

Programme Update

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Afghanistan

Appeal No. MAAAF001

28 August 2008

This report covers the period 1 January 2008
to 30 June 2008



Afghan Red Crescent provincial disaster response unit assists the affected population during the harsh winter in February.

In brief

Programme purpose:

- The health status of vulnerable people in targeted areas is improved.
- The preparedness capacity of communities and institutions to provide quality response to common disasters in the country is strengthened.
- Service delivery capacity of Afghanistan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) is enhanced at all levels.
- Raising awareness of humanitarian values and the Red Cross Red Crescent Fundamental Principles in the ARCS and targeted communities and reducing discrimination.

Programme(s) summary: Major activities during the reporting period included: the finalisation of the harmonised operational plan; revision of the 2008 plan and budget; and the drafting of the 2009/10 plan.

Expanding the Community-based First Aid (CBFA) and HIV/AIDS projects to Panjsher and Bamyan province were the important achievements of the health programme. Additionally, ARCS initiated a comprehensive community-based health intervention (CCBHI) project in three districts of Mazar province targeting 8000 individuals. During this period, the DM and health departments of the National Society, in collaboration with the International Federation and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), covered the needs of 170,502 of winter-affected families. Other main achievements in disaster management were the revision of the DM operational plan and appeal for 2008, and conducting CBDP training workshops for 174 (39 female) new volunteers in five regions across the country. In the OD programme, one of the main achievements was the drafting of the harmonized plan followed by the meeting with partner National Societies (PNSs) in Geneva. Further, the NS has established a working group to work on the key policies, while a new finance

management system has been put in place. For HV, the NS leadership's commitment and support for the integration of HV within other core programmes can be a good step towards improving impact on target group.

Financial situation: The 2008 budget has been revised to CHF 5,700,280 (USD 5.43 million or EUR 3.49 million), of which 55 per cent is covered. Overall expenditure was 29 per cent.

[Click here to go directly to the attached financial report.](#)

No. of people we help:

Reporting Period	Programme title	Total number of beneficiaries		
		Male	Female	Total
1 January to 30 June 2008	Health and Care	239,433	275,066	514,499
	DM	55,786	42,084	97,870
	OD	7,260	2,800	10,060
	HV	31,505	32,795	64,300

Our partners: About 20 partners, including key government ministries, UN, organisations recognised under the government's national disaster management plan, and partners within the movement. Additionally, in response to cold winter disaster, ARCS received assistance from Kuwait, Qatar, Iran and UAE Red Crescent Societies.

Context

Due to the severe winter, Taliban and anti-government activities decreased in the south-west region. In contrast, government troops have increased their activities. In a major development, the Afghan National Army, backed by NATO forces, recaptured the Mussa Qala district of volatile Helmand province, where the Taliban has been taking asylum for almost one year, and developed it as their military training centre.

Afghanistan has been in the grip of a severe winter since 1st January, with heavy snow, rainfall, cold waves and flooding, which affected many parts of the country. Approximately 1,320 people have died, 183 injured due to damaged or collapsed houses and gangrene, while many others have been displaced. In response to this natural disaster, the ARCS in close collaboration with Movement partners (Federation, ICRC and other sister Red Cross Red Crescent societies like Iran, Qatar, Kuwait UAE Red Crescent Societies) provided humanitarian assistance to 170, 502 disaster-affected families.

Another major problem of the people of Afghanistan during this period was the rising prices of essential food items in the local markets, making these less accessible to the common people. According to the FAO and other aid agencies, up to 70 percent of Afghans – about 18 million people – currently suffer from acute food insecurity due to poverty, drought and years of conflict.

During this reporting period, Movement partners could not carry out monitoring and evaluation visits to some areas due to heavy restrictions. Federation staff were able to visit some areas where missions are allowed and monitored the activities. But in other cases, the delegation mostly relied on the reports being filed and sent by ARCS branches and Federation sub-offices.

Progress towards outcomes

Disaster Management

Outcome(s)/Expected result(s):

Programme component	Component outcome
1. Disaster preparedness (DP)	Communities in target areas are aware of disaster hazards and are well-prepared to effectively cope with the effects of localized disasters.
2. Disaster response (DR)	The impact of disasters in affected areas on people's lives is reduced through effective and timely emergency response.

Achievements:

Expected Outcome 1

Community-based disaster preparedness activities were expanded to two new provinces of Dai-Kundi and Paktia which are considered disaster-prone and undeveloped provinces. During the reporting period, seven Community-based Disaster Preparedness (CBDP) training workshops were conducted for 174 (including 39 female) new volunteers of Kabul, Herat, Mazar, Jalalabad and Kandahar regions. Additionally, 364 volunteers received CBDP refresher trainings in Jalalabad and Herat regions.

