

ANNUAL REPORT



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

AFGHANISTAN

14 May 2004

In Brief

Appeal No. 01.52/2003; Appeal target: CHF 14,523,714 (USD 9.7m or EUR 9.8m); Appeal coverage: 53.5%.

[\(click here to go directly to the Financial Report\).](#)

This Annual Report reflects activities implemented over a one-year period; they form part of, and are based on, longer-term, multi-year planning. All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

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Overall analysis of the programme

Summary

The challenge for Afghans in 2003 was to build on comparative stability with the institution of the transitional government. The return of 2.3 million refugees in 2002/3, while presenting new challenges, was a sign of a new confidence in the community. Achieving reconstruction - both human and physical - is the principal goal of the Afghan people and the humanitarian organisations that support them including the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies.

In this transitional phase, the Federation has adopted a flexible approach to the changing political, security, and humanitarian landscape in Afghanistan. Reflecting a shift from the emergency of the 2001/02 Afghan crisis, the Federation initiated a specific 2003 country appeal seeking CHF 14,523,714. In June, the Federation and the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) undertook a revision of their activities and revised the appeal to CHF 10,703,983 (reflected in programme update 22 July 2003). This was against a backdrop of an upsurge in security tensions, which had seen humanitarian organisations targeted. Agency operations were affected with several suspensions of programmes and withdrawals of staff, especially in south and south-eastern Afghanistan. These developments seriously limited the ARCS/Federation water and sanitation project and restricted all operational movements. The primary health care programme focus shifted to adapt to the changing context (new government health policy) resulting in a suspension of the expansion of clinics and maximising the impact of ARCS services to vulnerable populations within the Movement's context.

A further operational review in September revealed that, in spite of progress in nearly all the expected results, the overall tempo of implementation had slowed due to access restrictions created by the deteriorating security situation. Visits to some construction projects were not possible, which resulted in late identification of obstacles and problems. Similarly, the delegation was unable to maintain the necessary level of mentoring support to branches and to field operations (which the national society continues to run).

In addition to fresh contributions from partner national societies (PNS), the Appeal benefited substantially from the financial and in-kind resources reallocated from the Afghan Crisis Operation. This enabled ARCS to consistently support the most vulnerable people as well as building its own capacity.

Context

The Afghan people are living through a critical stage in the country's development – the transition from conflict to peace. The Afghan Transitional Administration is now into its second year. Progress is being made by the administration and its partners. Infrastructure, public administration, the judiciary and security sectors, health, education and agriculture are all subject to reforms. Following a quarter century of conflict, the recovery of Afghanistan will be a lengthy and expensive process.

Nation building is moving ahead and a constitutional *loya jirga* (grand assembly) took place in December 2003 resulting in the adoption of a new national constitution in early 2004. Presidential elections are scheduled for June 2004. The government, with the support of the UN, opened voter registrations centres in major cities. Over three quarters of a million voters had registered by the end of the year. Efforts are being made to roll out the process to 4,200 registration centres to register over 10 million voters in the months running up to elections.

Over 2.2 million refugees have returned since 2001. Sustainable reintegration and protection of refugees and internally displaced persons remain substantial issues, as do economic recovery and employment. Some 3.5 million Afghan refugees remain outside the country, many in Iran and Pakistan.

Good rains and snowfall up to the spring of 2003 meant relief from drought and a bumper harvest, estimated at 4.6 million tonnes of wheat, (a 650,000 tonne surplus). The south-west of the country continues to reel from a four-year drought which has been responsible for dwindling water tables and population displacement.

Heavy rains in 2003 caused flooding in northern, western central and southern Afghanistan that affected thousands of people and destroyed hundreds of houses. A sandstorm in the western region destroyed hundreds of homes and buried agricultural land, displacing whole village populations. Melting snow created mudslides in the northern and eastern provinces. An earthquake measuring 5.8 on the Richter scale occurred, in an isolated region of north-eastern Afghanistan, but did not result in any fatalities. A similar occurrence in April 2002 at 6.2 Richter scale devastated the town of Nahrin causing 900 fatalities and affecting 80,000 inhabitants (Afghanistan Emergency Appeal 10/02).

On the security front, crime is rising with the illegal drug trade a major factor in this. Conversely, warlords only caused sporadic tension with the trend towards disarmament and political solutions. Insecurity is predominantly a cocktail of terrorist/extremist, factional and criminal elements.

