

ANNEX 5 – SOCIAL IMPACT

A. INTRODUCTION

1. This annex addresses the social impact of the earthquake disaster and the recovery needs of the affected population. These social dimensions have an important bearing on reconstruction in specific sectors, which are covered in more detail in the sectoral annexes. This annex gives an overall presentation, differentiating the immediate impacts and more long term impact and concerns. The assessment has been formulated in consultation with a range of international and national agencies, UN and government institutions working in the affected areas²¹.

B. DAMAGE OVERVIEW AND RECOVERY NEEDS

2. The population and social structures of the earthquake-hit areas has been seriously affected by the number of human deaths. By November 3, the following figures were reported: about 73,000 people were dead and 70,000 injured across NWFP and AJK, probably more than 2.8 million without shelter. These figures may still increase as the more remote of the affected areas are accessed. The victims were mainly from already vulnerable groups, living in comparatively inaccessible mountain areas with lower levels of income and service provision as compared to the national average. Women and children made up a large share of the victims, as many women were caught unaware in houses when the earthquake struck, and the collapse of school buildings resulted in the deaths of many children (close to 3500 students died in government schools alone, without any available data from private and religious schools). Among the injured, many will be permanently disabled due to spinal cord injuries, severe head injuries and injuries to limbs, resulting in a high proportion of amputations. Due to difficulties in access, many victims were not rescued in time and people succumbed to injuries in the absence of medical treatment. Furthermore, the number of permanent disabilities continues to increase, as untreated limb injuries have turned gangrenous and required amputations.

3. **NWFP and AJK.** The total population of the 8 affected districts is 5.7 million (AJK: 1.8 million, NWFP: 3.9 million), of which around 88% lives in rural areas. The affected districts in NWFP and AJK share basic socio-economic characteristics. Apart from pockets of concentrated populations, settlements are generally scattered across the hills and mountains following the topography. The smallest neighborhood comprises 1-2 housing units and the biggest may have over 300, with 2-3 households living in one housing unit. According to the 1998 population census, average family size is 7 in urban areas and 6 in rural areas. About 42% of the population is below the age of 15 years, while 6.7% of population is above the age of 60. Land fragmentation and increasing population has over burdened subsistence agriculture, forcing people to undertake seasonal migration to urban centers of Pakistan and abroad, with some districts in AJK having up to 30%-40% of the population working abroad. The unemployment rate is around 37%, but women constitute only 2% of the active labor force. Especially in the northern part of Neelum valley and in the border areas, and the area near Jhelum River in Bagh and Sudhnuti, access to

²¹ The following government institutions, organizations and agencies have been contacted and/or met: Ministry of Social Welfare, Crisis Center (MOWD), National Institute of Special Education-Ministry of Social Welfare (GOP), EAD (GOP), Bait al Maal (GOP), UNICEF, Pakistan Red Crescent, IFRC, World Vision, Oxfam, Action Aid, Aurat Foundation- Peshawar, Islamic Relief (NGO), Rozan (Pak NGO), Sahil (Pak NGO), NRSP (Pak. NGO), RSPN (Pak NGO), plus information from DFID, CIDA, review of minutes of Protection Cluster, progress write-up from Save the Children USA.

income and development is very limited. A good part of these areas lack access to roads, and people have to travel long distances by foot and pay carriage for transportation of goods.

4. **Unattended children.** The number of orphans and unattended children is feared high, although numbers are as yet unavailable. Unattended children constitute a group which will require special protection immediately and continuing in the medium and long term particularly to help them overcome trauma and prevent exploitation. In the aftermath of the earthquake, with little information available about family members, the government has put a ban on any form of adoption of children from earthquake affected areas. Children are also not allowed to be relocated from their areas without official permission in order to prevent trafficking in children. Some local NGOs and the Ministry of Women's Development are making efforts to meet the protection needs but these have to be scaled up. The Government wants to register every child and the Rapid Registration Form will be used by all agencies of the "Protection Cluster group" (composed of UN, bilateral, international and national NGOs and government of Pakistan). Data will be sent to NCCWD while data on unaccompanied/separated children will be provided to ICRC for registration and tracing the families.

5. Priority must be given to family reunification in the case of separated children, and for orphans culturally-sensitive interim and alternative care options need to be provided. Unnecessary institutionalization of children must be avoided. Psycho-social support and legal protection may also be required, and needs to be provided through local capacities. Awareness raising and training on child rights and child protection should be carried out targeting all concerned actors. Special attention should be paid to children's inheritance rights concerning to land and property, and administration thereof by legal guardian until the child reaches maturity.