The ARCS and Federation DM staff participated in the following training workshops, held outside the country, to improve and strengthen their capability and knowledge: 1. Second Global Relief Training Workshop in Geneva. 2. Regional Disaster Risk Reduction Field Exercise in Nepal. 3. Vulnerability Capacity Assessment (VCA) Learning by Doing Practitioners Training in Bangladesh. 4. Regional DRR Curriculum Development Consultative meeting and Disaster Management Working Group meeting in Delhi.

The reporting officer of the National Society's DM department was contracted as staff on-loan with Federation DM department for six months. During this period, the Federation DM department and PMER unit trained her in reporting.

Meanwhile, under the disaster preparedness component of the DM programme, the VCA activity, which was planned to be carried out in five branches, was cancelled. This was due to the lack of qualified staff in the branches, lack of coordination between ARCS programmes as well as the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authorities (ANDMA) for the development of a VCA plan. Instead, a national VCA training workshop and a "Learning by Doing" VCA practical have been proposed in the next few months.

The planned construction of a new warehouse at Herat region was also cancelled as ICRC has already allocated USD 300,000 (CHF 315,000) to construct warehouses for ARCS in disaster-prone areas.

Expected Outcome 2

The National Society's DM department and health department Emergency Medical Units (EMUs) carried out several activities in response to the needs of the people affected by the severe winter. The EMUs treated more than 4,850 people who were affected by cold waves. The winter was characterised by heavy snow-fall, rainfall, flooding and cold waves, mostly affecting the western region. As a result, more than 1,320 individuals were killed, 183 people were disabled because of gangrene, and 28,417 families' (170,502 individuals') homes were damaged. Monitoring and evaluation missions were carried out in Mazar and Herat regions in order to ensure the sufficient delivery of assistance to the most disaster-affected populations in the targeted areas.

The Terms of Reference (ToR) for the RCRC Disaster Management Coordination Unit (DMCU) in Afghanistan were developed in May 2008. The ToR will further strengthen the existing internal Movement coordination mechanism for more effective and extensive mobilization and deployment of the Movement's resources to address humanitarian needs across the country.

Based on the disaster response preparedness assessment conducted by UNDAC and Federation teams from 16-30 July 2006, it was recommended that the ARCS develop its preparedness response capacity at regional and provincial levels. As a consequence, a nation-wide earthquake contingency plan process was started in March 2008. A Contingency Planning Workshop was conducted for 25 ARCS staff and volunteers from 15-19 June 2008 at the ARCS national headquarters in Kabul. Following this, a five-day National Disaster Response Team (NDRT) training workshop was conducted for 28 ARCS staff and volunteers (including five females) in Kabul from 21-26 June 2008. Based on the outcomes of these workshops, an earthquake contingency plan for Kabul was drafted and will be finalised through a consultancy process.

Constraints or Challenges:

The very volatile security situation has made it impossible to run a number of community-based activities in several provinces in Afghanistan. The conflict has been moving from region to region and has even extended to formerly peaceful provinces in the North, West and Central regions of the country, making many communities inaccessible.

ARCS branches have also had to respond to more frequent disasters this year. The branches, particularly in the Western and Northern regions, have done quite well despite poor coordination by the authorities.

The high turnover of DM staff at the headquarters remains a major problem and is not foreseen to be resolved soon due to inadequate finance and human resource management systems and capacities.

Poor communication between branches and national headquarters also slowed down support to branches to help them respond to local disasters more promptly and efficiently.

DM activities are significantly behind schedule due to the security situation, ARCS internal institutional gaps and the lack of national coordination. At the end of the year, there may be a need to revise the plans and budgets, and postpone some activities to 2009.

Working in partnership:

The National Disaster Management Plan (NDPM) clarifies the roles of all stakeholders, including ARCS. The National Society works as an auxiliary to the government of Afghanistan in close contact with all other stakeholders such as key ministries, the UN family (like United Nations Assistance Mission for Afghanistan, WFP, UNHCR) and other related NGOs, through ANDMA¹. ARCS has very strong ties with key governmental ministries which represent the government of Afghanistan in ANDMA, like the ministries of public health, agriculture, transport, defence and internal affairs. At the same time, ARCS is an important member of the National Commission on Disaster Management which is the national co-ordination cell under Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authorities (ANDMA).

Contributing to longer-term impact

All activities under the DM programme have enabled the NS to improve its disaster management capacity and provide speedy response and effective assistance to the vulnerable and disaster-affected communities in targeted areas. Effective and timely response have a positive impact on the life on of the vulnerable population. Through close cooperation and coordination with other humanitarian agencies and ANDMA, the adverse impacts of the disasters have been reduced. In turn,

¹ Afghan National Disaster Management Authorities

the relief operations have boosted ARCS's image and capacity in assessment, planning, logistics and reporting.

