

The Salvation Army
2014 USA Salvation Army Conference for Social Work and Emergency Disaster Services
25 to 28 March 2014

GLOBAL CONVERSATION SESSION 4C

“How can we serve suffering humanity with few resources?”

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Introduction – the context

Pakistan was established in 1947 with very few resources to build on. People had to struggle with all the available possessions and potential. The country has been supported by overseas donations and aid since then. There has not been much development in comparison to the number of years it has been independent. As a nation, we are blessed with uncountable natural resources and the human potential to make use of them. But unfortunately due to political instability, corruption and less awareness about broad-spectrum growth, many people still live with stereotypes and outdated customs. The ability to grow economically has been declining as the country has become unstable and volatile.

Missionaries have contributed to the country with all aspects. They provided Pakistan not only with financial aid but also their services building schools, hospitals, rehabilitation centres and many other social service centres'. They carried out their services in the slum areas as well as the cities.

Many local NGOs established in Pakistan are affiliated with overseas donors. Several training centres have been established to carry out their role effectively. Boys and girls are trained with skills like welding, auto-mechanic, nursing (both male and female), and sewing. There are adult literacy centres to provide education for those with limited resources and opportunity. Many people leave their homes in rural areas and move to the cities to look for opportunities to learn, get jobs and enjoy a higher-quality standard of living.

The Salvation Army's response

I will share a few of the ways we are currently trying to serve humanity with limited resources. We try to help needy people through our services. I will highlight work in health, education, income generation, faith-based facilitation, women's advocacy and emergency services.

1. Preventive Family Health Care with a focus on Maternal and Child Health

Health is an essential asset to our life. Awareness about this concern and about preventive measures is communicated through health programs. These are achieved through focus groups, activities focusing on reproductive health, pre/post natal health, drug addictions and health of children, immunization and polio campaigns, adolescent, youth and young parents programs. Other health concerns like diarrhoea, blood pressure and dengue are emphasized too.

As a result of our programmes in the communities we serve we have seen:

- child malnutrition has reduced by 70 percent
- 80 percent increased awareness on hygiene and basic health care among the women
- mother and child death rate has also gone down
- 50 percent reduction in water-borne diseases by spreading awareness about preventive measures.

We have developed health information resource groups to work with awareness campaigns constantly. The community members have better access to health centres and hospitals. Health related issues are resolved more efficiently now due to such convenient facilities.

2. Improving Education Standards

The literacy rate here in Pakistan is still very low. Currently it is 57 percent but with a significant difference between men (69 percent) and women (only 45 percent). The Government is struggling to even provide basic primary education for free. People living in the rural areas have almost no means to fulfil this basic need to educate their children. They earn on a daily wage basis and hardly cover a day's worth of meal. Education is a challenge itself as limited financial resources prevent so many families from sending their children to school.

The daily income of a labourer in Pakistan is Rs. 500 - about US\$5. Families with seven or eight children find it difficult to cope with providing education and the expenses (uniforms, books, stationary) accompanied with it. There are a few places where the Government has provided school with reasonable tuition fees. Some people send only their boys to study and not their girls. Many girls belonging to the rural areas are still facing gender discrimination.

The Salvation Army in Pakistan has directed our attention towards providing reasonable means of education to both boys and girls. Literacy and its importance are being promoted among the community. This has actually helped the community to allure the desire for basic/higher education among the young generation. Adult literacy enables them to budget and maintain their financial details both for their household and small business.

3. Income generation skills training

Poverty has been a burning issue for many decades. Many have tried to resolve it but it still manages to continue. It may be due to the inability of resource management. In the rural villages, people still believe in the combined family system. Many families have seven or eight children, and very few to earn a living for the whole household. This sometimes leads to child labour where parents are forced to send their children to work instead of sending them to school like they should. People lack the awareness of family planning and have as many children as they can, considering them as God's blessing.

The Salvation Army has compiled health projects to introduce awareness about family planning and how to live happily with fewer children and sensible resource allocation. Our training and vocational courses have helped both men and women to develop skills and earn more to support their families and entrepreneurial initiatives.

Salma's story

I share a case study from a Salvation Army project in Pakistan to highlight the impact we are making by our literacy project. Salma graduated from one of our skills class. She supported her husband with his business through financial help. They own their rickshaw and he uses it as means of income for his family. Previously he could not provide for money to fix and repair the rickshaw, which was a crucial time for the family as they had nothing to earn from.

Salma applied for some financial help from Sustainable Livelihood Development Programme to help fix their rickshaw. They made a detailed feasibility study, calculating the total expenses and benefits that it accompanies after it's fixed. She was excited to receive that help and they mended the rickshaw. They earned Rs. 4,000 before and now they are earning Rs. 6,000 – Rs. 7,000 per month from it. Now they keep up their maintenance up to date. Her husband brings home Rs. 200 (sometimes more than this) every day. From this amount they save and meet their needs. The family is happy and grateful to The Salvation Army Project Team. We have given them advice on how to access to revolve loan/ payback for microenterprise development and livestock acquisition.