Militant attacks continued through much of the south and east. The killing of an ICRC delegate in March and of a UNHCR expatriate in November were among the attacks affecting humanitarian workers that led to further limitations on travel by agencies. Two ARCS and four DACAAR staff were killed in August and October respectively. In Kabul city, an explosive device detonated at a Save the Children office. Coalition forces and NATO's International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) remain the favoured targets for extremist attacks, along with government representatives and national police and army forces in the provinces. Private sector workers involved in reconstruction activities have also been killed and kidnapped while the Intercontinental Hotel in Kabul was damaged by a bomb. Afghan civilians are frequently killed and injured in extremist attacks

The ISAF mandate has been altered to allow for deployment outside Kabul city. However, despite this, there has been only very limited increase in geographical coverage and this is due to low levels of commitment from NATO member countries. A new provincial reconstruction team in Kunduz has been formed under ISAF.

Coalition military operations against militants continue, particularly near the Pakistan border areas. There are also signs of increasing Pakistani military pressure on their side of the border.

Health and Care

The priority of the ARCS has been to improve the overall health of people lacking access to health care with an emphasis on services for women and children, including reaching those living in remote villages and poor urban areas. A key and ongoing objective has been to upgrade and standardise service levels across the network of 49 national society clinics and reallocate clinics where necessary to avoid duplication of medical services. This has been done in coordination with the Ministry of Health and other service providers.

In 2003, the Ministry of Health produced a document 'Basic Package of Health Services for Afghanistan' (BPHS). This is an attempt to offer basic health services across the entire country and will be based on a provincial, or cluster of districts approach. The government, with support from the World Bank, European Commission, USAID and Asian Development Bank, is in the process of contracting these services in designated provinces to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) who will provide the whole BPHS in their respective provinces and build the capacity of the Ministry of Health staff for a period of up to three years. Sustainability after this time has not yet been addressed. The ARCS, with the support of the Federation, is about to complete an assessment to identify the clinics to be adapted to the new Ministry of Health standards during 2004. The national society, with one or two clinics in most provinces and overall a nationwide coverage of clinics, can best fit into this new BPHS to support the most vulnerable, particularly women and children.

Programme Goal: The health vulnerability of one million Afghans - mostly women and children - is reduced.

Programme Objective: The capacity of the Afghan Red Crescent Society to reduce health vulnerability has increased.

In 2003, ARCS, with the support of the Federation, provided health care through 49 fixed clinics, eight health emergency mobile teams, the environmental health project (formerly water and sanitation) and the community-based first aid (CBFA) network projects. A total of 3,309,162 people benefited from the health services, representing one sixth of the total population.

Health clinics project

Objective: The capacity of the Afghan Red Crescent Society to provide high quality primary health care services, including mother and child health (MCH) and health promotion, is heightened.

Progress/Achievements

The national society, supported by the Federation, provided health care services through 49 fixed clinics nationwide. All clinics offer health education, consultation, treatment and provision of essential drugs, with 40 clinics also offering an expanded programme of immunisation (EPI) and 35 clinics offering antenatal, post-natal and child growth monitoring services. Family spacing is offered in 32 clinics, with intra-uterine device insertion (IUD) in six clinics in the Kabul region. Additionally, the ARCS trained the existing traditional birth attendants (TBAs), aiming to reduce pregnancy and delivery related death among women. Nine clinics in Kabul, Herat, Mazar and Jalalabad regions have trained 258 TBAs and provided supervision. In addition to the fixed clinics, the national society, supported by the Federation, operates eight mobile teams.

Table 1: Services provided by ARCS clinics during 2003

Outpatient treatment	Health education	Ante/post-natal care	Child growth	Child immunisation	Family planning	Home visits by TBAs	Women delivered by TBAs
609,991	726,991	45,784	35,674	99,943	31,717	35,935	7,498
Total: 1,593, 533							

Approximately 80 per cent of outpatients were women and children treated for common diseases, with respiratory tract infections and diarrhoea being the predominant ailments. Over 155,000 people benefited from individual health education sessions, covering such topics as the importance of childcare, hygiene, prevention and treatment of diarrhoea, nutrition, immunisation and family spacing. Fifty-five percent of antenatal care attendees were women with first pregnancies. A total of 7,359 women attended post-natal sessions.