The recruitment and training of 174 (39 female) new volunteers in five regions across the country has enabled the ARCS to implement successful risk reduction measures and involve all members of targeted communities, specially women in disaster-prone areas, in planning, decision-making and the implementation process. Consequently, the involvement of communities has improved the quality of assistance delivered to disaster-affected populations.

Health and care

Outcome(s)/Expected result(s):

Programme component	Component outcome
1. Community-based first aid	Health awareness, promotion and first aid services at the community level are improved.
2. Public health in emergencies	Level of adequate response to health needs in disasters and in normal situation is improved.
3. Basic health centres	Access to quality preventative, promotional and curative health services are enhanced
4. HIV and AIDS	Youth in targeted areas have improved knowledge on preventive measures of HIV and other sexually transmitted infections and practice less risky behaviour.

The ARCS has been assisting more than a million vulnerable people through its projects

Achievements:

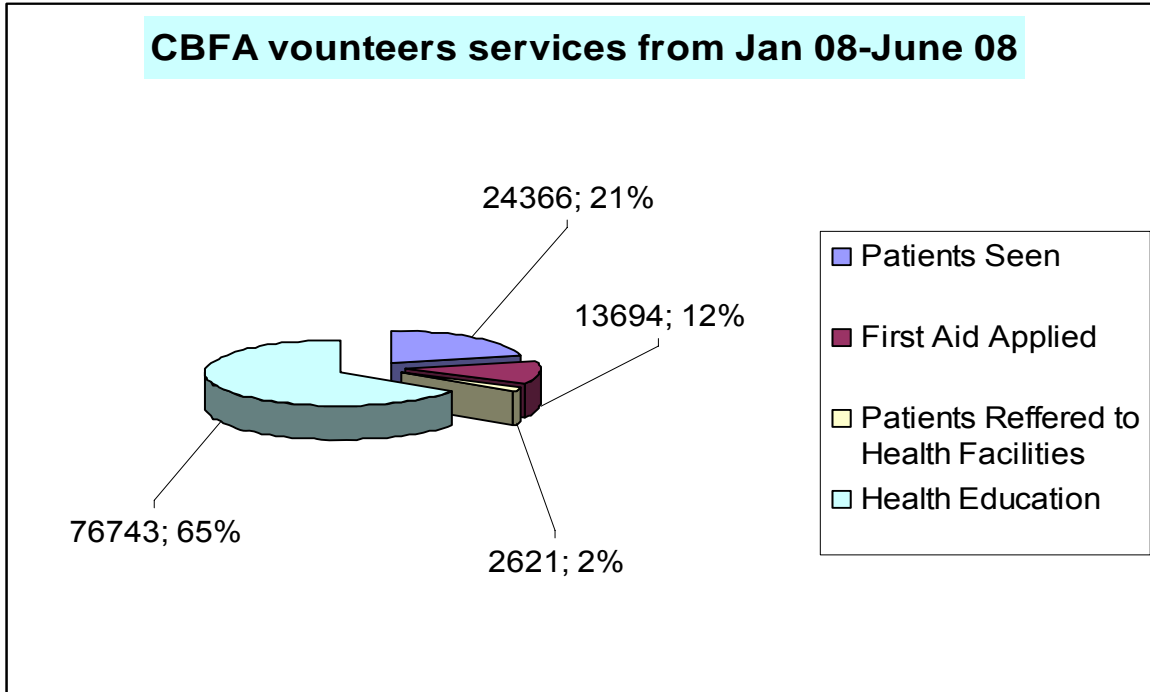
Expected Outcome 1

The ARCS expanded the CBFA programme to two new provinces of Panjsher and Bamyán and recruited new trainers to manage (follow up and monitor the activities of new recruited volunteers) the programme there. The initial CBFA training for the volunteers has been undertaken and so far, 20 volunteers have been trained in each province to provide first aid and health promotion services to the communities. All volunteers in the Federation supported provinces (13 provinces out of 34) were provided with first aid dressing materials and 800 first aid bags for the newly trained CBFA volunteers. The entire CBFA programme was supervised and monitored by CBFA trainers and regional supervisors.

A memorandum of understanding (MoU) was signed among the ARCS and the Movement components (ICRC and International Federation). The main propose of the MoU was to create a harmonized programming/support mechanism among movement partners for effective implementation of the CBFA program.

The CBFA trainers and volunteers in Takhar, Samangan, Baghlan and Faryab provinces took part in survey and distribution of relief items with the DM team in severe winter affected areas. Similarly the Mazar CBFA volunteers assisted 25 people during New Year Celebration.

