

Post-Assessment Notes – Pakistan Earthquake REA  
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Provided below are some quick notes arising from the REA conducted in Pakistan following the 8 October 2005 earthquake. The notes represent the views of the author alone.

1. CARE International in Pakistan provided excellent support for the REA.
2. Using a two person team to lead the REA has definite advantages, particularly as both persons were trained in the REA process and were able to undertake different REA tasks concurrently.
3. There was strong involvement of environmental NGOs IUCN and WWF in the REA. Results in included:
  - Participation of staff from both organizations in the OLA and CLA field work.
  - Better understanding of longer term environmental issues in Pakistan.
  - A joint CARE-IUCN-WWF "Alert" publication on earthquake related environmental issues.
  - Tentative agreement for IUCN to second an advisor to CARE to strengthen environmental review of relief and recovery efforts.
  - Possible WWF technical assistance in design and construction of winter shelter.
  - Likely future collaboration with both organizations on recovery projects.
4. Cooperation with UNEP/OCHA Joint Unit efforts was good. Information and expertise was shared and, while the REA was not integrated into the Joint Unit effort as had happened in Sri Lanka, both efforts fed into and off of each other.
5. Linkages with the UNEP and GoP were not as extensive as would be preferred. There was insufficient time to cultivate contacts with the GoP. UNEP operational contacts should be strengthened in the future. Government contacts should be given equal weight as environmental NGO contacts.
6. The Pakistan REA effort was weak on the internal review of CARE's own relief and procurement activities. Implicitly, CARE's relief operations were greener because of the REA. But this outcome is not based on a formal review of project activities, and there isn't presently the institutional underpinning needed to ensure that future activities are as green as possible.
7. Cost recovery funding for the REA was not included in proposals developed by CARE. Since the REA is part of the emergency response, it is logical to request some level of funding for this effort in emergency proposals. This should be done in the future.
8. The REA only focused on one area (Northwest Frontier Province) due to limits on access. However, the results do appear to be applicable to the whole disaster-affected area.
8. One REA team member (Kelly) was deeply involved in Islamabad-level cluster coordination activities on Camp Management and Shelter. This involvement was justified as these sectors were identified as having significant potential negative environmental impact. An effort was also made to be involved in the Water and Sanitation cluster, but the time needed to attend and participate in three cluster meetings was too great.

The involvement in the Shelter cluster was most significant, and resulted in becoming the CARE “representative” being involved in working groups dealing with shelter policy and technical issues. This involvement was justified on the basis of being able to “inject” environmental perspectives into policy (e.g., the emphasis of recycling and reuse on the shelter strategy) and technical decisions (e.g., the selection of stoves and design of alternate shelter structures) made by the cluster. This effort was successful at the policy level. Operational impacts remaining to be verified<sup>1</sup>.

9. A number of environmental assessments were conducted following the earthquake. The comparative advantage of the REA may have been in the community level assessment input, something which is was not systematically covered in the other assessments.

In future large disasters it may be more effective for the REA to focus on the community level assessment when other organizations focus more on the assistance organization perspective. This community focus would also have advantages in developing response plans, as it would speed up the incorporation of survivor input into plans and operations.

At the same time, for disasters where there are few or no other assessments, the full REA process may be appropriate. This situation would probably develop in a sub-national scale disaster without a major loss of life.

Adjusting how the REA tools are used, and striking understandings on these options with UNEP and the Joint Unit may be a good way to integrate the REA into the overall UN Coordination effort.

10. Cooperation with IUCN and WWF was good and raises the question as to whether CARE and these two organizations want to establish formal linkages with respect to post disaster environmental assessments. Where IUCN and WWF are present in a country, this cooperation would have the significant advantage of bringing a locally aware environmental perspective into the assessment process.

Further, IUCN (following the tsunami) developed a post disaster assessment tool which focused on areas and issues which are not covered by the REA. Packaging the REA and IUCN tools (e.g., using them end-to-end) may be a good way to extend the integration of environmental issues into recovery as well as relief operations.

11. The issue of follow-on was raised by several parties. IUCN and WWF clearly intend to push for the integration of environmental issues into relief and recovery, and appear to want to partner with CARE in this effort. This process and identified outcomes need to be monitored.

CARE’s own follow-up on to the issues raised in the REA is unclear. Response to some of the issues raised, such as shelter<sup>2</sup>, is integral to CARE’s response.

However, CARE’s programmatic involvement in other critical issues (health, waste management and hazard management) is less clear. This is not a fault of CARE Pakistan, but a result of

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<sup>1</sup> A Pakistan Emergency Shelter Environmental Review Checklist, based on a document developed for Sri Lanka, was drafted and disseminated in Pakistan but use is not known.

<sup>2</sup> CARE’s shelter efforts are based on recycling construction materials from damaged/destroyed buildings, which responds to the shelter and debris management issues.

CARE's logical steps to focus on specific high priority areas of immediate need where CARE has an organizational advantage.

The REA methodology suggests that CARE should take on an advocacy role in the non-focus areas. But how this would be done in reality remains to be determined.

Further, Pakistan highlighted a weakness to the cross-sectoral approach to relief management, as presented in Sphere and the (evolving) UN cluster approach. For instance, attention was given to environmental issues in Camp Management and Shelter clusters while there was someone playing an active environmental advocacy role in these clusters. The same is largely true within the time and staff constrained CARE emergency effort. However, it is unclear whether environmental issues can receive appropriate attention once the advocates are no longer involved in the clusters.

For the cluster approach to be successful, cross-sector environmental advocacy needs to be heard in the clusters as well as sector-specific operations (i.e., within shelter activities in CARE). IUCN and WWF are, by their own clear admission, not relief organizations. It is unlikely they have the staff capacity to function as environmental advocates in the cluster system (this capacity implicitly requires someone with an understanding of a sector (e.g., water and sanitation) and environmental issues related to the respective sector.

Both organizations have looked to CARE to provide this expertise. But the position of an Environment-Wise Relief Advocate has yet to appear on CARE's (or any one else's) organizational table. As with age, PLWA and gender, it may be time to consider a more task specific staffing on the environment in disaster response.