Of immunised children, a third received BCG (tuberculosis), a third received measles vaccination, and a third completed all rounds of OPV (polio) and DPT (diphtheria). In addition, 87,132 doses of TT vaccine were given to women of childbearing age with 25,000 of them completing the vaccination. National society health staff and volunteers were also involved in the ongoing polio National Immunisation Days and measles campaigns, targeted at children under five. The national society also participated in a pilot tetanus vaccination programme for women of childbearing age. It provided EPI services in 40 of its clinics and during the year took over the support and management of vaccinators from UNICEF/Ministry of Health in these clinics.

First time family planning attendees averaged 49 per cent and services offered include the oral contraceptive pill, injection, male condoms and, in selected city clinics with trained staff, the IUD. The pill remains the most preferred method, followed by injection and condoms.

Various workshops and trainings were conducted for clinic doctors, staff and TBAs. These included the new health information system reporting formats with an emphasis on accurate health data collection, emergency mobile unit (EMU) training, and a UNFPA funded workshop on reproductive health.

New TBAs in the provinces of Baghlan and Badakhshan completed three week training courses. Refresher courses were organised for TBAs in other provinces.

To enhance understanding and community management, a health committee was established in the Mehterlan clinic in Laghman province as a pilot project. The committee draws its representatives from the community, the ARCS branch and the Ministry of Health and includes three female members. Preliminary work has been undertaken to establish similar committees in other clinics.

The ARCS and Federation regional health officers and health delegates made regular monitoring and supervision visits to clinics across their regions. During these visits, on-the-job training was provided to all relevant clinic staff. The officers were briefed on the BPHS endorsed by the Ministry of Health and, in turn, briefed the clinic's staff in their respective regions.

Impact

The ARCS health clinics focus mainly on women and children and, in so doing, contribute substantially to improving the lives of the most vulnerable in Afghanistan. In many places, these clinics are the only access to health care for vulnerable families.

Group health education offered in the clinics stimulates discussion and leads to healthy behavioural changes, while individual health education allows for professional health advice and detailed explanations tailored to individual needs.

Antenatal and post-natal services contribute to improvement of mothers' health and decreases in maternal mortality. In Afghanistan, where the majority of women deliver with no trained health person in attendance, antenatal attendance is crucial to monitor the pregnancy, to offer advice, and to urge referral for at-risk pregnancies. Similarly, post-natal attendance can ensure that mother and child are checked and advice is given to ensure a healthy future for mother and baby.



When mothers bring their children to ARCA clinics for growth monitoring, they also receive advice on nutrition and other important health messages. Children showing signs of malnutrition are seen by the doctor to treat any medical causes and then referred to nutrition centres

Immunisation provides the necessary vaccination to women and children and is one of the most effective preventive measures to protect children from the main causes of childhood morbidity and mortality.

Family planning advice and supplies are provided to couples in about half the national society's clinics. Families who are able to space their children can ensure that women have time to recover from one pregnancy before embarking on another.

ARCS TBAs attend deliveries and provide home visits to pregnant and lactating women to offer health advice. This makes a significant impact as many of these women have little or no other access to health care services.

By conducting regular workshops for clinic staff and supervision visits, they were kept updated and motivated which increased their capacity to offer the best possible service to the clients.

Regular liaison, including sharing of ideas, helps to ensure that beneficiaries receive the best possible service from all health agencies and that agencies do not duplicate services.

Constraints

One of the major constraints was unstable security, especially in the south and south-west of the country. This prevented regular supervisory visits of national society and Federation health officers, Federation health delegates and other visitors to the clinics of those areas. However, ARCS health officers were able to visit clinics in many of those provinces which were off-limits to Federation staff. Clinics that could not be visited by national society or Federation staff were supplied via their respective ARCS branch staff.

Another significant constraint was a shortage of qualified health staff, especially female, in rural areas. This prevented the extension of MCH services to more clinics. The national society offers MCH services in 35 of its clinics and endeavours to extend such services gradually to all of its clinics.

Low level of education and literacy among communities, especially women, made it difficult to encourage more women to attend clinics regularly for antenatal and post-natal care, immunisation, and regular growth monitoring of children. However, this situation gradually improved throughout the year. Education levels also meant family planning services were less effective, especially in rural areas.