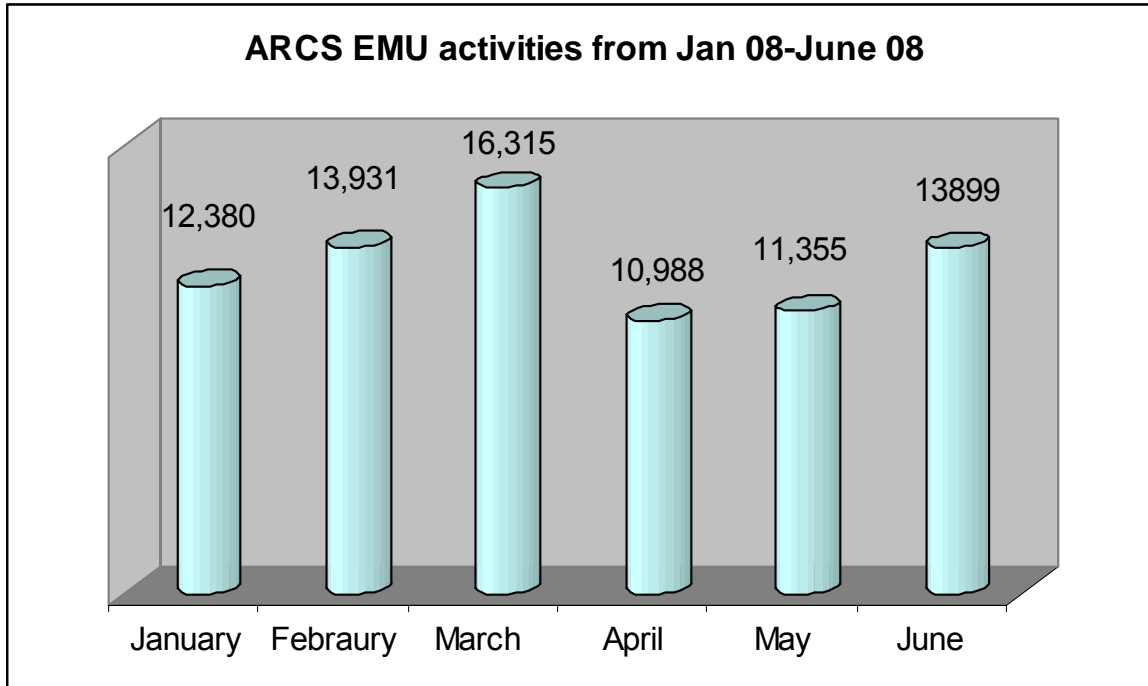
The following chart shows the achievements of CBFA programme during the reporting period



Total number of CBFA beneficiaries: **Male:** 70,454 **Female:** 46,969 **Total:** 117424

Expected Outcome 2

The EMU teams in Kabul, Herat and Mazar provinces assisted 4,850 winter-affected people with health services. Similarly, Herat EMU teams participated and worked closely with MoPH to respond to Gurlan Disease outbreak (a specific disease which is caused by mixing poisoned plant with wheat and causes liver damage/liver cirrhosis and leads to death) which affected Gurlan district of Herat province. EMU teams covered three of the 27 affected villages where 10 people died out of 125 cases. EMU teams also participated in an immunisation campaign against polio in Jalalabad and Mazar and immunised 3,600 children. The EMU/clinics teams were provided with the necessary equipment and supplies, including 20 pairs of tires, 110 stretchers, medical kits, emergency medicines and minor surgical sets.



Total number of beneficiaries: **Male:** 43,377 **Female:** 35,490 **Total:** 78,868

Three ARCS regional health officers (RHOs) participated in the Response to Cholera and Shigellosis epidemic training course organised by the International Centre for Diarrhoeal Disease Research, Bangladesh (ICDDR) in Bangladesh in May. Such diseases are very common in Afghanistan. The RHOs also participated in the Prevention and Control of Communicable Diseases Taskforce Committee meeting at regional levels for coordination and assigning the role of stakeholders during outbreaks of communicable diseases. The ARCS's EMU officer together with the Federation's health programme officer made a monitoring visit to Kandahar and Jalalabad regions. During the visit the team conducted meetings with MoPH provincial directorate, WHO, AHDS and ICRC.

