

**Scottish Government International Development Fund  
Project “Disaster Rehabilitation for Women”  
University of Glasgow and Heritage Foundation**

**FIRST AID WORKSHOP  
7TH AND 8TH DECEMBER, 2011  
JABBAR AND KODAR VILLAGES, SIRAN VALLEY, MANSEHRA**

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April 2012



## BACKGROUND

In the 2005 earthquake affected area of the Siran valley, Mansehra, Heritage Foundation has been working since soon after the 2005 earthquake for the rehabilitation of the disaster hit people and the area on various fronts with tangible results. Housing, education, income generating schemes and preservation of the local heritage are some salient fields where much has been achieved.

In this scenic Siran Valley tucked away in far flung high mountains, disease has been rampant, but no curative remedy was available. Two dais [self trained mid wife's] and a quasi-medical man was all the medical help at hand. These villages, cut off from the world, due to absence of roads, electricity and telecommunications , were left to traditional home remedies for dealing with all illnesses from common cold to complications of pregnancy, heart attacks and paralysis. In the event of accidents or major disasters like the massive earthquake 2005, no first aid or immediate care was at hand. Heavy snow for three months restricts movements out of the villages especially because of absence of proper roads and transportation. Apathy and an acceptance of such abysmally poor state of healthcare as fate, made the situation extremely testing for the local communities.

Heritage Foundation due to its stay in the area with total involvement and concern for the people, seeing this lamentable state of health decided to intervene in March, 2009. To begin with a health survey was planned. Voluntary services of a doctor in Karachi were engaged to conduct this survey. A first aid workshop was also to be held during the visit for the survey. This was done in April 2009 along with a medical camp - perhaps the first in the village.

The health survey revealed skin diseases as the most rampant, followed by psychological disorders. Lack of hygiene was appalling. More alarming was the total lack of any medical facility for prevention and cure. And even more cause for concern was the unpreparedness of the villagers for any emergency requiring medical attention - be it of a minor nature or a natural disaster.

## EMPOWERMENT OF VILLAGERS BY FIRST AID KNOWLEDGE

With the above background, Heritage Foundation decided to empower the villagers with first aid knowledge as the first step to giving medical relief --a basic right. It was also decided to build a basic health unit in Kodar village to begin with.

The first workshop for first aid in April 2009 was successful in that the idea of caring for themselves was imparted to the villagers and they saw some hope of treatment hitherto deprived of. Five enthusiastic young men were selected to be further trained in first aid. The basic health unit was built in Kodar in July 2011 and is in operation.

With the assistance of the University of Glasgow and the Scottish Government International Development Fund, and due to the efforts and sincere concern of Dr. Azra Meadows and Dr. Peter Meadows, a first aid workshop was arranged by Heritage Foundation in September 2011 in both Jabbar and Kodar villages with about 45 participants, male and female.

It was felt that this should be an ongoing process. In December 2011, from 6<sup>th</sup> -8<sup>th</sup> December, another workshop was done in both these villages. Funded by the Scottish Government International Development Fund, Dr. Azra Meadows and Dr. Peter Meadows specially came from Scotland with audio visual aids for this workshop. Their participation and assistance have been of invaluable help. Heritage Foundation looks forward to a continuing fruitful partnership with them.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> December 2011 a workshop was held in the office of Heritage Foundation in Battal, Mansehra by Dr. Azra Meadows and Dr. Peter Meadows, in which audio visual presentation was done of first aid and disaster management. On 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> December, Heritage Foundation team with both the Dr. Meadows' went to the villages of Jabbar and Kodar respectfully - over an hour's journey by roads which were at that time still in the making.

Day long workshops were held in both villages with the participation of around fifty villagers. Separate sessions were held for females and males in accord with the local culture of segregation of sexes. Dr. Azra Meadows conducted the workshop for females. Of all attendees, only three had some prior knowledge of medical care--one being a clinic assistant and the other two had taken a short course on first aid. The rest were ignorant about the subject. The literacy level was that some had been to school or were still studying. Some were totally illiterate, especially amongst the females.

## WORKSHOP METHOD

Theory and concept of first aid was explained at the level of the capacity of the audience. Charts photographs, audio visuals brought by the Meadows' were used.

A practical demonstration of first aid was done. A booklet in Urdu on first aid and CPR was given to the participants.

The demonstration included:

1. How to react to an emergency-- local, minor or a big disaster.
2. How to attend to the victim/injured/sick.
3. Checking for signs of life and death.

4. Checking the pulse.
5. Checking the blood pressure.
6. CPR.
7. Transportation of the patient/victim.
8. Seeking help/assistance.
9. Informing closest ambulance and hospital.
10. Splinting injured limb, back, neck.
11. Control of bleeding.
12. Tying a bandage.
13. Importance of airway. How to ensure and maintain clear air passage
14. Use of airway plug.

An interactive session was held after the presentation. Participants were encouraged to ask questions. They were made to practise the taught methods on each other. In this activity, much enthusiasm was seen. CPR was practised by them on each other. This was done to see how much they had learnt and to what degree they were keen to know. Another reason was to pick those who showed aptitude and skills for further training.

The outcome was very positive. There was keen interest amongst the villagers to learn the skills of first aid. Their eagerness to learn and be prepared to deal with minor and major emergencies was palpable and extremely encouraging.

## CONCLUSIONS

The First Aid Workshop and associated training were very successful. They have shown that there is an impetus for further training the people of these villages in Siran Valley, where not much exists in terms of even basic healthcare. Capacity building as emergency medical workers and first aid providers will go a long way, enabling them to take care of themselves, especially in an area where full medical facilities are somewhat far away. An area prone to natural disasters such as the Siran Valley calls for much more attention and support from both the private and government sector and from international donor agencies.



Dr Hussain Nasir demonstrating CPR to villagers.  
Jabbar village. December 2011.

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Dr Azra Meadows teaching women (front row) and boys and men (back two rows) about first aid and disaster management.

Heritage Foundation Base Camp.  
Battal, Chattar, Siran Valley. December 2011.

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