National society clinics refer malnourished children to the supplementary and therapeutic feeding centres run by other organisations. Such centres are available in most regional capitals but there is a problem for malnourished children in more remote areas where there is lack of such centres.

Key national society staff turnover was another constraint which slowed down activities in some regions. In the first half of the year, three experienced health officers went to work with other organisations offering higher salaries.

There was little progress in negotiations with the Ministry of Health on the expansion of EPI services to the remainder of national society clinics.

Security constraints prevented many field trips.

Emergency mobile units project

Objective: The capacity of emergency mobile units to respond – both during disaster and non-disaster times – in each of Afghanistan’s five regions has increased.

Progress/Achievements:

The EMU training, facilitated by one Finnish and two Norwegian emergency response unit (ERU) delegates, was undertaken in February as a follow-up to the initial training held in 2002. It included field exercises for all the regions where participants had a chance to work as a team and use and test some of the equipment. Staff from fixed clinics joined their EMU colleagues in the training. This was one way of increasing the knowledge base as well as extending the human resource foundation in health emergency preparedness and response activities. In November, an EMU deployment and simulation exercise was held with a comprehensive training course for the Herat EMU teams and water sanitation team. The Norwegian ERU trainer from the previous two trainings, supported by the Norwegian Red Cross Society EMU consultant, supervised the training. This was the first training when all the equipment was in place and useful experience was gained

The water sanitation support unit for the EMU was inaugurated and tested in an exercise just outside Kabul. Federation and ARCS engineers, including those from the CBFA and disaster management department, participated in the training exercise. The equipment in the unit is stored centrally, and may be deployed to any region together with the EMU when there is a disaster of a certain magnitude. The goal is that water of drinking quality can be provided for 5,000 people per day according to SPHERE standards.

Fortunately, there were no major natural disasters in 2003 necessitating a full deployment of an EMU unit. However, EMUs have responded to health emergencies in all the regions in accordance with their response priorities. When it comes to activities related to the first priority - responding to health emergencies caused by natural disasters - the teams have rendered medical assistance to victims of flooding, sand storms and landslides. As a response to disease outbreaks and epidemics, the teams have been involved in response to outbreaks of malaria, diphtheria, cholera and whooping cough.

During normal activities in rural and remote areas, the mobile teams treated almost 60,000 patients who would not otherwise have had access to primary health care. Most of these people also received health education. Presently there are two teams each in Kandahar, Mazar and Herat, and one each in Kabul and Jalalabad. The EMU teams are increasingly seen as a resource by the health authorities when it comes to assisting in assessments when there are rumours of outbreaks that need verification, or for supervision of vaccinators participating in national immunisation days and pulse immunisation. They also participate in social mobilisation prior to vaccination campaigns. In ensuring better linkages between EMUs and CBFA projects in the field, new volunteers were recruited and trained in areas where teams worked.

The health department has coordinated regularly with the Ministry of Health emergency preparedness and response (EPR) director, and attended and made presentations on the EMUs at EPR workshops in Kabul. Regular coordination with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the Ministry of Health took place regarding possible disease outbreaks in various parts of the country. One example was the malaria outbreak in Karokh of Herat province, where ministry personnel trained the team to do simple blood tests in the field and offered the testing equipment. There was also very good coordination between national society EMU teams and the Ministry of Health, UN agencies and NGOs in taskforces in the regions, responding to outbreaks and health assistance in the provinces.

Following the Bam earthquake, the Herat EMU team, together with seven other ARCS volunteers including the CBFA supervisor, were deployed to the Iranian city. The deployment of the team was organised and coordinated with local authorities, Ministry of Health representatives WHO and UNICEF.

Impact

The contribution of the EMU teams in response to health emergencies gradually improved with the increased experience within the teams. The presence of ERU teams rendering health assistance and advice in remote areas is highly appreciated by the villagers and reduces morbidity in vulnerable people. The teams also address needs of

urgent cases and advice on referral when primary health care is not sufficient. It also raises the profile of the ARCS among communities and other players.

Training has improved the ability of the EMU teams to respond to health emergencies and provide basic health care during disasters. The water sanitation EMU support component is able to assist any of the health EMUs with clean water for a minimum of 5,000 people.