Expected Outcome 3

During the first half of 2008, ARCS initiated a comprehensive community-based health intervention (CCBHI) project in three districts of Mazar province, targeting 8000 individuals funded by the British Red Cross. Three staff (a project manager, and watsan and hygiene officers) for the project were recruited. The project manager has visited targeted villages and selected health committees. Prior to implementation, a baseline survey for the project was carried out. The final draft of the baseline survey has been submitted to the institution review board (IRB) of MoPH for the approval. The British Red Cross health advisor visited Afghanistan in April and visited CCBHI project site together with ARCS/Federation health teams and had meetings with relevant stakeholders. The ARCS received contraceptives from MoPH for all its 34 basic health centres. The total cost of donated contraceptives is estimated around USD 30, 000.(CHF 31,500) The clinics were also provided with medical kits and blood pressure machines and stethoscopes based on their needs.

The achievements of 34 Federation-supported ARCS clinics during the reporting period are reflected in the following chart:

Category	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	Total
Category 1:							
OPD Activities							
OPD visit under five years male	3985	4043	3989	3856	3272	3775	22920
OPD visit under five years Female	4254	3977	3695	4091	3346	3630	22993
OPD visit over five male	6199	7036	7050	6508	5006	5832	37631
OPD visit over five female	10905	12210	13708	11710	8817	11707	69057
Re-attendance	2490	2256	2690	2527	1526	2458	13947
Sub- Total							166548
Category 2							
Immunization							
BCG	2621	1685	1675	1560	1793	1617	10951
DPT / Polio	1638	1871	1992	1884	2119	2067	11571
DPT2 / Polio2	1751	1850	1809	1695	1867	2042	11014
DPT3/Polio3	1223	1637	1651	1578	1685	2139	9913
Measles	1686	2486	1874	5412	2230	1559	15247
TT women	5018	5448	6221	6949	6211	13064	42911
Sub- Total							101607
Category 3							
MCH activities							
Family planning	1088	1354	1251	1081	1129	1646	7549
Antenatal care	1568	2394	2728	2203	2445	3621	14959
Postnatal care	339	534	713	452	913	1313	4264
Children growth monitoring	628	556	641	873	476	904	4078
Sub- Total							30850
Grand Total							299009
Health Education							
Group health education	1546	5159	7229	2239	7888		
Individual health education	1075	2885	2526	4811	3719		
Note: Health Education has been a part of the other activities such as OPD, MCH and Vaccination, so it is not counted in the total beneficiaries.							

Total number of beneficiaries: **Male:** 121,717 **Female:** 186,292 **Total:** 299,009

Six midwives from ARCS Mazar clinics participated in DOTS training, which was conducted by the provincial office of the ministry of public health. Meanwhile, eight midwives of ARCS clinics in Mazar participated in Emergency Obstetric Care policy development workshop which was supported by UNICEF. The ARCS regional health officers and Maternal and Child Health (MCH) officer made supervision and monitoring visits to the basic health centres. In addition to the internal monitoring, the ARCS health team conducted joint supervision and monitoring visits of the central and regional ARCS clinics with the ministry of public health.

Expected Outcome 4

After a needs assessment in May 2008, the HIV/AIDS project was expanded to Herat and Mazar. During the assessment the team met ARCS branch president, RHOs and other stakeholders. A knowledge attitude study was conducted among branch staff. A district coordinator for the HIV/AIDS project in Mazar has been recruited, while the coordinator for Herat province is yet to be recruited. ARCS recruited and trained 20 YPE²s in Kabul. In addition, the ARCS facilitated a five-day YPE training on HIV/AIDS and adolescent Reproductive health for 24 YPE trainers conducted by National Aids Control Programme (NACP) with the financial support of UNICEF in April in MoPH in Kabul. During the reporting period, 8,500 peers in 340 YPEs groups in 24 schools in Kabul province have been trained by the existing YPEs and reached to the set targets. The Federation provided some equipment (camera, multimedia, overhead projector) and office furniture to the ARCS health department/HIV.

A Blood Donation Motivation Training course was conducted for 21 participants (YPE, YPE trainers and HIV staff) from 5 to 7th February 2008. The training was facilitated by Central Blood Bank professional staff and Federation's health delegate. A committee for setting up "club-25" for the Voluntary Non Remunerated Blood Donation programme has been formed by ARCS and TORs developed.

Two clubs 25 were established, with 12 and 14 blood donors and motivators organized in each of the clubs respectively.

A symposium on ARCS's VNRBD programme was conducted on 12 June 2008 in coordination with national Aids Control Programme/ Ministry of Public Health (NACP/MoPH) and Central Blood Bank in ARCS Head Quarter. Some 150 people, including schools principals, educational districts, blood motivators, YPE trainers and ARCS/Federation programme managers participated. As a result, 21 blood donors donated their blood as a gift to safe life.

A mid-term external evaluation of the ARCS's HIV/AIDS project was done by an external evaluation team from SARD with the support the Federation's country health team in February 2008.

