UNICEF and NRSP forged forces for this specific purpose to resurrect health facilities and train capable and willing community members to take on the role of paramedics after completing a fast paced, rigorous training for community health workers. For this purpose NRSP established its third regional office at Muzaffarabad to work along with the offices in Bagh and Rawalakot to select these young volunteers to become CHWs.

UNICEF had a special interest in meeting the maternal and child health demands which according to the projections made by United Nation Family Planning Association (UNFPA), would constitute a "Maternal Emergency". Almost 17,000 women in the earthquake affected areas of Pakistan were expecting to give birth in the two months following the earthquake, 1,200 of whom were likely to face major complications and about 400 would require surgical assistance. Newly born and thousands of young children were facing a fatal threat due to the intimidating cold, disease and malnutrition.

The project aimed at training 1000 Community Health Workers (CHWs) to revive health infrastructure by rebuilding human resource of paramedics that had perished in the earthquake. Moreover, six new field health clinics run by NRSP were also established.

A rigorous training schedule was devised, with back to back trainings and field attachments for the 1000 plus young men and women nominated by the communities of Rawalakot, Bagh and Muzaffarabad. As these young enthusiasts had no prior experience in medicine or community work, NRSP-IRM and UNICEF worked closely with community health training experts to design modules with all the essential community emergency health components yet keeping it free of technical jargon so that the information and training could be utilized immediately.



Country representative of UNICEF Omer Abdi and Roomi S. Hayat, Director NRSP - Institute of Rural Management at certificate distribution ceremony of Community Health Workers

The training was largely conducted in Rawalpindi and Rawalakot in AJK, commencing in December and ending in May 2006. In this three-step training process, batches of trainees underwent 5-day intensive theoretical training followed by a month-long field attachment for practical experience before returning for their refresher and graduation. Despite the gloom of the earthquake the trainees found ways of making their education and excursion as fruitful and entertaining as possible. All sessions were conducted by professional resource persons, who had experience in community health worker training, national programme for family planning and family health care.

The training covered a variety of medical and social care themes: nutrition, hygiene, sanitation and prevention of communicable diseases caused due to winter and hygiene-related factors. Participants were trained with basic first aid skills to handle emergency situations. They were also taught motivational skills to address the psychological needs of victims. Trainee CHWs could manage the treatment for any injury or sudden illness before the arrival of ambulance or a doctor.

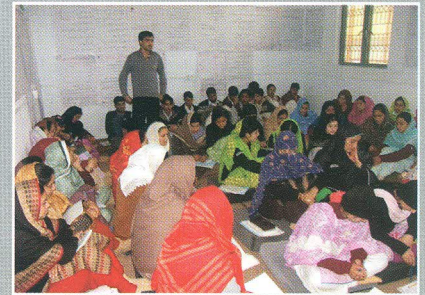
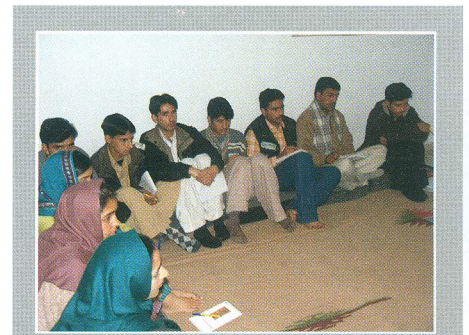
Prevention was central to this training.

Primary health care and family planning guidelines enabled the trainees to learn ways to reduce pre- and post-delivery health complications that may lead to infant and maternal mortality as well as morbidity. The training also imparted skills on how to prevent malnutrition among people of all ages.

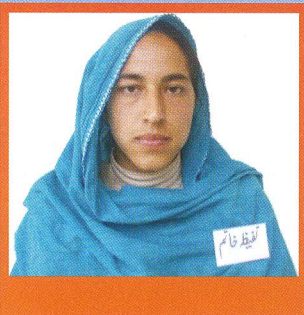
The entire graduating class of 1042 CHWs and their supervisors, consisting of 70% females and 30% males, were immediately placed in the field for essential medical services in their communities. As a monitoring tier NRSP placed three district health

The need of the hour was a quick resurrection of health facilities to heal, help and boost the morale of the affected communities.

coordinators assigned to oversee 42 Supervisors who in turn monitored, aided and guided the 1000 CHWs under them, ensuring complete documentation of patients treated, referred to hospitals and door-to-door visits undertaken.



