



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

PAKISTAN

CASE STUDY

Providing Shelter and a Warm Room

Master builders train others to construct temporary homes



A master builder instructs a villager in constructing an earthquake-resistant transitional home.

“We began distributing kits to widows and other vulnerable people. Now everyone in our villages has received shelter kits. Many have already rebuilt and moved into their transitional homes,” said Jack Norman, Director of Catholic Relief Services, Pakistan.

Telling Our Story
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Challenge

In the fall, people living in Pakistan’s mountainous terrain at 5,000 feet above sea level usually start moving into the valleys to pass the winter, but the devastating earthquake in October 2005 disrupted this cycle. Subsistence farmers who store their wealth in wood supplies, food, animals, and fodder feared their entire net worth could be stolen if they left their assets unguarded. Women and children who lost their head of household feared that, given the lack of systematic land registration processes and loss of documents, if they did not occupy their land they risked losing their one remaining asset — land.

Initiative

In response, USAID provided 6,000 transitional shelters to help these people weather the harsh mountain winter. Communities participated in the decision-making process, considering issues such as how to prioritize who should be the first to receive shelters while minimizing potential conflicts as building was underway. In addition, USAID sponsored cash-for-work projects to help clear debris from shelter sites and recover materials suitable for reuse in construction. Builders learned new techniques for building sturdy structures and earned daily wages for constructing temporary houses. USAID provided tools and materials including plastic tarps, iron sheeting, wood stoves, and blankets to construct and supply each structure with basic survival items. Each shelter measures approximately 16 x 16 feet, protecting a household of eight to ten people. Cash-for-work initiatives also hired people to dig 400 latrines in select areas.

Results

USAID supported two community mobilizers and technical advisors to assist villagers as shelters were built and needs met. By the end of the 2005, USAID’s program distributed over 6,000 transitional housing kits, allowing approximately 35,000 people to move from emergency relief tents into a transitional shelter with at least one warm room they could call home.

Photo: Disaster Assistance Center, Pakistan