The mobile teams and CBFA volunteers are working together and gradually being more effective in improving the lives of the beneficiaries.

Constraints

Security problems are the main constraint especially for EMU deployment in some of the regions. Security advice has to be taken seriously and constantly updated so as not to compromise the safety of EMU staff. This does however reduce the response ability in some areas. Local adaptations have been made in the regions in order to reduce risk such as removing radio communication equipment from the vehicles in Kandahar. For security reasons the planned training with a Norwegian Red Cross Society trainer for the EMU teams of Kandahar, Jalalabad and Kabul in December had to be cancelled on short notice, slowing down the progress of capacity building in the teams.

The loss of key staff and turnover of personnel, mainly for financial reasons, makes it difficult to build institutional memory in the teams. The position of one of the very experienced Kandahar team doctors has been vacant for a long time.

The EMUs are supposed to be national response teams based in the regions. However, the ARCS does not have a regional structure and teams are seen as belonging to one province in some of the regions. It is important to have an overall coordination of all the teams so that routine activities and ongoing commitments do not jeopardise the emergency response capacity.

There are many ongoing changes in Afghan society with drastic health reforms in all the provinces. Private companies and NGOs will supervise the health care in the provinces and the coordination of outreach activities by national society teams may have to be negotiated differently than in the past.

Environmental health (water and sanitation) project

Objective: The provision of water and sanitation to vulnerable people in drought-affected areas has increased.

Progress/Achievements

The implementation of environmental health activities in 2003 was difficult for a variety of reasons, although there was reasonable progress. The programme managed to reach 50,580 beneficiaries from the targeted 85,000 (revised programme update number 2) in the appeal. This was mainly due to reduced activities in the earlier part of the year given the insecurity surrounding the targeted location of Kandahar province. The programme continued in Herat and Farah provinces and made meaningful achievements. This is despite security problems in Farah in the latter part of the year. A total of 272 new boreholes were constructed in 2003 in Herat and Kandahar. Herat recorded the highest number of boreholes constructed.

Table 2: Achievements in both hard and software components of the project

Province	District/ mosque name	Number of wells constructed in 2003	No. of wells rehabilitated in 2003	No. of latrines constructed	No. of people who attended hygiene education sessions	No. of hygiene promotion sessions
Kandahar	Maruf	15				
	Dand	7				
	Kandahar City	78		175		
	Shegha	13				
Herat	Enjil		2			
	Gojarah		3			
Farah	Centre	25				
	Lashe Jowin	30				
	Anardarah	30		10	680	20
	Qala-e-kah	54		10	3,044	110
	Khak Safid	20		10		
Totals		272	5	205	3,724	130

The major achievement of the programme was the involvement of the communities in project design and implementation. The capacity building of the targeted communities has resulted in the community ownership of the water points. The communities formed water user groups prior to project implementation and thereafter were involved in decision making concerning their water points. Involvement of the communities helped to highlight the hidden desire for participation in community projects in the targeted population. Through community participation, the programme was able to identify the missing links in the hygiene promotion programme by the introduction of couples to spearhead the hygiene education programme. The hygiene couple concept was introduced mainly to overcome the cultural sensitivity of Afghans who cannot allow women to go and work without an escort from a family member. This system worked to the advantage of the programme since the couples were able to cover both men and women during their hygiene education visit to households.

Further to the above, 43 female volunteers were trained in Kandahar, adding value to the hygiene promotion efforts being undertaken by the national society. A workshop was held for volunteers in Herat for hygiene promotion, attracting 30 participants, both male and female. The main objective of the workshop was to equip the participants with skills so that they can disseminate information on hygiene and sanitation in their respective communities.

The Red Crescent teams assisted by the Federation carried out detailed assessments in Herat and Kandahar in order to ascertain the real needs of the communities targeted in the programme. Further, with the introduction of government reforms in the water and sanitation sector, the ARCS/Federation activities fitted in well with the proposed system which emphasised community-based ownership of the programmes.

Impact

The provision of clean water to the communities of Kandahar, Farah and Herat has brought many benefits to the beneficiaries. There has been a noticeable decline in water-borne diseases though there is no empirical data available. Health centers have recorded fewer cases of waterborne diseases indicating that clean water supply has contributed to the health of the beneficiaries. Hygiene education and sanitation has had an impact on the communities as behavioral changes continue to transform the health of the targeted beneficiaries.