6. **Single-headed households.** Widows and single-headed households present a particular vulnerability as they have to deal with their psycho-social distress as well as caring for children on their own. The loss of a mother has particularly negative physical and psychological impact on small children and infants, while the loss of the male head of family constitutes a serious blow to the economic livelihood of the household, significantly reducing its coping ability since the employment opportunities for women outside the household are limited. Particularly in AJK the proportion of female-headed households is already high, around 20%, due to the high level of labor migration. Female headed households are of two types: (i) households where the male member is working abroad or in the big cities of Pakistan with women left to manage the household; and (ii) widows without any male support. Compared to the rest of Pakistan women in AJK face less social restrictions on their mobility and social participation, while the Pathan population in Kohistan, Batagram and Mansehra district tend to practice strict purdah with little mobility and voice for women, which inhibits the outreach of relief work to women and girls, who may find it difficult to register for assistance as well as collect rations and/or cash support on regular basis.

7. **Security of women** in the affected areas is a concern and single women, widows and women-headed households (i.e. without a male guardian) are reportedly reluctant to go to the tent camps for affected people, if these are outside their local area, since they will be among unrelated men, who may belong to another ethnic group and speak a different language. Medical teams furthermore find it difficult to access injured women unless they have female staff, as it according to local traditions is inappropriate for a male medical worker to deal with female patients. Oxfam's assessment of its relief work following the 2003 earthquake in Astore Valley in North Pakistan underlines the importance of having female workers involved in relief distribution teams to ensure that women actually receive the relief items meant for them and clearly understand their usage.

8. **Permanently disabled.** Before the earthquake, around 10% of the population was permanently disabled, and their support systems, however informal, may have been destroyed and they are a particularly vulnerable group in terms of accessing relief. If the only route to survival is to walk out of a

valley, or to have the mental alertness to register for assistance, then the risk of disabled, old and other vulnerable groups being left out is very high.

9. **Shock and trauma.** The very high death toll and number of severe injuries in addition to the widespread material damage will have long-term consequences for the well-being of surviving family members, particularly widows, single-parent children, orphans, and the elderly. Severe shocks and trauma are widespread among bereaved families, particularly among children, and comprehensive psycho-social support is required, adapted to the social-cultural background of the affected communities.

10. **Shelter.** Strong community cohesion is a common feature of small isolated communities, and particularly in AJK, there is a very close-knit social structure and social support mechanism through the extended family and biradari system, which will serve as an important coping mechanism both for emotional, social and financial needs. However, the loss of human lives and the scale of material damage and displacement have been so great, that in many communities these usual support structures may be destroyed as well. In the relief camps, the Army and relief agencies attempt to settle households from each local community together. Tent camps have been set up around the affected areas, but those living in the high mountains are encouraged and enabled to come down to the tent camps. The Government plans to set up tent villages in Punjab and in the non-affected parts of the NWFP in the short term. Many affected people seem to be reluctant to leave their areas, since their livelihood (land and livestock) is not only severely disturbed by the earthquake destruction but also by their displacement. In some cases, male household members are reportedly bringing their wife and children to the relief camps while they return to their village to protect whatever possessions they have left or finish the preparations for the winter in terms of fodder collections, tending to surviving livestock and so forth. Most families are likely to remain in the relief camps for an extended period (at least during the winter) and their needs should be assessed and responsibilities for their continued support clearly assigned.

11. **Organization of the relief effort.** The relief effort was from the beginning spontaneous and sporadic, but after a couple of days both local and international NGOs and the Pakistan Army became involved in more organized relief efforts. NGOs/CBOs are a comparatively recent phenomenon in AJK and not very well established in the affected districts of NWFP, either. A majority of these organizations have been formed/registered in the 1990s and are of religious nature like madaris (religious schools), while others are mostly welfare oriented. Most relief camps are presently organized and run by the Army, but it will be necessary to transfer the administration to relief agencies as soon as possible as the Army does not have the experience or capacity to handle the urgent relief and protection issues.

12. During the first weeks of rescue and relief efforts, relief in the more distant areas was provided either through air drops or through scattered distribution centers in the mountains, where women, old, disabled and other vulnerable and physically weak and less mobile groups were unable to compete in the frequently uncontrolled rush to access aid. Moreover, the aid agencies do not have any record of the numbers of women and children in any particular locality and are thus unable to target them. It is essential to set up special desks at all distribution centers for women/girls and other vulnerable groups.

13. International experience shows that protection of women and children is frequently violated under disaster and conflict conditions. Considering the prevalent social norms, it is important that the privacy for women and girls in connection with washing and changing clothes, breast feeding children and sanitation facilities should be ensured for the displaced women and girls. Pregnant women in the camps should also be ensured access to reproductive health care in view of the potential effects which the psychological and physical strains will put on their maternal health. There is also a need to raise awareness in camps of the risks of sexually transmitted diseases, such as HIV/AIDS.

14. **Legal aspects.** Most of the population of the affected areas owned a small plot of land (less than 2 ha). The land records system is centered on the Patwari who knows the ownership of every parcel of

land, and copies of Land Records are maintained in several different offices and should thus be recoverable in case of loss. However, many areas have been affected by land slides and changing the topography and rendering identification of land plots impossible. This may cause difficulties during rehabilitation stage, if land ownership becomes a condition for provision of house reconstruction grants. However, a number of households may have held customary tenure rights, which in case of the titleholder's death may prove difficult to transfer to legal heirs.

