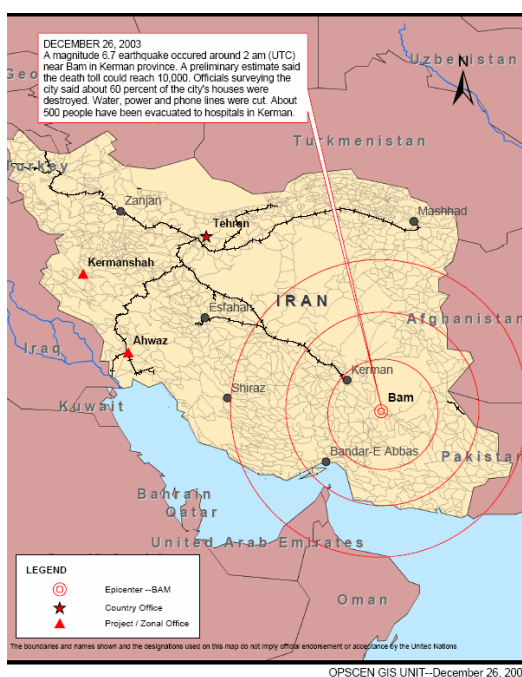


# UNICEF HUMANITARIAN ACTION

# **BAM, IRAN**

## DONOR UPDATE 6 FEBRUARY 2004

- **Substantial requirement for the foreseeable future to sustain Education in temporary facilities**
- **Funding for Water & Sanitation required to move beyond immediate emergency relief**
- **UNICEF National Committee of Germany tops contributions to-date with US\$ 1,997,504**



## 1. EMERGENCY OVERVIEW AND RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

A month after an earthquake registering 6.3 on the Richter scale reduced the area Bam, Iran, to rubble and dust, and took more than 40,000 lives on 26<sup>th</sup> December 2003, more people have been coming back to resume their lives in Bam – some 75,000 made homeless in the disaster. The scale of the disaster being so massive, reconstruction and full recovery of the city of Bam and its surrounding villages are expected to take years.

Still, basic services for children and women lie in shambles. Almost all of the health facilities are destroyed with nearly 50 per cent of the local health staff reported either dead or missing. The earthquake damaged part of the drill wells and water distribution network that had provided clean and adequate amount of water to the city of Bam. Similar damages to the water supply system of the surrounding villages have left the villagers largely dependent on water tankers and bottled water. Some 90 per cent of the existing schools of all levels in Bam, or 131 schools, have

been destroyed with the remaining schools sustaining damages that are likely to be beyond repair. Some 30 per cent of Bam district's 32,443 students and a third of the teaching cadre, which used to number 3,400, have perished in the disaster. In the massive scale of deaths that entailed the earthquake, 1,800 children<sup>1</sup> have been orphaned and over 5,000 lost at least one parent. For many orphaned children, tracing and reunifying them to their distant relatives remain a complicated task. The psychological impact of the sudden death of loved ones, destruction of familiar surroundings and the loss of cherished possessions affects all children of Bam.

With more people coming back, small but significant developments are taking place to bring back life into the area. However, every step taken forward is not without grave challenges. For example, the local authorities declared schools open as of 24<sup>th</sup> January. However, 'going back to school' for Bam's girls and boys is not quite what it means in the ordinary sense of the word. Until such time that the government can allocate enough resources and map out a complex plan to rebuild the infrastructure, 'school' for Bam's children will mean tents or containers erected in 26 selected former-school sites, now only ugly skeletons of the former building, often without adequate supply of school furniture and teaching & learning material.



Children engaged in classroom activities on the pavement. (Photo/UNICEF/ M. Kanawati)

As eager as they are to open schools as soon as possible for girls and boys of Bam, the education authorities are trying to overcome an overwhelming challenge. With a third of their colleagues killed, most of the remaining teachers are deeply distressed and struggle to cope with the challenges of caring for their own families, let alone classrooms of children. Nonetheless, over 400 teachers have now come back to teach – some with injuries. However, without the means to provide them with proper accommodation, some wonder how long the community could rely on the extra-ordinary goodwill of the teachers.

Further, the exact number of students who may want to come back to school is a great unknown. Some estimated 20,000 surviving school-age children are known to be living dispersed around the city, but the information on the location of children of different age groups and their conditions still remains elusive.

While young children are responding well to the psychosocial support being provided through various play activities supported by UNICEF, the particular situation of Bam's youth need to be given due attention. The youth find it increasingly difficult to cope, living confined to tents and camps, worried about their school work and disrupted academic progress, and looking into a bleak immediate future ahead. Also, the conditions of women and girls, especially in female headed households, need to be looked into carefully. Many women have lost all adult family members but cannot come to the distribution centres to collect aid because they need to take care of the children and younger family members. Having depended financially on their husbands or male family members, women who have lost other adult family members are in particularly vulnerable situation, especially when they are illiterate.