The introduction of hygiene promotion and capacity building helped the communities realise what a difference it makes to their lives once they get involved in the project implementation. The programme was community driven except for the physical construction of the boreholes which required heavy machinery.

Constraints

Security ranked high on the constraints for implementation of environmental health activities. The killing of an ICRC delegate in the first quarter of the year was a major blow to the already fragile security. The programme was suspended in Kandahar for three months while security was being assessed. The programme resumed on a smaller scale as some areas were still inaccessible. The road between Herat and Farah continued to be insecure

thus leaving little choice for the water sanitation team in Herat to monitor activities in the province. Funding was also a major problem with a lukewarm response from donors.

Community-based first aid project

Objective: The capacity of the community-based first aid project to reduce vulnerability, particularly in remote areas, has increased.

Progress/Achievements

To assist reorganisation of existing CBFA volunteers in central and eastern regions, a survey was conducted in both areas. This led to a reorganisation into community groups of ten in the various districts of the regions.

In the central region, 438 new volunteers were trained to achieve the reorganisation. In some provinces training could not be undertaken due to a lack of security.

The survey helped pinpoint training needs in the eastern region. This resulted in 305 people receiving training. Again, security was a major constraint.

Throughout the year, a total of 3,345 volunteers from 1,413 villages of nine districts in 12 provinces were recruited, trained and equipped with first aid kits. This brings the total number of volunteers trained since the commencement of the project in 1997 to 15,822 from 13,409 villages of 159 Districts in 23 provinces. Approximately 10 per cent of volunteers trained in 2003 were women. The total number of trained female volunteers is now 622. Training of women had been forbidden under the Taliban regime.

To encourage and upgrade the knowledge of volunteers, the ARCS, with support from the Federation, held first aid competitions among volunteers from groups right through to regional level. Altogether 7,300 project volunteers participated.

Team leader workshops were conducted in all of the five regions. A total of 1,052 team leaders participated in these workshops which focussed on management and technical abilities. A ten-day refresher training session was held in Kabul for 65 trainers, supervisors and assistant supervisors of CBFA and youth from across the country. This was facilitated by three experienced trainers from the Iranian Red Crescent Society.

During the year CBFA, volunteers gave first aid or advice to 327,791 beneficiaries and provided health education (including disaster and mine awareness) to over a million individuals with an emphasis on disease prevention.

The CBFA project concentrated its efforts to mobilise communities to support the volunteers in their localities. A total of 71 national society corners were established in various locations across the country. The corners are referral points for the villagers where the CBFA volunteers provide them with first aid and health education.

The disaster management department started to use CBFA volunteers in their activities – for example to survey the vulnerable and for distribution of relief items in Logar. They invited all CBFA regional supervisors to attend the community-based disaster preparedness (CBDP) implementation procedure/plan development training workshop held in Kabul. In the southern region, the ARCS disaster management supervisor also conducted three workshops for CBFA team leaders and volunteers with over 50 trained in total.

In cooperation with the ARCS environmental health project, CBFA volunteers took part in hygiene education and encouraged people to dig wells to access clean drinking water.

ARCS CBFA teams are beginning to link more closely with the health clinics and EMUs, water and sanitation teams, hygiene promoters and youth and humanitarian values teams, both at headquarters level and in the regions. They also work closely with the ICRC, particularly the dissemination department, and with Ministry of Health and UNICEF, particularly for support to national immunisation days.

Impact

The survey helped identify the number of volunteers active in their villages. Due to the difficult circumstances they face, some volunteers inevitably move on to earn money or have other more pressing issues to deal with. The

survey confirmed that over 90 per cent of trained volunteers in the areas reached by trainers/team leaders remain active in their villages.

With a team approach, the profile and visibility of ARCS volunteers has increased. The community is now more aware of the volunteers and the opportunity to pass on health messages has risen. Volunteers continue to offer timely first aid, coupled with relevant health messages. This, in the longer term, will increase the coping capacity of those populations.

In many cases the CBFA programme is being implemented in remote areas where there are no health facilities. In these areas, families receive health education and learn to protect their children against preventable conditions such as diarrhoea, and the importance of immunisation. Communities also received timely first aid for injuries, as well as mine awareness education.

