

Community animal shelters in Pakistan earthquake

At the time of the 2005 Pakistan earthquake, herds of sheep and goats were migrating back from pastures, resulting in a large number of deaths. The death toll was even higher in static farming systems as buffaloes, cattle, and poultry died when the shelters in which they were kept collapsed. The surviving livestock were extremely valuable to survivors, as they provided a vital milk source for the winter and retained their value. Responding to need, the Brooke offered pastoralists community-based rather than individual shelters for animals, since resources and land for building shelters were limited and communal shelters would be able to protect the animals during the approaching winter.

People living in close proximity were encouraged to build wooden frames large enough to shelter livestock for several families (up to 30 animals). They were provided with technical support, plastic sheeting, nails, and corrugated iron sheets to complete the shelter.

Participants were selected through discussions with village leaders together with surveys to find the most vulnerable and in-need. If people were unable to construct a shelter within their group, the Brooke offered them support. Some were reluctant to build community animal shelters to begin with, fearing that this would cause the spread of disease, but the Brooke provided vaccination and health care before animals were put together. This project had the added benefit of sharing livestock care among women as a labour-saving measure. Following this project, the Brooke went on to provide training in animal health and husbandry to women, and then to formally train community animal health workers (CAHWs) to improve the long-term health and welfare of the animals.

Source: Julia Macro, personal communication, 2008.