
THE JEWISH COALITION FOR TURKEY EARTHQUAKE RELIEF

AIPAC (American Israel
Public Affairs Committee)
American Friends of Soroka
Medical Center of the Negev
American Gathering of Jewish
Holocaust Survivors
American Jewish Committee
American Jewish Congress
American Jewish Joint
Distribution Committee (JDC)
American Jewish World Service
American ORT
Anti-Defamation League (ADL)
B'nai B'rith International
Canadian Jewish Congress
Central Conference of American
Rabbis
Conference of Presidents of Major
American Jewish Organizations
Congregation Beth Simchat Torah
Haddash, Women's Zionist
Organization of America
HIAS (Hebrew Immigrant
Aid Society)
Jewish Communal Fund
Jewish Council for Public Affairs
(JCPA)
Jewish Foundation for the Righteous
Jewish Labor Committee
Jewish Reconstructionist Federation
Jewish War Veterans
Jewish Women International
Lilith Magazine
MAZON: A Jewish Response to
Hunger
Meretz USA
National Council of Jewish Women
New Israel Fund
NYANA (New York Association for
New Americans)
Rabbinical Assembly
Rabbinical Council of America
Reconstructionist Rabbinical
Association
Religious Action Center of
Reform Judaism
The South African Jewish
Board of Deputies
Tikkun Magazine
UJA-Federation of New York
UKJAID (United Kingdom Jewish
Aid & International Development)
Union of American Hebrew
Congregations (UAHC)
Union of Orthodox Jewish
Congregations
United Jewish Communities (UJC)
United Synagogue of Conservative
Judaism
Ve'ahavta: Canadian Jewish
Humanitarian & Relief Committee
Women of Reform Judaism
Women's American ORT
Women's League for Conservative
Judaism

Final Report: Coalition Activities

May 3, 2001

I. BACKGROUND

In August and November of 1999, Turkey suffered two disastrous earthquakes, the first of which centered in Izmit in the Marmara region, and the second occurring further east and severely affecting Duzce. Official estimates put the death toll at 18,000 people, with 29,000 injured and 800,000 left homeless. An estimated 400,000 buildings either collapsed or were badly damaged.

International and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) immediately arrived with emergency supplies and relief materials. More than 130 tent cities were set up and 100,000 tents were erected following the disaster. Today, many people continue to live in temporary, prefabricated housing and in tent camps. The tents, however, have proven inadequate and families have been forced to move in with relatives or relocate to other regions of Turkey, creating further strain on already compromised services. Today, the Government and private agencies continue to work in this reconstruction phase to build permanent homes.

According to experts, the socio-economic impact of the earthquakes will be felt for years to come. In addition to severely damaging the country's infrastructure, they have increased the unemployment rate, the number of citizens suffering from physical disabilities, and psychological trauma. Domestic violence and the suicide rate are on the rise. Thousands of aftershocks and moderate tremors continue to plague the country, the most severe of which occurred in January in southern Turkey and measured 4.9 on the Richter Scale. It has been reported that 25% of the people in the earthquake region were seriously traumatized, and 70% of those affected have developed mental disorders that affect their quality of life.

The Government is still widely viewed as being unable to meet many of the needs of the victims. Adapazari, the town hardest hit by the August earthquake, was able to utilize only 60% of its water network more than one year after the disaster, and approximately 20% of its sewer system was functioning.

II. STATUS OF MAILBOX FUNDS

The total amount of money raised by the Coalition members was \$98,027, with interest accrued of \$3,111, bringing the grand total of funds available to \$101,138. As noted below, the funds have been programmed and fully utilized.

III. UPDATE OF JEWISH COALITION PROJECTS

Community Outreach Workers In Kocaeli and Adapazari Provinces: Foundation for the Support of Women's Work

This Coalition grant enabled the Foundation for the Support of Women's Work (FSWW) to expand access to primary health care and psychological services through the hiring and training of two new Community Outreach Workers. Based in FSWW's eight Children's Houses/Community Centers in Kocaeli and Adapazari provinces, these workers and other center staff provided trauma counseling, primary health services and training to earthquake victims.

From October through December of 2000, a total of 2,201 women and 1,243 children used the centers. In all eight centers, volunteers and Outreach Workers conducted home visits to 845 families residing in tent settlements to improve young mothers' skills in child development. Over 500 women have participated in training sessions organized to address a variety of practical and emotional needs. Approximately 250 women have taken part in FSWW's economic initiatives, including the production and marketing of toys, paper and wood working workshops, individual and group micro-credit projects, and savings groups. In addition to empowering local women, these activities also help to ensure each of the centers' operational and financial self-sufficiency. Since the end of 2000, the Outreach Workers have increased and intensified service provision, including housing and resettlement activities, which are priorities.