As part of capacity building, two ARCS HIV/AIDS team members and MCH officer participated in a Monitoring and Evaluation workshop which was conducted by Bangladesh Rural Advanced Committee (BRAC) from 1- 6 March. In addition three HIV/AIDS staff members participated in HIV prevention, treatment, care and support regional ToT training held in Dhaka Bangladesh.

Total number of beneficiaries to-date for the HIV/AIDS component was 10,800 (Male: 3,885 and Female: 6,315) direct and indirect beneficiaries

The planned activities for the rest of the year will be as followings:

- Conduct two baseline surveys of new project in Mazar and Herat.
- Conduct two ToT in Mazar and Herat for 40 new YPE trainers.
- 20 YPEs training will be conducted for 500 new YPEs in Kabul, Mazar and Herat provinces.

² Youth Peer Educators

- Sensitise 1500 teachers, principals and parents in Kabul, Mazar and Herat.
- Train 150 CBFA team leaders and supervisor will be trained in Kabul, Mazar and Herat provinces.
- Conduct one VNARBD motivation training to 20 motivates in Kabul.
- Conduct seven refresher trainings for trained YPEs.
- Marking of WADS in three mentioned provinces, meanwhile one anti stigma and discrimination will be conducted.

Constraints or Challenges:

There was no major constraint during the reporting period apart from the continuing security situation, which resulted in the loss of 102 medical kits on the way from Herat to Kabul. This may cause a shortage of medicine in ARCS clinics for a period of time.

Working in partnership:

ARCS is a member of the inter-agency emergency task force (comprising the World Health Organisation, other UN agencies and government ministries) for emergency preparedness and response, and avian and human influenza, at national level. ARCS, along with the Federation, have also been participating in the Afghanistan health cluster meeting. The National Society is a member of the HIV/AIDS coordination committee for Afghanistan and has been regularly participating in coordination meetings with MoPH, UNICEF, WHO, the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan and other stake holders. These coordination meetings help the ARCS to manage its health intervention more effectively and avoid duplication of services. As stated earlier, ARCS conducted the VNRBD and YPE ToTs with the technical support of Central Blood Transfusion Centre and UNICEF respectively.

Contributing to longer-term impact:

The preventive, promotional and curative health services (clinics, EMU and CBFA) focusing on mother and child health have contributed to the decrease in number of illness and deaths among mothers and children (25% fall in infant mortality over the last five years according to JHU studies in 2007). The immunization services provided through the health services outlets have reduced the incidences of vaccine-preventable diseases (but still 1/3 of children do not have access to immunization, JHU studies in 2007). Similarly antenatal and postnatal consultations have decreased the number of pregnancy-related complications (However only less than 1/5 receives MCH services, according to JHU studies in 2007). Family planning services have had a positive impact on the health of the mothers as they are better able to space the birth of their children.

Through the HIV/AIDS prevention project, the ARCS has helped significantly to create a positive attitude among school authorities/school students where the ARCS has been providing training and utilizing youth peer educators as disseminators of HIV/AIDS issues at school levels. This achievement was highlighted during focus group discussions with YPEs, parents and school authorities by external evaluation.

Organisational Development

Outcome(s)/Expected result(s)

Programme component	Component outcome
1. Human resource development	Capacity of human resources is improved.
2. Finance development	ARCS financial independence has improved
3. General capacity building	Financial and administrative management is improved
4. Development of ARCS legislation	National society legal base is strengthened
5. Branch development	ARCS branch functional capacity has improved

6. Development of youth and membership	Volunteer, youth and membership management system is improved.
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Achievements

Expected outcome 1

In the ongoing process of strengthening its HR system, ARCS has set up a commission to study and identify the major gaps in the human resource structure at the HQ level. The commission is also responsible for studying the skills level and identifying the training needs of the OD staff responsible for the implementation of ARCS' five-year strategic plan. This needs assessment was started as a pilot step and would be carried out in other departments and branches latter.

Expected outcome 2

After a long process, the new finance management system has been inaugurated. However, the old system will continue to function until the new system is up and running. At the same time, English and computer training has been provided to 18 finance staff and will continue for nine months. SARD finance delegate visited Afghanistan and studied the development process of the ARCS new finance management system and made some recommendations.

Expected outcome 3

In close collaboration with SARD and the zone office, the Movement components in Afghanistan decided to initiate a process to harmonise the support to ARCS's humanitarian programme in Afghanistan. A joint Federation and ICRC OD and capacity building team, consisting of the acting head of OD in Geneva, OD coordinator based in Kuala Lumpur, SARD OD delegate and ICRC cooperation coordinator based in Kuala Lumpur, visited Afghanistan. The team assisted the ARCS to work out a harmonised plan through meetings and an intensive workshop for key people of the National Society and Movement partners. The process of developing the final version of the harmonised operational plan of 2008-09 started in March. It was finalised in May and was submitted to the joint OD team in Kuala Lumpur for their comments and recommendations. This Plan has been submitted to the ARCS leadership for approval. A tri-partite Movement meeting convened and decided to review and revise the MoU for Afghanistan, mainly aiming at the Seville Agreement and Supplementary Measures country level implementation. The additions and minor changes will mainly cater to future in-coming partner NSs in the future.

