

"Special Flood Relief Issue" News N Views



Experience of Delivering Food Items to Victims of Recent Floods By Nadeem Ghafoor Chaudhry

Most of the time, we Pakistanis, complain about one thing or another, cricket team, bureaucracy, police, politicians etc. These complaints are by and large correct. We have few incidents to be cheerful and proud of. The experience that we had over the weekend was one of the few which we can all be happy about.



It all started with a chat, between four of us (Nadeem Chaudhry, Rizwan Qureshi, Imran Raza, Dr Saqib Rasool and Dr. Tauseef Gulrez). Dr. Tauseef was in Rice University, Texas, U.S.A at that time. He proposed, and we all agreed to start a group with the sole purpose of helping flood victims. We were well aware of the fact that we, as a nation, have a serious problem of trust. To make the process as transparent as possible, we immediately created a Google doc for record keeping of the funds. The idea was that every donor can see the record of his/her donation right away. <https://spreadsheets.google.com/pub?key=0Atk5pv2BUDordEFkeG3QzFByzY3dUNQdkdOU2lwRHc&hl=en&output=html>

Name	Donations		Collected By	Status
	Cash		Goods	
	Rupees	Aus. Dollar		
Imran Raza	5,000		Imran	
Rizwan Qureshi	5,000		Rizwan	Consumed
Nadeem Chaudhry	5,000		Nadeem	
Dr. Saqib	5,000		Nadeem	
Dr. Tauseef	5,000		Tauseef	
Kashif			20Kg Atta x 10, 40 Kg Ghee	Tauseef
Mansoor	0			Tauseef
Jane	65			Tauseef
Laaila	54			Tauseef
Tauseef/Saleem Bhai	150,000			Rizwan Consumed
Chicago	0			
UT Austin	0			
Riaz/Houston	0			
Hamza/Houston	0			
Asif	0			
Sal/Sydney		200		
Ale/Pisa		52		
Dr. Asad 0	0			
Dr. Rizwan Jameel		0		
Umera Imtihan	10,000			Nadeem
Akhter Ali Abid	5,000			Nadeem
Tayyeb Ameen	5,000			Nadeem
Hassan Raza	15,000			Nadeem
Abdul Karim Shahid	3,000			Imran
Ali Zia	1,000			Rizwan
Tayyab Ch.	1,000			Rizwan
Dr. J.S. Mirza	0			
Jamal Hassan	5,000			Nadeem
Haroon Waheed	5,000			Nadeem
Eesha		500		Nadeem
Abid Bhutta	2,000			Imran
Azfar Zeeshan	5,000			Nadeem
Rizwan Jameel Qureshi	2,000			Rizwan
Unknown/kram	1,000			Nadeem
Atif Saeed	5,000			Nadeem
Saima Saleem	3,000			Nadeem
Tayyab Ameen		442		Tauseef
Maria		41.41		Tauseef
Ahmed Hafeez		109.088		Tauseef
Mohd. Akhter		218.165		Tauseef
Relos	25,600			
Ammamallah		500		Nadeem
Usman Ashraf	2,500			Nadeem
Shakeel	3,000			Nadeem
Syed Baqar Hussain	5,000			Nadeem
Asma	2,000			Nadeem
Ahmed Hafeez		269.862		Tauseef
Dr Ijaz Khokhar	20,000			Nadeem
FSHah	1,300			Nadeem
Collection Box	105			Nadeem
Nadia	28,000			Nadeem
Omer	3,080			Nadeem
Haider Ali	5,000			Nadeem
Sheikh Rasheed/USA	85,000			Tauseef
Total	424,585	\$1,452.81		



As can be seen from the record we received donations from all over the world. Not only was there a large geographical variety but also the range of amount donated was non-uniform too. But one thing that was common to all was sincerity. One of our lab assistants donated Rs 2,000/. Given the salary of a lab assistant it is a big deal to donate Rs 2,000. Once again it proves that we are in a hole not due to our people but due to our leaders. If people have trust in their leaders they can perform marvelous acts. We had no authority, but trust of people who entrusted us with their hard earned money. (Note: The entries in the above link are only regarding cash, not items like blankets etc. Some people donated material instead of cash.)



Any how we purchased the food items in bulk from Akbari Mandi (a local Lahore wholesale market) and had it delivered to COMSATS campus in Lahore. There a team of Computer Science students first unloaded and unpacked the bulk packing. Later they repackaged it into individual family packs. They performed this job with great efficiency and packed more than 300 packs in less than 2 hours. These packets were then loaded onto COMSATS bus around 8:00 PM. This completed the Lahore part of the effort.



We left Lahore around midnight of Friday-Saturday (September 18th 2010). The group which went by bus included five students (Hafiz Shirazi, Arshad Tolker, Bilal Shaikh, Rana Ramiz, Awais Arshad) of Computer Science department and Asim Shahjahan. The other group included Nadeem, Asif and Dr. Tauseef. Here is one of the very few unpleasant incidents of this whole experience. The driver(s) of our bus did not take the route which was suggested by Arshad, instead went on a route which was longer and more time consuming. Later we found out that they wanted to meet someone on the way. Due to this detour our trip was extended by four to five hours, as a result we reached our destination, around 11:45 AM. It is an unfortunate reality of our country that it is not just corrupt politicians who are responsible of terrible state of affairs.



Almost every one who is given charge of something is ready to ditch the larger good for very small personal gain. The driver of the bus would take the bus on a longer route so that he can meet his relative, the bowler would throw a no-ball so as to get a few thousand pounds, the teacher would leak the paper so that he/she can get positive feedback from students, the petrol pump owner would hold back petrol so that he can charge extra and the list goes on and on.



Our target area was area around Al Moiz Sugar mill located in Paharpur, district D.I Khan in Khyber Pakhtoon-Khawah. The people of Al Moiz Sugar mill were very helpful and hospitable. They offered us tea and later lunch. We discussed our plan with them and they arranged a tractor trolley along with a flat bed truck so that we could simultaneously go to multiple locations. Furthermore they provided us with helper staff and three armed guards. It is a sad state of affairs that some people are still robbing and looting aid vehicles. It is not the higher ups only who are siphoning off the aid being sent for the flood victims but ordinary crooks and thieves are in full operational mode. Any how we split our team into two groups and went out in two different directions. The people from Al Moiz Sugar mill had lists of people in villages around the mill so in each village we distributed the packets according to the list. This made it a lot easier for us to decide who really belongs to this area and who does not. Because we started late so we finished the distribution job late. We came back to Al Moiz Sugar mill around 9 PM had dinner and left for Lahore around 10:30 PM. This time we took the route that Arshad told us about, and as a result we reached Lahore around 5:00 AM.

Below is the link of the pictures of the trip:

<http://www.facebook.com/album.php?aid=211519&id=761906796&l=5b6cf4beda>

We plan to do more work in the area, so feel free to donate more.

Thanks

