

Save the Children Response for Conflict-Affected Children and Families in Pakistan

Field Fact Sheet 11: September 16, 2009

Javed, 10, waiting to collect rations for his family at a Humanitarian hub in, Buner. Save the Children is distributing monthly food rations to Javed's family as well as thousands of other returnees in NWFP.



Save the Children has reached an estimated 456,141 people (including approximately 273,684 children) through the provision of food and supplies, education, protection of children and women, livelihood support, and health and nutrition services in the districts of Swabi, Mardan, Buner and Swat. Thus far we have received \$7.09 million of our \$10 million global appeal. Save the Children is continuing to expand services and shift programs to Buner and Swat in order to support families who were severely affected by the conflict.

The Emergency: From April to June 2009, nearly 2.3 million people in northwest Pakistan fled their homes to escape the conflict between the military and Taliban insurgents. Now that peace has been restored to many parts of Buner, Swat, Dir and Shangla districts, approximately 1.64 million people have returned home; 148,690 remain displaced. Many returning families are encountering damaged or destroyed homes, as well as lost livelihoods. Those who stayed behind are also struggling to cope: Many were marooned during the fighting, with no means of accessing relief goods, food or health services. For the hundreds of thousands who still live in camps or with host communities — primarily because the conflict continues in their community— their future remains uncertain as they endure crowded living conditions and their hosts' resources are stretched to the limit.

Current Needs: In early August 2009, Save the Children conducted an assessment in Swat district, the area that was hardest hit by the conflict. The assessment found that nearly all households urgently needed blankets and quilts before the harsh winter began. It also revealed that the children and families who had returned (or had never left) were more vulnerable and poorer than they had been a few months before. On average, families' incomes have been reduced by over 70%. More than half of households are in debt, and even more have no savings. Access to health services — which was limited even before the conflict — is an even more acute need now.

The Impact on Children: Children who have returned home, as well as those who are still displaced, are suffering from myriad health issues due to overcrowding, malnutrition and poor hygiene. Skin diseases (particularly scabies), diarrhea and respiratory infections are common. Eager to return to school and resume their normal lives, many children (especially girls) must wait at home until their damaged or destroyed schools have been rehabilitated or temporary schools can be erected. Children are also trying to cope with their families' stress. As crops have been destroyed, livestock have been lost, and homes have been looted, many families are facing tremendous financial pressure. In many areas, the tense security situation compounds these worries. Such stressful conditions add to many children's anxiety and slow their emotional recovery.

Save the Children's Response: Save the Children is coordinating with the government to ensure that families affected by the current crises can recover quickly. Save the Children's response thus far includes:

Health & Nutrition (supported by AusAID, DFID, OFDA, CEF)

- Thirteen static health teams are providing health services to returnee and conflict-affected families in Buner and Swat. Since mid-July, these teams have treated more than 21,790 people in areas of return.
- Save the Children's emergency health teams have treated more than 68,784 patients in Mardan, Swabi, Buner and Swat through a combination of mobile clinics and support to 14 government facilities. Approximately 70% of these patients are female.

Non-Food Relief Items (NFIs) (supported by CIDA, OFDA and DANIDA)

- 12,232 families (85,624 people) have benefited from distribution of 2,650 shelter kits, 3,000 baby kits, 6,582 household kits, 12,232 hygiene kits, and 2,000 female hygiene kits in Mardan, Swabi and Buner.
- Save the Children has completed distributing baby kits, hygiene kits and female hygiene kits to 2,000 conflict-affected women and their families in Buner district. Women and children are prioritized for all of Save the Children's NFI distributions.

Protection of Children and Women (supported by SIDA and OFDA)

- Child-friendly spaces are one of Save the Children's key programs for protecting children from physical harm and emotional distress and helping them continue learning and developing during and immediately after crises. At the spaces, children can draw, make crafts, play games and engage with other children.
- Four mobile child-friendly spaces are serving displaced communities in Mardan and Malakand Agency, while four are providing activities for children in Buner. Four static child-friendly spaces have been established in Swabi and 19 in Buner. Over 4,075 children from 25 villages are benefiting from these mobile spaces, while 773 are benefiting from the static spaces.

Food (supported by WFP)

- This distribution program is coordinated from three humanitarian hubs, all located in Buner, to serve returnee and conflict-affected families.
- Since food distribution began, 41,118 displaced families (or approximately 287,826 people) have received 1-, 2- or 3-month food baskets. Women and children comprise the majority (approximately 75%) of people receiving food assistance.
- Each food basket contains salt, sugar, wheat flour, oil, tea, legumes, high energy biscuits and ready-to-use supplementary food (RUSF), which helps prevent and treat malnutrition. In total, Save the Children has distributed nearly 8,736 metric tons of food to conflict-affected families.

Livelihood (supported by OFDA and DFID)

- In addition to already distributing cash vouchers for 5,000 families, this week the distribution of a second round of 5,000 additional grants began. During the last week, 2,257 people received postal drafts.
- Under the DFID-funded cash grant project, 871 people received money orders. Another 2,729 cases have been assessed.

Education (supported by IKEA and JOAC)

- Save the Children has improved the conditions of 50 schools previously occupied by displaced families. The schools now have functional water supplies latrines and electricity. General environment improvements and minor repairs have also been made. Of the 50 schools repaired, 40 are for girls.



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