To demonstrate an improved level of self-sustainability and independence, the ARCS leadership has started to pay the salaries of the staff who have been receiving incentive salary from Federation (and the ICRC).

The ARCS and the country office put a lot of effort into organising the partnership meeting for Afghanistan. With support from SARD, zone office and the invaluable assistance of Federation staff, the meeting was held in Geneva at the end of June. Altogether, 16 representatives of partner NSs, participants from the Federation country office, SARD and zone office, ARCS team and representatives of the ICRC country delegation and headquarters participated in the meeting. Overall, the meeting went well and all participants expressed their interest and willingness to support the ARCS and asked for more time to read the ARCS harmonised plan and to send their respective teams for better understanding of the plan and for more concrete feedback and action.

Expected outcome 4

For improved implementation of the ARCS strategic plan, changes were made on the placement of key staff in the departments starting from the Afghan New Year. The NS will pay the salary of its entire staff from its own resources. The NS annual plan was developed based on the strategic plan. Federation OD planned activities and budget was revised due to unavailability of funds.

Expected outcome 5

It has been decided to develop a clear plan of action to enhance the ARCS branches capacity.

Expected outcome 6

A working group has been assigned by the NS leadership to work on various policies, procedures, rules and regulations. The last version of the ARCS constitution has been submitted to the administration department of the government after the revision of some key articles by a joint ARCS, Federation and ICRC-assigned working group. The revised constitution will provide more independence to the NS to decide up on certain issues without the need to consult the government of Afghanistan, and clarifies its auxiliary role. Once this is approved and authorised by the president of the country, all other ARCS-related rules, regulations and key policies (like HR policy, logistics/procurement policy, property management policy and so on, for instance) would be revised accordingly.

After several meetings with the head of the ARCS youth and membership department, it was agreed to review the ARCS membership programme and address the current challenges which have slowed down the programme activities so far. Also during the period, 267 new members have been recruited, out of which 39 are female.

Several meetings were held with different governmental stakeholder ministries encouraging their staff to accept the voluntary membership of the NS. In addition, plans are being developed for a need assessment in five disaster prone branches through an integrated approach (OD, DM and health).

More than 8,650 youth volunteers received training in English language, computer programmes and mathematics, in five youth clubs across the country. These were facilitated by more than 160 volunteer teachers. Also, more than 200 youth volunteers opened centres to raise funds, collect money and motivate the public to contribute assistance to the winter-affected population in Herat province. As a result of this fund-raising campaign, USD 20,000 (CHF 21,000) was collected. The volunteers of the Herat branch actively participated in the needs assessment of the winter-affected families and covered three districts of this province. More than 100 volunteers actively participated in food distribution to the affected populations.

A mine-awareness training for 100 volunteers and first-aid training course for 150 male and female volunteers were conducted by Mazar youth club. At the same time, 100 volunteers helped to clean the Blue Mosque compound and surrounding areas in Mazar. One hundred youth volunteers of the Jalalabad branch donated their blood at the provincial hospital.

Constraints or Challenges

The lack of fundamental institutional capacities is the biggest obstacle for the National Society to retain qualified staff. The ARCS is not actually short of funds or assets, but due to their close links with the government, it is not able to create independent structures and management systems under its current Constitution. In order to implement the Strategic Plan 2008-12 and the present harmonised operation plan, the National Society should be able to organise itself without pressure of any form from the government and political groupings. Having to apply government salary scales and systems makes it difficult for the National Society to pay key staff competitive salaries and present obstacles in restructuring its human resource structures.

The worsening security situation is another key obstacle towards implementation, monitoring and evaluation of the programme. However, despite the security challenges the NS and related Federation staff have stepped up monitoring visits to branches.

Working in partnership

The ARCS has expanded its close relations with governmental ministries to ensure that its programmes can be implemented more smoothly and effectively. MoUs for close cooperation with the ministries of education and higher education, for eg., will allow the National Society to expand its network of young volunteers in the school.

Besides this, the ARCS OD department is in close contact with the ICRC and the OD department of the Federation to enhance its OD capacity building. The youth and membership department of the NS is

also in closed contact with Japanese Red Cross in youth project and youth international exchange programme.

