



Youth Alliance For Human Rights

(Profile in earthquake relief and rehabilitation work)

On October 8, 2005 a massive earthquake (7.6 on the Richter scale) struck the Kashmir region of Pakistan and India. Its epicenter was 95 kilometers from Islamabad, the capital of Pakistan. The Government of Pakistan estimates that over 73,000 people have died, 70,000 people have been injured and between 2.8 and 3.2 million left homeless by the quake. The earthquake struck on the morning of a school day which left many children dead and many more injured or disabled.

The YAFHR Emergency Response:

After the 7.6 magnitude earthquake that struck the northern areas of Pakistan and India on 8 October 2005, Youth Alliance For Human Rights directly or indirectly supported number of relief activities in Muzaffarabad, Bagh, Balakot and Shangala areas that were affected most by that disaster.

- In the initial stage right after October 8th earthquake, Youth Alliance For Human Rights sent its two teams, comprising of young volunteers to Balakot and Muzaffarabad on 10th October 2005. Our teams helped there the rescue workers and aid staff to remove debris and saved many precious lives. In Muzaffarabad the team also worked with some foreign rescue teams and they appreciated the commitment and work shown by our volunteers.
- At local level in Lahore, Youth Alliance For Human Rights solicited funds from students of different schools and colleges through our network of members and volunteers and sent eatables and clothes worth 450,000 to earthquake affected areas. The students contributed a lot and donated blankets, quilts and number of eatable items including drinking water.
- Youth Alliance For Human Rights partnered with Youth for Environmental Sanity (YES), USA and Direct Current Media (Canada) to launch an appeal in USA and Canada to get some financial support for earthquake victims. With more than US \$ 10,000 collected through this appeal YAFHR set up temporary tent schools in the affected union councils of district Abbotabad and also provide 500 tents to survivors during the extremely bad weather conditions earlier this year.
- Youth Alliance For Human Rights joined hands with Lahore Citizens Movement and our members contributed goods worth 180,000 to Lahore City District office and three of our members also joined them in Muzaffarabad for distribution of these goods. During the whole relief operation our teams worked closely with city district government, Lahore and other concerned government departments.
- On 15th October 2005, Youth Alliance For Human Rights set up two camps in Lahore city, one in Main Market Gulberg and other in DHA to collect goods from citizens and

handed over all the goods to Lahore City District government office. In the last week of October Youth Alliance For Human Rights established two temporary offices one in Abbotabad and one in Mirpur.

- Youth Alliance For Human Rights collaborated with SAHARA for life trust and joined their team of foreign doctors in Muzaffarabad and Bagh areas. Our organization also contributed funds to SAHARA's fiber glass camps they provided in EQ affected areas. Some local pharmaceutical companies also donated a large number of health and hygiene kits to earthquake victims through Youth Alliance For Human Rights.
- Youth Alliance for Human Right in the first week of December asked its international friends to help EQ survivors and with the generous help supported by them provided more than 1200 tents to affected families in Muzaffarabad, Balakot, Bagh, Abbotabad and Shangla areas.
- Our members in Karachi worked with US Consulate, Karachi and facilitated quick transfer of goods to earthquake affected areas donated by American government and people of America.
- Youth Alliance For Human Rights also approached some local pharmaceutical companies and encouraged them to donate generously. Our organization handed over life-saving drugs worth 600,000 to Pakistan Army collection units in Lahore.
- A group of doctors approached Youth Alliance For Human Rights in December 2005 and offered trauma reduction services for earthquake victims. Youth Alliance For Human Rights placed them in Muzaffarabad for two months and they helped about 13,000 trauma sufferers in the region.

YAFHR in rehabilitation phase:

As part of a multi-disciplinary response, volunteer groups of Youth Alliance For Human Rights worked to address the many needs of these communities. This includes providing basic goods and helping them in settling down the tent villages. After the initial relief operation phase Youth Alliance For Human Rights started working on recognizing and addressing the psychosocial needs of children and their families. One part of this response is the provision of a safe space, in which the children started to resume some aspects of normal life – they are encouraged to play, learn, listen to stories, draw, etc. When and if they choose to do so, they can talk to the child protection monitors and volunteers, recruited from their community, about their fears and concerns.

They can learn to address their anxieties and learn useful information about what to do during the frequent aftershocks. The resumption of structured activities allows the children and their families to see the possibility of a return to “normal” life. Their confidence increases. Their development is supported through the use of age appropriate activities. Children learn and their social skills develop through the interaction and opportunities for play. Older children can resume an education program (albeit non-formal), until schooling is restarted. At the same time children are now getting awareness on different forms of abuse and ways of prevention.

Women facilitating and supporting these activities also benefit from the chance to talk and share their concerns in a safe space. Young people are also involved, working with younger children, building their sense of value and worth by contributing to the welfare of their community.

So far Youth Alliance For Human Rights has established 5 Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) in two union councils of district Abbotabad and soon we plan to expand in the other areas of North West Frontier Province (NWFP) and Azad Jammu Kashmir (AJK).

For more information:

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