Livestock initiatives/Projects

Another good example of our work is seen in some inaccessible communities outside the major cities where we have helped a number of communities to work together. The people were helped to address the wellbeing promotion, livelihoods and awareness for peace in their communities. In addressing livelihood issues we helped with skills development for income generation and livestock

programmes. This was funded by Salvation Army donors from other territories through the through the Community Projects Management and Support System (CPMS).

CPMS funding compliments the work we are doing and is easily fitted into the ongoing community process. These programmes – with the support of local leadership and committees – address different community projects like water, livestock and livelihood support initiatives. Our BASSIC Programme is moving forward by having good networking activities and initiatives from communities which shows change and development among communities. Committees were keenly involved in carrying out their activities and livestock projects in their areas. Extensive work was done on capacity building of people both financially and socially which empowers them to address their issues and concerns on their own collectively.

The Salvation Army Programme team kept on ensuring the participation of communities in decision making at community level in all livestock programmes. People came up with the idea of having cows, buffalos and goats as livestock for milk production to earn income for their families. It has been reported by the beneficiaries and our team that these programmes help people to enhance their income and support their daily needs and also nutrition for the family members. People are earning better income, sending their children to schools, having better diets and also fulfilling their other necessary needs in a better way. It has resulted in better health and people are thinking positively to move forward for their communities' social and monetary development.

4. A faith-based way of working

Faith Based Facilitation tools have really helped us to move forward towards development programmes. The Project Department does not only carry out its own work but also integrates with other departments. For example, the Projects' department coordinates with Women's Ministries, to compile projects for Young Women. Together with the Youth Department they are working on the rising issues of today's youth. Young people are provided with social centres to come in with their concerns and queries about those issues.

The Project department also works with the Training College conducting seminars/workshops for cadets, to prepare them for the community and the upcoming challenges that they will have to face. Since 2010 the community development program has been part of the Training College curriculum. It has indeed facilitated the cadets with the way they believe. This significant difference in cadets has helped them to be more responsible for the holistic ministry – body, mind and spirit – of all those they interact with.

Communities are addressed with bible stories, sharing different perspectives and dimensions. Many people benefit from these stories for their character building, thanksgiving towards God, and with

managing their need and wants surrounded with limited resource allocation. People are taught with a useful fact to admit that, relief is temporary but development is permanent.

5. Women's Advocacy

Our women advocacy project (WAP) was introduced in the course of network expansion with the communities. Several workshops were conducted in the divisions to promote the issue on a wider scale. These workshops were aimed to stimulate women's perspective about themselves and the other fellow colleagues. Issues referred to successful women are still not widely unwrapped and talked about as the culture is still surrounded with men oriented behaviour. This is more extreme in rural areas as some families avoid sending their girls to schools. To change a primeval tradition of thinking to this new perspective about giving women more respect and sense of honour to their existence, is still very challenging.

This programme has the following objectives:

- To help women become aware of their rights.
- Help them to advocate for themselves with knowledge of their rights
- Project approaches the community capacity rather than the political aspect of it
- Women will find a ray of hope in the darkness, as the project aims to reduce gender discrimination in the social sphere of Pakistan
- Help women to become aware of issues in this facet
- Build relationships
- Bridge alliances with other NGOs

These issues are discussed throughout our workshops. Attendees are given the opportunity to reflect on themselves as well as the wider population affected with this discrimination. Positive feedback is being achieved, as women were grateful to receive a safer platform for themselves. This is a great opportunity for women to express their unsaid concerns and a safe opportunity to give their opinions too. They learn from each other's experiences and have built individual groups to carry on the fellowship.

6. Emergency Services

In the course of an emergency, The Salvation Army Emergency Services in Pakistan has always been eager to provide necessary welfare. It has been an active function at the time of desperate need during natural disasters and internal instability in the country. The aim is to meet the needs of that time and carry out need assessment for it all to be effective, considering limited resource allocation.

From 2005 – 2010 Pakistan faced severe natural disasters (earthquakes, floods) and political instability where people were completely shattered with no hope to survive on. Emergency Services Team provided that ray of hope for the affected. Those people were facilitated with immediate needs (food, utensils, beds, tents) as well as sustainable development requirements like building a school. The aims, goals and objectives of the Emergency department can be summarised as readiness, response and rehabilitation. This concept has been carried forward to train officers with emergency training who then, can meet the needs of people effectively keeping in mind efficient resource management. The aim is to clarify the concept and function of this department and the capacity it carries to meet its goals in the times of extreme chaos and affliction, when only limited resources are available.

Conclusion

This paper has given a brief insight to The Salvation Army's work in Pakistan. It has shown how we make a contribution towards helping people with limited resources and when faced with endless opportunities to serve.