15. Widows' and daughters' inheritance rights are defined according to Islamic Law as a certain share of male inheritance rights, but in many rural communities, women customarily relinquish their claims to the joint family property. In the present situation, where traditional mechanisms of social support may be destroyed, the risk of widows and female orphans losing their rightful inheritance is considerable, especially since they may be unaware of the procedures to be followed to ensure legal possession of the land they are entitled to inherit.

16. Restoring lost records of property rights to housing, commercial property, and land should be launched as soon as possible, with special assistance given to the poor, squatters, widows, and orphans in demonstrating legitimate property rights.

17. ***Involuntary resettlement.*** Relocation of households and communities may take place where specific, severely affected locations are declared by authorities as too high-risk to allow further settlement. A measure of voluntary resettlement may also be expected in places affected by major land slides, or where affected people have either been squatting or were renters.

18. Apart from these situations, relocation should be avoided where possible, and assistance should, to the maximum extent, be given to enable people to rebuild their homes to better standards in their old location. This would minimize the need for new land acquisition, which may constitute hardship for those affected by losing land or livelihood opportunities. If land acquisition or displacement of people for new housing or infrastructure is unavoidable, a social assessment process involving all stakeholders should be undertaken.

RECONSTRUCTION AND RECOVERY NEEDS

Immediate Needs

- ***Provision of shelter and food.*** Provision of temporary shelter and food for affected people need to be addressed urgently in view of the onset of winter: (i) *Individual construction of temporary shelter* in situ in the affected areas, where special precaution should be taken to ensure outreach to women, the elderly, and other vulnerable groups with limited mobility. Material support and guidance (technical, location) should be given to individual households with the ability to erect temporary shelter for themselves; and (ii) *Extended stay in relief camps*, to bring people safely through the winter.
- ***Protection of vulnerable groups.*** Immediate initiatives should be taken to ensure the physical security of women and children in the temporary camps and shelters. In case of separated children, family reunification efforts have highest priority, and for orphans, culturally-sensitive interim and alternative care options need to be provided. Special attention should be paid to ensuring the inclusion of the disabled, the elderly, and other vulnerable groups in the relief efforts. Psycho-social support and legal protection should be provided through local capacities. Awareness raising and training on child rights and child protection should be carried out targeting all concerned actors.

- **A social assessment** should be undertaken to provide sufficiently detailed information about affected population (gender disaggregated data, number of orphans, permanently disabled, livelihood data) to design recovery efforts in accordance with the specific needs and requirements.
- **Coordination among agencies and actors** in relief and rehabilitation efforts to ensure full coverage and technically and socially sound outcomes.

Longer Term Recovery Needs

- **Housing.** Housing assistance packages should be developed based on principles of community consultations and household-driven reconstruction as well as minimum relocation. Community Based Organizations (CBOs) may facilitate the reconstruction process and the interface between households, local governments and locally-based building contractors and suppliers
- **Livelihood.** A comprehensive package (grants/loans/microfinance) should be developed to assist affected households in recovering their lost assets and means of livelihood. Single-headed households will need extra support in re-establishing livelihoods, and a certain proportion of households may need support in creating new livelihoods. Community-based approaches may be used to reach the largest number of beneficiaries as soon as possible to reduce dependency effects. Careful targeting of the most vulnerable groups, including the high proportion of female headed households and permanently disabled, should be undertaken. Sending single women (widows, young orphaned girls) to the Darul Aman (women's shelter run by the Government) should not be considered an option. Efforts to utilize local resources and employ local people in the rebuilding activities, including public works programs related to local recovery activities, should to the extent feasible provide local employment opportunities to the most needy.
- **Legal rights.** Action to restore lost records of property rights to housing, commercial property, and lands should be launched, with special assistance given to the poor, squatters and widows and orphans in demonstrating legitimate property and inheritance rights. Special attention should be paid to protection of women's and children's inheritance right to land and property, and administration hereof by legal guardian until the child reaches maturity.
- **Disabled.** A high proportion of the injured people will be permanently disabled. Exact numbers are not known yet, but measures will need to be planned, to cater to the specific needs of this group, including counseling, medical care (to enable them to function with their limitations), and support to achieve social inclusion and to ensure disabled children access to education. Some of these measures need to be taken in the immediate future and others in the medium term.
- **Community participation** will be essential in most sectors for the success of the reconstruction efforts and it is essential to preserve existing social networks which form the basis of support and mutual aid among the affected households. Local communities will need to be actively involved in the decision-making for and implementation of reconstruction activities, including decisions about rebuilding *in-situ*/relocation, housing, location of and types of services and so on. Examples of successful implementation of schemes through community participation are Rural Water Supply Project and Community Infrastructure and Services Project.