

Al-Shifa reaches out to IDPs



Special Newsletter Supplement

Al-Shifa launches comprehensive eye care package for Internally Displaced Persons

Recent conflict in Malakand and Tribal region of Pakistan has resulted in mass migration of people from Swat and adjoining areas. This has heavily taxed the local resources and health care system. There are around 3 million Internally Displaced Persons as a result of this conflict. Out of as many as 30 million IDPs in more than 50 countries, Pakistan today is faced with maximum number of IDPs in the modern history. The government of Pakistan has arranged about 20 IDP Camps in NWFP to provide temporary shelter to these people. Many others have taken shelter in the homes of their relatives or friends.

A population on the move or living in temporary shelters is difficult to care for. These communities are poor, vulnerable, and at greater risk of acquiring disease.



Al-Shifa Trust provides eye care to 3,000 IDPs



Al-Shifa Trust (AST) has always contributed nationally in the hour of need, whether it was October 2005 earthquake or 2009 IDP health care. Rising to the occasion, AST started providing eye care to IDPs in their temporary shelters, the moment IDP camps were established in different nooks and corners of NWFP. During the last few weeks, Al-Shifa Trust has provided health care to around 3,000 IDPs. Medicines

for general ailments as well as for eye diseases were provided in camps. Children who needed glasses were also provided the same at the spot. In addition our team consisting of male and female doctors, and eye paramedics also made a generalized assessment of the eye care needs of IDPs and based on that AST has now chalked out a long-term comprehensive eye care package for IDPs.

Comprehensive eye care package of Al-Shifa Trust for IDPs



There are around 20 camps for IDPs set up by the Govt. of Pakistan. The IDPs will stay in these camps until situation returns to normal in Swat region which is expected in near future. Based on this, AST has prepared a Two-Phase Plan for serving the IDPs. An amount of Rs. 10 million (125,000 US dollars) has been allocated in annual AST budget for this purpose.

1. Provision of Eye Care in IDP Camps.

- a. A team consisting of an eye doctor and a general physician along with essential paramedical staff will conduct eye clinics in the camps.

- b. The team will provide free eye and general medicine along with vision glasses to children, where required.
- c. The team will also impart basic training to relief workers for identification of sight-threatening eye diseases.

This program will continue till the IDPs are relocated to their homes.

2. Treatment facilities when IDPs move back

Once the IDPs are relocated to their original homes, they will constantly need the support of an essential health care system which has largely been compromised due to conflict. AST will transfer their IDP Eye Care Setup to district/tehsil hospitals of Swat and Dir region till such time when local health system can handle the patient load. AST IDP team will provide following services locally: -

- a. Providing eye care facilities in each DHQ hospital of Swat and Dir area through regular holding of eye camps.
- b. The patients in the screening camps will be provided free medicine. Those in need of surgery will be transported to base hospital at Rawalpindi and operated free of cost.
- c. Screening of school children will be conducted and children identified to be in need of vision glasses will be provided free glasses.
- d. Community health education through distribution of literature and video shows.

AST has set aside a budget of Rs. 10 million from its own sources, but the total cost is around Rs. 25 million. The remaining 15 million will need the help of our friends, philanthropists and donors from within Pakistan and abroad.

Let us join together in this hour of crisis. Let's lessen the deprivation, the suffering and the helplessness of all those to whom we owe our time, effort and resources.

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