A year down the road after the state of emergency has relaxed; many trainees still continue their services. The training channeled the energies of the youth in a positive and productive way, above all bringing the realization that even when all is lost hope should remain alive.



Simple Guidance Changes Lives

Nafeeza Khanam, 21, of Rawalakot participated in the CHW training. "I discovered that simple changes in hygiene and health practice can change the health condition of communities and that I can make a difference in peoples lives - they now drink boiled water and take care of their personal hygiene."

She is working in the local health centre and is helping people with their problems. She has successfully handled delivery cases in her village which is evidence of the community's confidence in her abilities as childbirth is usually handled by older married women.

Reviving Education in AJK

I asked my 7-year old sister “Do you like your school?” and she launches into profuse descriptions about the beautiful building, the nice teachers and the games and fun she shares with her classmates. However, children in AJK shudder at the thought of school as it brings back visions of death, destruction and confusion.

After the initial frenzy of relief and rescue, to help traumatized children normalize their lives and restart their disrupted education, NRSP in collaboration with Rural Support Programmes Network and USAID began a reviving of education project in close coordination with the Provincial/ District Departments of Education in AJK, to rehabilitate 114 government schools that had been badly damaged or had collapsed.

Since children had become petrified of sitting under concrete roofs, tents and temporary shelters were provided.

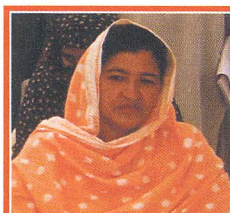


Sidra Arif of grade 10, is studying in Govt. Girls High School, Sethi Bagh Muzaffarabad.

She is happy to return to a safe tent school where there is no fear of falling debris. “My parents were scared to send me to the crumbling school building. We had moved away to Rawalpindi but I missed my friends and school a lot. Now our school is better than before, we feel safe and are not scared of after shocks anymore”.

The project ensured that schools were provided basic equipment, latrines, furniture and teachers’ aids. Students also received colourful school bags with stationary, crayons, notebooks etc. Best of all each school got a mini library with wonderfully illustrated story books that motivated, entertained and inspired both teachers and students.

The project made sure that once restarted in this way, these schools should continue to do so with the full participation of parents, teachers and



Razia, now a trained SMC member for Govt. Girls Middle School, Dhokan,

Bagh, has high stakes in ensuring her school runs well. “My three daughters and five nephews study in this school. We are lucky that we have not just received much needed furniture, library books, student and teacher kits but also training to make sure all these material is used for quality education for our children.”

government education officials. To sustain quality maintenance of these provisions, NRSP-IRM developed training for School Management Committees (SMCs) that are parent-teacher bodies who monitor school affairs. They ensured teachers’ attendance, compliance to a child friendly teaching methodology, trauma counseling, school management and upkeep, enhancing enrollment and reducing drop-outs.

Working under the precept, “rebuild better than before”, teachers were given training in “joyful learning”; a teaching methodology that is playful, interactive and entertaining both for students and teachers. Even experienced teachers were touched by the innovative ways of teaching children, something they were not aware of or accustomed to.



Syeda Zubaida Begum of Rawalakot is a teacher at Govt. Girls High School Mohri Farman

Shah for the past 6 years. Since the earthquake she and her family live in a tent provided by NRSP. “Training on joyful learning and child friendly methods has simply changed my attitude. It has injected an element of dedication in my veins.”

Building human resource has been a rewarding and challenging task for NRSP-IRM in the reviving of education in earthquake affected areas. However, trauma and fear of another devastating earthquake due to the aftershocks seemed like the most overbearing hurdle faced by trainers and trainees. “A slight tremor would create panic in the training hall, disrupting the concentration and bringing back memories of that fateful day”, says George Chughtai, training coordinator from NRSP-IRM.

Nevertheless, with the completion of the project NRSP-IRM looks back at a great learning experience and with a feeling of satisfaction for having helped people in dire need and equipping them with necessary skills.