FSWW has successfully leveraged Jewish Coalition and other support to secure funding from additional international agencies. The Italian Red Cross enabled them to establish a business next to the center in Duzce offering catering services, an Internet café and a library/resource center. Other centers have organized tea parties, small fairs and other outdoor activities in an effort to attract non-affiliated women to the center and to raise money.

Beneficiaries are beginning to move from prefabricated settlements and tent-cities to new permanent housing sites. As this happens, the Foundation works to maintain the connections established with these women. After much research, they determined that the establishment of "cooperatives" is the best way to organize networks of women in the new settlements. It is hoped that these cooperatives will enable women's groups to mobilize, conduct activities that will generate income, and help them to establish an independent, official identity.

The Community Outreach Workers hired with Coalition funding will continue to play important organizing roles as the FSWW develops its programs in pre-school education, neighborhood mothers programs, micro-enterprise and business support and saving groups, housing and settlement groups, and psychosocial support groups.

Wheelchair-Accessible Midi-bus: Mercy Corps International

As reported previously, the custom-built vehicle has been operational since September 2000. The midi-bus, a Citroen Panel-Jumper with a hydraulic lift for wheelchairs, is being used in cooperation with the governmental agency SHÇEK, the Turkish Social Services Children's Protection Agency. Acknowledging the fact that the hard-hit earthquake regions lack sufficient facilities to address the needs of disabled children, SHÇEK brings many children to Istanbul for rehabilitation.

The center, which is supported by the Government and private foundations, served 28 hospitalized and bed-ridden children and 120-140 outpatients daily during its busiest period. Prior to the procurement of the midi-bus, there was only one vehicle available, and center staff found themselves unable to provide for all the children's transportation needs.

The project now serves approximately 45 wheelchair-bound or disabled children six days each week. All the beneficiaries are registered with the center, where they receive low-cost or free treatment, physical and/or occupational therapy, and take part in recreational activities. Before the midi-bus was available, infrequent municipal buses were the only means of affordable transportation to and from the center. The vehicle allows children to be picked up at their homes, which is a great help to family members who had become accustomed to wheeling or carrying their children through narrow, crowded, high-curbed streets to bus stops.

The center has also made the transport service easily accessible. Parents request a "pick up" or "drop off" by phoning the center's administrative staff. Individual appointment times and geographic factors determine the schedule and route of the vehicle, and priority is given to those confined to wheelchairs. The center's staff has indicated that this free transportation service is in "huge demand," and that the vehicle is always "on the go" and perfectly suited for the needs of the children. SHÇEK employs two drivers who have been trained to operate the hydraulic lift. A nurse or physiotherapist from the center accompanies the driver on every shift. SHÇEK maintains the vehicle, providing gasoline and routine maintenance. Both the vehicle and the specialized lift continue to be in good, working order.

The Hygiene Outreach Project: Mercy Corps International (MCI) and the Turkish Family Health and Family Planning Foundation (TAP)

The Hygiene Outreach Project assisted families who resided in tents and temporary shelters in Duzce to gain the information and supplies required for hygienic living. A public health technician and a cadre of women were trained to provide sanitation and health information and hygienic kits in the Cay district, a site selected at the request of the Ministry of Health. A total of 1,200 women participated each month for a period of six months. Health and hygiene activities continue via the workers trained through the project and material and financial support acquired from additional donors.

Assistance to the Israeli Village and Summer Camp

Coalition funds were awarded to help conduct a summer camp for 1,200 earthquake victims (both children and adult) that took place last summer in the “Israeli Village” in Adapazari. The camp was part of the larger “Psychological Intervention Program” for trauma relief. Instruction was provided in sports, arts and crafts, “beautifying” the village, and adult discussion groups were organized. The balance of costs were covered by the Israeli Village management, the Tel Aviv Municipality, and the Ramat Chen Center for Mental Health. Jewish Coalition contributions provided arts and crafts supplies, musical instruments, sports equipment, and a video camera.

Finally, the small balance of Coalition funds remaining in the Mailbox was provided to the Israeli Village to augment its programs to assist young victims of the earthquakes.

IV. PARTING WORDS

All of the Jewish Coalition for Turkey Earthquake Relief funds have been utilized for programs to assist the earthquake victims. Many programs remain active today with support from other donors and through the partners’ income generation activities. Seed funding from the Jewish Coalition enabled the local implementing partners to acquire even more funding, maximizing the value of our contributions.

We thank you for your interest and participation in Jewish Coalition activities that have assisted so many. Together, we have helped some of the most needy among us, and demonstrated the caring and concern of the Jewish public for those in greatest need, regardless of their national, ethnic, or religious affiliation.