The importance of female volunteers cannot be over emphasized as they are able to talk to other women in their communities and pass on health messages, particularly those covering reproductive health for the health of mothers and their children.

The overall impact of the CBFA programme is that more people are considering health issues in their daily lives. Mothers are keen to immunise their children during immunisation days; some people with no access to vaccines in their respective areas are referred to the main towns or cities to get their children immunised. In some districts where the volunteers have established ARCS corners, people are attending health education sessions regularly to know more about arresting bleeding, immobilising broken limbs, dressing injuries, birth spacing and so on. By strengthening local coping mechanisms, communities become less vulnerable to poor health.

In the event of a disaster, those project volunteers trained in disaster management will be able to carry out assessment of the affected area, identifying the extent of the damage, the number of casualties and the immediate needs of the affected population. The CBFA trained volunteers are an invaluable asset in spreading the messages of humanity, coexistence and tolerance, building on their links with their local communities.

Constraints

The unstable and insecure environment, the struggle for subsistence, poor roads and unavailability of transport, unemployment and high turnover of ARCS personnel were the main constraints which affected the volunteers' performance. Despite the difficulties the trainers, supervisors and team leaders have kept in constant contact to find solutions for problems arising in their areas.

Lack of motivation is a serious problem among some of the volunteers, particularly those isolated in remote communities. ARCS aims to introduce an improved methodology of volunteer management so that committed and energetic Red Crescent volunteers, inspired by the power of humanity, join and remain with the national society.

Due to budgetary constraints, some provinces had no adequate dressing material available as the re-supply schedule was delayed. This, to an extent, affected trainer's and supervisor's credibility resulting in low motivation among some of volunteers.

Insecure living conditions in the villages has led to the more able community members, who could otherwise assist the volunteers on the way to self-sustainability, leaving the villages for the cities or abroad. Due to lack of employment and poverty in many local communities, mobilisation of local resources will remain a slow and difficult process. However, it is encouraging to see the improved links between CBFA volunteers and the environmental health, disaster management and youth and humanitarian values programmes, which will benefit the sustainability of these projects.

Disaster Management

As Afghanistan transits from a conflict to post-conflict phase, more developmental approaches are being adopted by the government in its strategies and policies. Disaster management is increasingly gaining importance and momentum on the national and international development agendas.

Programme Goal: The impact of disasters on vulnerable communities is reduced as is their subsequent dependency on humanitarian aid.

Programme Objective: The Afghan Red Crescent Society disaster management - both preparedness and response - capability is increased.

Progress/Achievements

As an entry point into the restructuring process of disaster management, ARCS identified its priorities as the strengthening of its structure and maintaining a well trained team of key staff. The relief and disaster preparedness sectors merged into a single disaster management department.

A number of activities were implemented in 2003 with the aim of increasing disaster management capability.



The warehouse in Jalalabad

Warehouses have been constructed in two strategic locations - Mazar-i-Sharif and Jalalabad. Mazar connects the country to central Asia and the region is the most disaster-prone in Afghanistan. The Jalalabad region experiences floods and landslides. Both locations are entry points to Afghanistan and a considerable amount of goods pass through these locations annually. Due to a lack of resources, the national society could not maintain some of the buildings damaged during the prolonged conflict, thus making the rehabilitation of the estates essential and important for strengthening national society capacity. One such building is a warehouse located at ARCS

headquarters which was rehabilitated with the support of the Federation. The warehouse is now fully functioning as the

central store for disaster preparedness stocks. To strengthen capacity at national headquarters further, the emergency operations centre (EOC) has been established which will enable the ARCS to provide effective assistance to disaster-affected communities as well as improved data collection. It will also allow it to coordinate better within its departments and with its interlocutors, such as the Department for Disaster Preparedness, the UN and other actors.

A disaster response unit (DRU) is another development accomplished at headquarters level. The DRU consists of eight people selected from existing staff with diverse profiles; four from the disaster management department, one each from health and CBFA, and two from the transport department. Equipped with two vehicles, a pactor station and specially designed DRU kits, including deployment procedures regulated by standing operating procedures, the team can be deployed to the field within 48 hours and can be self-contained for up to a period of two weeks. The unit demonstrated its importance and relevance during the severe floods in northern Afghanistan.

