

‘Give a man a fish, he will eat once. Give him a fishing rod, he will eat rest of his life’

This has been the ethos of work in Kashmir with our 2 projects, which are very much linked with each other.

1. Changing lives of women through training, skill development and empowerment at the very grassroots to bring social change and social inclusion of women in Kashmir and encouraging them to preserve the very much needed traditional skills. www.chakraproject.org
2. Introducing Permaculture practices in Kashmir to address social, economic and environmental issues, using sustainable and regenerative solutions. www.greenkashmir.org

16th October was celebrated around the world as World Food Day, so we thought it is a good day to remember those Kashmiri children’s and families who have been affected by the ongoing situation in Kashmir and have very limited access to food since the 5th August with a complete shut down and communication black out imposed on the people of Kashmir. This means that people have not been able to carry out their normal lives: shops are shut, all schools, colleges and universities are shut, transport is closed, Farmers have not been able to harvest the autumn crop which has been left to rot in the ground, and now many people are close to destitution and lacking in food supplies and the wherewithal to purchase food supplies. In brief, we are facing yet another humanitarian crisis.

Although our work is not usually to address a crisis of this nature in Kashmir and is addressed at more sustainable and regenerative and long-term solutions for the community resilience and peace building in the region. We have found ourselves obliged to take action to raise Emergency Food Relief Funds for Kashmir as due to the sensitive nature of the region unfortunately outside agencies and charities are not currently allowed into Indian Administered Kashmir to deliver relief. Therefore, it has been left to people like ourselves who are from Kashmir to access support from outside and to then share and distribute relief from within Kashmir.

Meanwhile, Before I left for Kashmir on my recent trip in August. Amber managed to speak with some key organisations here in the UK about the Kashmir situation and we were met with compassion and friendliness with regards our deep concerns for our Brothers and Sisters in Kashmir.

We managed to raise some crucial funds for the emergency food relief for Kashmir.

I was able to distribute food to several families who were close to destitution and were confined to eating one small meal a day.

Most of the shops were closed, shops with only clandestine opening for essentials in the late evenings and according to our assessment, that food supply should last these families for just over 2 months.

Some of the stories some of the families shared with me were very disturbing and heart breaking and I really wished I could do more to help some more families, but unfortunately, I had a very limited recourse and time. Now since I got back from Kashmir, I was hoping that the situation will calm down little bit, so people can get out to work and go for their daily business, but it looks there is still not sign in sight of this abating. The ongoing shut down is having a devastating effect on people's lives and this has led to a humanitarian crisis, with shortages of food, and severely reduced access to medical treatment and medical supplies. We are very worried about the families who live hand to mouth, who earn their money on a day to day basis, but are kept in their homes against their free will.

We also have 40 families involved with our women's project www.chakraproject.org in Kashmir who are depended on earning their living through stitching and making the products which are then sold to raise the money for this project. Due to the restrictions and communication blackout, my mother had no contact with any of the ladies or their families since last 2.5 months, which is deeply worrying.

The pain and hardships inflicted on Kashmiri people have sent shockwaves around the globe; but the ground reality is the situation has not improved even after 2.5 months, in fact it is getting worst everyday passing, and what makes it more harder is outside charities and agencies are not currently allowed in Indian Administered Kashmir to deliver emergency relief.

Therefore, we have decided to return back to Kashmir to make contact with the families involved with the Chakra Project and continue with the distribution of emergency food and medicine relief.

Please stand in solidarity with Kashmiri families and help us to offer real, practical help to those in a critical need.

Ways you can help!

1. Donate a one of payment / Sponsor a family
2. Make a purchase from our Chakra Foundation website www.chakraproject.org to buy a meaningful early Christmas Gift, and we will donate the 25% of the purchase amount towards the Kashmir Emergency Relief Fund.
3. Hold a Kashmir Solidarity gathering in your area and invite us for a talk to raise awareness about the plight of our Kashmiri Brothers and Sisters, as well as with the aim of raising some funds towards the Emergency Relief Fund.