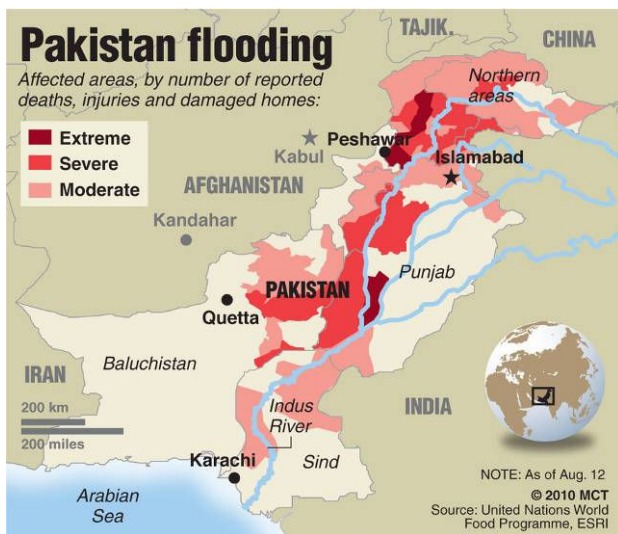


## Floods in Pakistan

John and Fiona Earle

In August, when catastrophic floods in Pakistan were headline news, members of All Saints contributed about £600 through the Produce Stall and a retiring collection. We sent this money directly to the Hindu Kush Conservation Association (HKCA) for flood relief in the remote Kalash valleys in the North West Frontier Province. We have just received another report that indicates the main features of the damage and how the money was used.



The floods were of an order of magnitude greater than anyone can remember. For a time, one third of Pakistan was under water. This is about 100,000 square miles. By comparison, the area of the U.K. is about 94,000 square miles. Twenty million people out of a population of 150 million have been displaced from their homes. Their live stock has gone, roads, bridges, hydro electric plants, buildings, trees and fields have been damaged or destroyed. The emergency is not yet over.



Maureen Lines is someone we know personally. We knew the money raised would go swiftly and in safety to where it was most needed. She normally runs a one-woman mini health service in the remote Kalash valleys and knows the area extremely well.

She was sent £15,390 initially and that was quick to arrive. She spent £4,000 on flour, tea, sugar and medicines. The transport costs were high as it needed lorries, jeeps, donkeys and mules to get necessities to remote villages. Having the money she was able to pay up front for the transport and so got a good deal. In fact, three thousand pounds of the original transport costs for delivering World Food Programme food could be reclaimed and recycled.



In addition Maureen supervised the repair of the local roads by the villagers and the job was done more quickly than the government had thought possible.

An administrator of the World Food Programme (W.F.P.) was so impressed by what Maureen had achieved that he gave

her a further 20 tons of food. Then a further 120 tons. That is easy to write but bear in mind that the largest sack of wheat available in the U.K. is 25 Kg. so 120 tons of food represents 4,800 sacks. Each sack had to be handled four times. Maureen is about to sign a contract for a further 240 tons. This represents 32 large lorry loads of food.



This will deal with the immediate feeding problems. That is all. The next problems will involve repair to the hydro-electric systems and reinstating more local food production.

The locals have lost their grapes, normally a good cash crop as they could be sold to make wine and also contain plenty of sugar and Vitamin C. Walnuts are a good source of protein but the storm-force winds and rain tore them off the trees. The fields will need to be restored as only about a third of Pakistan can be used to produce food.

The previous flood defences, made of concrete and put in by the government, were destroyed and they were swept away. A caging of J wire over reinforced concrete is expensive but necessary to survive further flooding.

Is this just a matter of closing the door after the horse has bolted? We don't think so. Major flood disasters can be measured, roughly, by counting the number of deaths due to flooding, the number of people displaced from their homes and the costs of the disaster.

Admittedly these measurements are only approximations, but they are the best we have. If we apply them to very severe floods that occur per decade on a global

basis, then it shows that the number of very severe floods per decade has been increasing since 1950.



The Kalash valleys are in the Hindu Kush mountain chain. It is the second highest mountain chain in the world, second only to the Himalayas. With that in mind, it is not a question of if another flood will come, but when it will come. Can the people in the valleys be prepared against the floods and the huge boulders they bring down?

Someone recently asked John a penetrating question. He said who is my neighbour? Probably because we have trekked in Nepal and know that food can only be conveyed to some distant villages by mules or donkeys, we view Kalash villagers as neighbours.

In this recent report, Maureen gives a "Very big thank-you to all our generous donors who we hope are very proud of the use to which your money has been put." So we pass on her thanks and add our own.

On Jan. 16<sup>th</sup> and Jan. 23<sup>rd</sup> the Produce Stall will again be in aid of the people in the Kalash valleys that Maureen is helping. The emergency is not over. One of her dispensaries needs rebuilding and restocking in addition to the other matters we have described.

A copy of the latest report from H.K.C.A. was placed at the back of the church in last month if you wish to read it or you can visit the HKCA website at <http://www.hindukushconservation.com/> where you will find newsletters, articles photographs and much more.