## 2. UNICEF RESPONSE: ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS

### Education

School activities eagerly resumed in Bam, but students and teachers gathered in very small crowded tents or met outside in open air, students sitting on the pavement of former school sites.

To support the resumption of school where children can meet protected from desert wind, sand, rain and cold, UNICEF has provided 16 high quality inflatable tents to the education authorities in Bam to be used as temporary classrooms in the 26 school sites. The tent has a capacity for up to 30 or 40 children and is totally self-contained with a built-in plastic groundsheet, making it wind, water and dust-proof. In areas where there is electricity supply, lights can be connected.



This week, children have moved into large school tents provided by UNICEF (Photo/ UNICEF/ E. Carwardine)

<sup>1</sup> The estimated number of orphans still fluctuates. The number of orphaned children who have lost both parents has been quoted as high as 2,500 by some authorities on the ground.

As the UNICEF-procured tents were erected, more than 240 School-in-a-Box kits, flown in on 29<sup>th</sup> December with the swift support of the Belgian Defence Ministry in transportation and by the generous support of the Belgian public expressed through the UNICEF National Committee of Belgium, were distributed tent-by-tent. Each School kit contains educational materials for 80 students.

UNICEF continues to advocate for first focusing classroom activities on easing the emotional pains of children using simple play and recreational activities. Drawing, painting and writing about their experiences often help children to look back to the better times before the disaster as well as to look ahead to the future. Sharing their memories of the disaster with those they trust, their friends and their teachers really does help children to take the first steps along the long path of rebuilding their lives.

While UNICEF school tents were set up, the UNICEF team work with the health and education authorities to move ahead on the school-based counselling programme. With UNICEF's technical support in planning, coordination and content-building, the two branches of the government ministries have mapped out a detailed plan of action where the Ministry of Health will conduct the training of trainers for school counsellors, who will in turn train school teachers. The teachers will learn skills to identify signs of stress, aggression and depression among children, and how to utilize active methods of working with these issues.

### Child Protection

UNICEF is actively working with a number of NGOs and government authorities to coordinate the psychosocial response to the disaster, supporting the establishment and provision of supplies for child-friendly spaces around the city.

With UNICEF's provision of recreational kits, and continued engagement and interest, the recreational tents set up by NGOs in IDP camps have quickly become a rare space where Bam's girls and boys leave behind their crushing realities and simply focus on being children - playing, laughing, shouting, while being supervised by social workers and volunteers on the desirable ways of social interaction. Using play materials provided by UNICEF, children engage in activities such as storytelling, drawing and painting, drama, art and craft work, sports, and singing.

UNICEF team in Bam often visit the recreational tents in large tent camps to monitor the needs that can best be met by UNICEF and to take the pulse of the children as they try to recover from the distress. Despite the confusion amongst many of the children, morale seems to be high. Especially for the youngest, the recreational tents and the organized activities provided by them are having a tangible impact on their psychosocial well-being.

Looking through the paintings and drawings of the children, the UNICEF team discovers and confirms the amazing resilience of children to weather great difficulties, as long as they have the love and reassurance of care-givers. Children in the tents are drawing their hopes for the future: nice houses with gardens, always bathed in sunshine. There is not a single picture of the devastation they saw in the earthquake.

UNICEF works closely with the State Welfare Organization, a key entity within the Iranian government that deals with the vulnerable population, including disadvantaged children and women. Thus far, UNICEF has provided 19 large and sturdy tents to help the Organization to establish child care centres across Bam and a few other locations where Bam's orphaned children have been transferred to and cared for. At least 12 of the tents are now erected by the Organization and activities are unfolding with the toys and sporting equipment provided in the 16 recreational kits so far provided by UNICEF.



Children in IDP camp inspect one of the UNICEF recreation kits being distributed by an NGO worker. (Photo/UNICEF/E. Carwardine)



Girls in a recreational tent express their feelings through drawing, using stationery supplied in UNICEF School-in-a-box Kits. (Photo/UNICEF/Shehzad Noorani)

After distributing to the State Welfare Organization some 10,000 sets of children's winter clothes, boots and gloves and socks of all sizes to be provided to the most vulnerable children of various age groups, UNICEF also provided the Organization with 10,000 packets of women's sanitary napkins, an urgent need in such situations of complete loss of property and displacement. UNICEF also procured 20,000 pairs of undergarment for women to be distributed through the Organization after being informed of the fact that the most vulnerable of the women in Bam were finding it hard even to have a change of undergarment since the disaster took away all their meagre possessions. The Organization has now organized a team of women to sort and assemble different types of donated items by age and gender, so that packets can be delivered to the vulnerable households, taking into consideration that poor women often find it difficult to come forward to collect such aid items.

