

Plight of Pakistani Baby Girl Inspires Tzu Chi to Invent Portable Bed

Written by Tzu Chi Foundation

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Moved by the plight of a 15-day-old girl sleeping in a Pakistani village on ground flooded by water, the foundation invented a portable bed. Over four days this month, volunteers from Taiwan handed out the new beds and tarpaulins to 9,358 families in the Thatta district of Sindh province, including the family of Shana, the baby girl.

Heavy monsoon rains since last July caused severe flooding in many provinces of Pakistan, with at its peak one fifth of the country's total land area under water. About 20 people died and 18 million were affected, many having lost their property and livelihood. Six months on, thousands are still living in tents and improvised homes, unable to resume their normal lives, without transport and communications.



Tzu Chi volunteers delivered their first aid to Pakistan last October and returned in February, holding four distributions between the 5th and the 14th in the Thatta district. They were helped by 67 local volunteers. During the mission last October, they found Shana, then 15 days old, lying on a towel spread over the soft, wet ground. When Master Cheng Yen saw the footage of the helpless infant, she was disturbed; she called on the volunteers to invent a portable bed which would give people protection from the water and they could give to Shana and thousands of other people in the same predicament. The volunteers constructed a simple portable bed that rises a short distance from the ground. Moved by the plight of Shana, they determined to return to Pakistan and deliver the bed to her and other victims.



They went back to Jakhra village in Sindh province where Shana lives with her family and demonstrated how to assemble the portable bed. They also delivered sheets of tarpaulin which help people to keep their makeshift homes safe from the wind and the rain. The two items will enable them to sleep properly, dry and in comfort. They gave the items to a total of 33 households in Jakhra, including the family of Shana. Shana's grandmother was very moved to see how their home has been transformed. For those volunteers who went to Pakistan last October and were making their second visit, the delivery of these precious supplies was a dream come true.

Pakistan: aid distribution concludes

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