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Dear Friends and Partners,

“Drinking water is our biggest problem” - that’s the unanimous opinion of UN experts, government officials and NGOs working in the flood regions of Pakistan. The floodwaters stayed for weeks in the heat, without receding, and drinking wells have been contaminated. It was truly the flood of the century. It is now not safe to drink the water from the wells. But often the people have no other choice. Read in our report how Shelter Now is helping four village communities in the flood region.

Over the border in Afghanistan, a lack of clean drinking water is also a frequent problem. Shelter Now is digging new wells – in Kandahar and Herat, for example. More about that too in our latest report...

Kind regards,

Udo Stolte
and the Shelter team



The children celebrate the arrival of the water filters



SHELTER Report



Before the floods, there were houses here



1300 rural families will receive these kitchen sets



"I am very happy. Actually the entire village is happy and very pleased that we've got these wonderful jerrycans from Shelter Now that are so useful. We feel very safe now with this water..." (Mr. Tilawat Shah)

"...We feel very safe having these filters and clean drinking water in our houses. Some of our people are even helping their friends in neighboring villages by providing them with clean drinking water from their jerrycans." (Mr. Jamil Khan)

These were some of the first reactions after local people in Pakistan tried out the jerrycan filters that we had distributed.

What has happened so far?

In early August, entire villages were submerged by the floods in Pakistan; houses collapsed and around 2000 people were killed. Millions of families were left homeless, having lost literally everything.

One week later, Shelter Now began distributing 2000 to 4300 hot meals a day. People were desperate for food. A short while later we were able to give out 300,000 water sterilization tablets and 2600 drinking water coolers. This meant that flood victims could drink the water available, without worrying about disease. Through these daily distribution rounds, Shelter staff got to know many of the local people. There were four village communities in particular, where the relationship worked very well. So we are now planning to continue working with them on a longer-term basis. There are about 1300 families living in the villages – or just under 10,000 people.

Getting back to cooking meals

We no longer have to hand out hot meals. The flood victims are now receiving dry food rations from USAID and the UN World Food Program. But the problem is, the people lost everything in the flood and so are unable to cook the food or turn it into anything edible. We spoke repeatedly with members of these village communities to find out what we could do and how we could provide the most effective help. In this case, we've ended up providing kitchen equipment. Each family in the four villages receives a basic gas stove, a set of pots, pans and other basics for cooking and a set of plates, bowls, cups etc.



The villagers from Mumtazabad are delighted with the jerrycans

This means the families are now finally able to cook their own meals again.

What are jerrycan filters?

The challenge of providing clean drinking water has proved more problematic. We knew that we would



Water before and after the jerrycan filtration

soon run out of sterilization tablets and needed a longer-term solution. A colleague from another organization told us he had bought 500 “jerrycan filters”; he wondered whether we wanted to have some of them. We decided to find out more. The jerrycans were developed by a firm in England called

“LIFESAVERsystems” and are equipped with a filter system for purifying water. These canisters can even be filled with water that is completely dirty and contaminated. The integrated handpump is then used to build up pressure in the can, when you then open the other side, you get clean, sterile drinking water.

The jerrycans have been used successfully following a number of humanitarian disasters around the world.

We immediately bought 200 jerrycans so that we could supply the first village. Shortly after the distribution, our project manager asked the villagers how they were getting on. He writes: “the people are delighted with their jerrycans, as they can now drink the water without worrying. Some of them are even providing their friends in neighboring villages with water.” We are happy and grateful that we can help so many flood victims solve their problem with drinking water.

Clean drinking water for nearly 10,000 people

Altogether, we will be providing 1300 families with these jerrycans. The firm has offered us a very good price. Instead of 260 euros per jerrycan, we are only paying 148 euros. Of course we also have to pay for them to be transported to Pakistan. We hope that we will be able to get sufficient finances together. The organization “Sign of Hope” has generously financed both the jerrycans and the kitchen sets for the village of Mumtazabad. We have also been able to enlist the help of a well-known consulting firm in financing jerrycans for the other villages. Staff at the firm are being encouraged to donate to the cause and the company will then double whatever they give. We thought it was a great idea! Nonetheless, we still need more donors for this project.

Houses

My tendency to talk about “villages” and “villagers” is perhaps misleading. The villages actually no longer exist. Nearly all of the mud-walled houses were destroyed in the floods, and even the loam itself was swept away, so there is nothing left. People are living in the open-air. Most of them have hung up old pieces of fabric on lines to create some kind of privacy. This is very important for the women in particular, as the Pashtuns who live in this area are very conservative Muslims.



When I was there a few weeks ago, it was still no problem living outside. But the temperatures are now dropping steadily, and temperatures of around freezing are quite normal in winter. Then there are also cold winds that blow down from the mountains and it rains frequently too. Not a pleasant thought for people who have no roof over their heads. That is what they are now afraid of. We have been considering together with them what we can do. We feel that buying tents just for one winter is too expensive. It would be better if we could supply them with the materials for a simple house – loam, straw and wooden beams. They could build the houses themselves, and then enlarge them next year with their own funds. But at the moment they don't have any money.

There is also another factor to be considered: if the village is going to have to be rebuilt from scratch anyway, it would be sensible to plan new infrastructure at the same time – i.e. the water supply, sewage and waste-water disposal, electricity ... We could basically create a kind of model village, that would provide an example for other village communities seeking to rebuild. This idea of raising the standard of living is still a far cry from luxury, but it would help reduce the infant mortality rate, among other things.

Afghanistan

The floods in Pakistan dominated the headlines, here in the west, and neighboring Afghanistan was somewhat sidelined. But our projects have continued there as normal. Shortage of drinking water is an ever present challenge in Afghanistan too, and we run various water projects there. The need in Kandahar is particularly

acute right now. Thousands have fled their towns and villages because of the militants and sought refuge in the city. There are so many people that the wells in Kandahar cannot provide sufficient drinking water for everyone. So more wells need to be dug. If a donor – and that may be a group, a school or a church – decides to finance an entire well, a plaque can be attached to it, bearing the name of the donor or a dedication. The cost of digging a well can vary greatly, depending on the ground conditions, but prices begin at around 900 euros.

Once complete, the well then provides a permanent source of drinking water for about 40 families.

Why not visit our website:

www.shelter.de

By the way we also joined Facebook a few months ago, there you can also find up-to-date news and photos:

www.facebook.com/ShelterNow

We would like to say a big thank you to all our friends, partners and others who have taken an interest in our work. We thank you also on behalf of those who benefit from our projects.

We wish you all a very happy Christmas and a peaceful 2011,

*with our best wishes
Udo Stolte*

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