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Pakistan

Labour Relief Campaign update

- News from around the world -

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The Labour Education Foundation has sent an update on the work of the Labour Relief Campaign for earthquake victims in Pakistan. The destruction is on massive scale and they have had no choice but to restrict themselves to two selected areas.

“After discussion, it was decided that Paniola town in Rawalakot district in Kashmir and some isolated villages in Balakot district in North West Frontier Province (NWFP) would be our area of work.

Paniola is 12 kilometres away from the Rawalkot district of Kashmir. Paniola is a small town, 12 kilometres from Balakot.

[<https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/lah1-2.jpg>]

LRC relief truck leaves Lahore

There are 38 villages around the town. They are located on both sides of Paniola, upward on the mountains and downward towards the valley. The town has a small bazaar. The registered voters in the local areas are 62,000. There are two union councils in the area, Pachiot and Bangohi. There is one girls college 4 kilometres from Paniola and one boys college 7 kilometres from here. Paniola is mainly a trading town with shops of all kinds. The total population of the town is not more than 2000.

It is mainly an area comprising working people. Some have gone to the Middle East and many to other parts of Pakistan in search of work. There are very few who could be regarded as rich and middle class. There is no industry in the area. The main work at Paniola is small commerce and selling milk and goats.

The earthquake on 8th October has hit the area and the damage is colossal. There are not as many human casualties as in the case of Bagh but almost every house in the villages, particularly towards the valley, is damaged or totally destroyed. It is estimated that there are around 350 casualties and many more injured. Most of the people have to live outside their demolished houses and some have managed to get some tents. And some have made some sort of shelter of cloths, blankets and bed sheets. The winter is approaching and the situation will get worse.

For first two days, no help arrived from anywhere, although several truckloads of goods were passing through here to go to Rawalkot and Bagh. This was building frustration among the villagers. Nisar Shah, chairperson Labour Party Pakistan comes from this area. He is a practising lawyer in Karachi. He was able to come here on 9th October. The first help arrived here on 11th October from Lahore sent by the Labour Relief Campaign. This was followed by several more trucks sent from Lahore. Several volunteers from Lahore LPP stayed here for a few days to help in distribution and a survey of the area.

The idea of setting up local committees was not materialized until the first relief truck that arrived here on 11th October. Local people had no trust as this might be just a talk show. Since then, 13 village committees have been set up. There is a central relief committee now working with the name of Citizen Relief Committee headed by Nisar Shah. A team of 10 members from Lahore visited the area on 18th October. The area needs immediate and long term relief and rehabilitation work. The main need of the area is shelter, food and medicines.

The other focal area of our work is some villages in the Balakot area in North Western Frontier Province.

At Sanghar, Kashian, Bhanghian and Josach villages in Balakot district, there are 80 per cent casualties and 100 per

cent of houses are demolished, one of the worst hit area. These villages are around 30 kilometres from Balakot city. Some more relief has finally arrived in the villages after 12 days. The Labour Relief Campaign was the first one to reach the area on 13th October five days after the most disastrous earthquake in Pakistan.

Here as well, a local relief committee has been established to help coordinate the work. This is the most affected area. We have heard that teams from China and the army have now reached the area and have provided some tents, food and medicines.

A lot more has to be done in this area including the rebuilding of the education and health system. The immediate need is shelter, food and medicines.

What has been done so far

We have sent nine truck loads of food, tents, medicine, blankets and clothes. This has been distributed by the local committees and by the volunteers of Labour Relief Campaign. We have established a temporary office and a store in Paniola. In this place, we are the only ones helping the area. Every day, dozens of earthquake victims from the villages from the top of the mountains and from the valley come to the office to ask for the help.

We are also trying to help build the networking of different organizations in Pakistan which are involved in relief and rehabilitation work.”

Please visit Labour Education Foundation website for more details of Labour Relief Campaign www.lef.org.pk

Donations can be sent to the Labour Education Foundation appeal in two ways:

To Pakistan, but which might be very costly:

LABOUR EDUCATION FOUNDATION

A/C No. 01801876

BANK ALFALAH LTD., LDA PLAZA, KASHMIR ROAD, LAHORE, PAKISTAN

Route:

Please advise and pay to Citi Bank, New York, USA Swift CITI US 33

for onward transfer to BANK ALFALAH LTD., KARACHI, PAKISTAN A/C No. 36087144

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Swift: ALFHPKKALDA for A/C No. 01801876 OF LABOUR EDUCATION FOUNDATION

Labour Relief Campaign update

Or through a Paris-based NGO, the ESSF, which is centralising the transfer of funds:

THROUGH ESSF:

Bank Account:

Crédit lyonnais

Agence de la Croix-de-Chavaux (00525)

10 boulevard de Chanzy

93100 Montreuil

France

International bank account details :

IBAN : FR85 3000 2005 0044 5757 C12

BIC / SWIFT : CRLYFRPP

Account holder : ESSF