## Water and Sanitation

An important progress has been made this week. A chartered plane from UNICEF Supply Division in Copenhagen arrived in Bam with 2,000 squatting plates and plastic sheets to build emergency latrines. While UNICEF Iran coordinated the logistics of this flight with UNICEF Copenhagen and local authorities, the UNICEF team in Bam was busy working out how best the supplies would benefit the population. In doing so, UNICEF fully utilized its established leadership role in the sector and good collaboration with NGOs. UNICEF requested the NGOs to share with UNICEF a detailed distribution plan for the 2,000 squatting plates and plastic sheets in the respective geographic zones that they work in, based on criteria of prioritization UNICEF provided earlier to focus on hospitals, school sites, and other un-served locations in the respective zones. It is expected that within the next 7-10 days, the squatting plates will be installed across Bam to relieve the urgent shortage of sanitation facilities.

3,000 additional quantities of squatting plates are procured collectively by the NGOs. Assisted by active coordination of UNICEF, the NGOs agreed on a single procurement process and a single bid went out this week. UNICEF supported by placing an advertisement in two major Iranian newspapers to invite bids.

To tackle the growing concerns over the garbage disposal in Bam, where solid waste adds to the 12 million tons of rubble creating a growing health risk, UNICEF has procured for the Municipality of Bam 20,000 dust bins and 750,000 disposable plastic garbage bags. The garbage bags are likely to last for about six weeks for the families of Bam.

Eight out of the 16 UNICEF water bladders have now been installed in tent camps and across the city of Bam. Located in carefully identified sites where the residents are not connected to piped water, the UNICEF water tanks help ease for many communities the arduous task of collecting water from afar.



The squatting plates are moved into UNICEF warehousing tent for further distribution to NGOs. (Photo/UNICEF/ K.Gibbs)

## 3. APPEAL REQUIREMENTS AND RECEIPTS

As part of the UN Flash Appeal for the Bam earthquake, UNICEF outlined a funding requirement of US\$ 14,340,000. The table below shows overall requirements by sector.

UNICEF APPEAL REQUIREMENTS FOR BAM EARTHQUAKE	
Sector	Funds required (US\$)
Health and Nutrition	2,000,000
Water and Sanitation	5,760,000
Education	3,400,000
Child Protection	3,180,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>14,340,000</b>

Of the appealed, UNICEF has received funds/pledges of US\$ 10,691,401. As shown below, the bulk of the funds/pledges received thus far is from UNICEF National Committees, which includes funds that are being given

for beyond the three-months' perimeter of the UNICEF Crisis Appeal. While UNICEF is grateful to the donors for their generous response to its appeal, it encourages donors to sustain their contributions in order to enable UNICEF to continue to respond to the humanitarian needs of children and women affected by the earthquake for the year to come.

The table below provides a summary of funds/indications received by donors.

<b>DONOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO UNICEF APPEAL FOR BAM EARTHQUAKE AS AT 4 FEBRUARY 2004</b>		
<b>Donor</b>	<b>Received (US\$)</b>	<b>Pledged (US\$)</b>
<b>Governments</b>		
ECHO		873,908
<b>National Committees</b>		
Australian Natcom		597,000
Belgium Natcom	59,382	
Canadian Natcom	239,159	
French Natcom	149,812	
German Natcom	1,997,501	
Italian Natcom	621,890	3,750,000
Japanese Natcom		420,000
Korean Natcom		100,000
Netherlands Natcom		125,000
Spanish Natcom	123,843	
Swedish Natcom	49,135	
UK Natcom	1,509,768	
US Fund		
<b>Private Sector</b>		
Microsoft		75,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4,750,493</b>	<b>5,940,908</b>

In addition to the financial contributions, the Government of Norway has made available two warehousing structures (worth US\$ 20,580) and has provided camp accommodation for 40 people in Bam, which will not only benefit UNICEF, but as well as other UN agencies. The total value of the latter donation-in-kind is estimated at over US\$ 2 million. There is also an indication of US\$ 650,000 from the Swedish government. Moreover, discussions continue with ECHO for a possible contribution of €700,000 to support psychosocial activities, and with DFID and the government of Belgium for the water and sanitation sector, of £500,000 and €500,000, respectively.

#### **4. CURRENT PRIORITIES**

Urgent funding is required to support the activities in the education sector. The needs of temporary school facilities and equipment are substantial, for which UNICEF has been able to satisfy partially with funds available. UNICEF is planning to support school-based counselling, beginning with teacher training in imparting skills to aid children in transitioning from the devastating experience into regular school activities.

Further, it should be noted that, while funds are being received, most of the immediate activities during the first month of the disaster have been undertaken with UNICEF's corporate emergency loans, which totals US\$ 1,150,000, which need to be reimbursed with the donor contributions.

Details of the Bam earthquake emergency programme can be obtained from:

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