With the support from the Federation the National Society has kept in touch with humanitarian activities of the international community and participated in various conferences, trainings and meetings. The UN humanitarian reform through the cluster approach has been closely monitored. The main clusters have been shelter, food security, health and protection cluster where the Federation has participated as an observer, sometimes accompanied by the ARCS.

Contributing to longer-term impact

The Constitution (Statutes) of the ARCS will play an important role in the development of the Society's position with regards to the Government and other authorities. It also creates a proper and needed foundation for its membership work as well as developing the society's legal base in a wide sense. The Constitution also sets a base to establish an independent management system within the ARCS, including the finance, human resource and logistics mechanism that meet the requirements of Movement partners as well as other relevant stakeholders.

The Strategic Plan 2008-12 will be developed taking lessons from past experiences. The operational plan 2008-09 will be worked upon by the Movement in order to harmonise the support to the host National Society. Key policies of the Society are being developed, and will be adapted into the ARCS existing environment once the revised Constitution is approved. The Finance Development project has advanced well and will enable the leadership to manage the Society in a much better way than before. When it is fully in place, it will also contribute to the development of a society-wide reporting system, which is currently missing.

The extension of the membership system to the ministries and schools has expanded the wide network of volunteers. For instance, the active participation of Herat volunteers in the fundraising, assessment and distribution to the disaster affected population can be considered as the early impact of the volunteers programme and a greater impact is expected in the future.

Humanitarian Values

Outcome(s)/Expected result(s):

Programme component	Component outcome
1. Humanitarian values (HV)	All ARCS core programmes practice a component of HV while carrying out their activities in the field.
2. Anti-discrimination	Discrimination, violence and intolerance and stigma are reduced in the targeted communities

Achievements

Expected outcome 1

One of the achievements under project component 1 was getting the support of the ARCS leadership for the incorporation of HV into all programme field-related activities. As the current understanding of HV remains limited, the initial focus has been on ensuring that gender is reflected in service delivery and their involvement in relevant NS activities. The conceptualization of the HV program is still an ongoing process and requires continued technical support.

No other activities were carried out during the reporting period.

Expected outcome 2

The second component is being partially implemented by some religious scholars who became volunteers of ARCS under an ICRC-supported project. The religious leaders play a key role in dissemination of the Movement's principles. Due to their unique position in the community, they can

strongly encourage people to respect human dignity and reflect it in their daily life. Volunteers in schools, clinics and health centres also carried out activities to promote respect for human dignity.

Constraints or Challenges

More technical and financial support is required for the ARCS's HV programme to enable them to work and implement the planned activities in a professional and desired way. ARCS and Federation HV programme staff need further trainings, guidelines and other training materials for the better implementation of this programme in targeted areas.

Working in partnership

To implement the HV programme, there should be a wide network of stakeholders and partners. To achieve this, the ARCS HV programme has close relation with ministries of religious scholars, higher education and public health. The ARCS's HV programme also receives support from ICRC and Federation, and is trying to find new partners among other international humanitarian organisations.

Contributing to longer-term impact

The dissemination of the Fundamental Principles and values in selected communities, particularly those who suffered three decades of war and experienced several ethnic, religious and political conflicts, will allow them to understand and implement the concepts in their life and enable them to live in peace and respect human dignity, diversity and gender.

Furthermore, the ongoing HV activities will give the NS the chance to expand its network of members and volunteers and project itself as the only indigenous and nationwide humanitarian organisation in the country which helps and provides assistance to the needy and affected population without any discrimination.

Looking ahead

The ARCS plans to implement comprehensive community-based health intervention (CCBHI) in Mazar, which will be extended later to other parts of this province. This pilot programme is attracting the attention and support from the MoPH and local authorities.

The completion of the ARCS constitution (Statutes) process will allow the ARCS to develop their key policies and put them in place.

The Humanitarian Values programme will seek to work through the other core programmes as a important cross-cutting issue, in addition to specific HV activities, subject to funding and external technical support.

The Movement harmonisation process between the Federation and the ICRC will continue to ensure a harmonious approach to support the ARCS.

The National Society's DM department will continue with the Contingency Planning Process which will result in specific plans for major earthquakes and floods. In this respect, the Society will rely on the support from the Federation, both financially and technically, through the country office, SARD, zone office and Geneva. The Federation country office plans to strengthen its capacities to provide adequate technical and financial support to the National Society, as well as demonstrate a proper role within the Movement in Afghanistan. It will rely on the technical support in the areas of OD, Health and DM provided by SARD, Zone and Geneva. Assistance from the latter is also needed on Movement cooperation, legal base and related issues.

The Federation also aims to work with the rest of the international humanitarian community and demonstrate the significant role of the Movement in responding to the humanitarian challenges in Afghanistan.

How we work

The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

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