The ARCS disaster management department was involved in various disaster response operations in 2003. The biggest relief operation was the national society's participation in winterisation efforts coordinated by the Ministry of Rehabilitation and Rural Development (MRRD) and the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA). ARCS assisted 19,144 families in central Afghanistan with basic relief items – coal, coal stoves, blankets and plastic sheeting.

In addition, national society response teams and provincial branches supported thousands of families affected by heavy flooding, sand storms and landslides all over Afghanistan with basic relief items. A number of operations were undertaken jointly with the ICRC and UN agencies with the ARCS as the lead implementing agency.

The disaster management department implemented two relief distributions for American Red Cross Society school chests to Afghan students and Swedish Red Cross Society baby kits in a number of provinces selected by the national society and coordinated with relevant ministries and UN agencies.

Disaster preparedness stocks were replenished in order to strengthen disaster preparedness and response capacity. Some 2,000 rolls of plastic sheeting, 280 pick axes and 1,500 shovels were procured locally and 4,500 kitchen sets, 10,000 blankets and 2,803 jerry cans were contributed by the Finnish Red Cross Society.

Structural changes in the disaster management department were in tandem with reforms in the national disaster policy and structure. The government, supported by the UNAMA and the Indian-based consultancy group SEEDS, completed drafting a National Disaster Management Plan at the end of 2003. The plan focusses on streamlining disaster management systems at the national level through reorganisation of the government's Department for Disaster Preparedness and laying down operating procedures of major stakeholders. The ARCS, supported by the Federation, was party to discussions and negotiations from an initial stage. The national society's goal was to be a strong partner with the government in national disaster management efforts reflecting its auxiliary role to the public authorities while maintaining the Movement's principles. The national society now has a clear basis for its disaster management strategy, policy and planning. The three main roles of the ARCS in the National Disaster Management Plan are:

- as a member of the national emergency operations centre, together with 12 key ministries;
- as a recognised member of the National Commission on disaster management; and
- overall disaster preparedness and response programmes at community level.

Effective service delivery to beneficiaries, structural changes, further development of strategies, policies and procedures in the disaster management department, as well as fulfilling roles and responsibilities as part of the national disaster management system cannot materialise without a well trained and stable team. The disaster management programme focussed on skills development and capacity building through workshops, seminars, field trips, study tours and exchange visits with other national societies in South Asia. Disaster management team members have been trained in regional disaster response, the Better Programming Initiative, geographical information systems, vulnerability and capacity assessment, and disaster management through the South Asia regional workshops. A draft basic disaster management training manual was developed through a workshop supported by the South Asia regional delegation (SARD) and national societies from the region: India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka. The Nepal Red Cross Society supported the ARCS in organising CBDP training of trainers and developing a concept paper on CBDP. The SARD facilitated visits by the head of disaster management and the director of CBDP to the Indian and Nepal Red Cross Societies.

A number of workshops were held to train some 160 staff and volunteers in disaster management, including those from CBFA and youth.

Strong links between relief, rehabilitation and development is widely being acknowledged as a long-term ARCS disaster management strategy, placing more emphasis on community development and strengthening local coping mechanisms. As a result, a pilot CBDP programme was initiated in eight provinces. Vulnerability and capacity assessments were completed to identify communities/districts for the CBDP programme in the northern and eastern regions provinces of Baghlan, Samangan, Takhar and Kunar.

Impact

The new structure, complemented by the DRU and the EOC, has contributed to an improved disaster management capacity. The DRU was deployed for assessments and flood response operations, with effective results.

Through the implementation of the winter programme and various response operations in close cooperation and coordination with other humanitarian agencies, the impact of adverse winter conditions and natural disasters on vulnerable communities was reduced. The relief/response operations greatly boosted the ARCS image. Activities increased the national society's capacity in assessments, planning, logistics and reporting.

The national society's role in the National Disaster Management Plan continues to strengthen the national society's disaster management structure. Its participation has also raised its image as an indigenous organisation capable of implementing large-scale disaster response and preparedness activities. Being assigned such a prominent role in the plan is also a clear indication of increased credibility of the ARCS. Its participation also triggered the national society's commitment to design clear disaster preparedness and response plans and policies. A consistent, agreed and shared disaster response and preparedness policy and plan will considerably increase the effectiveness of the ARCS in these areas.

With the expanded network of trained volunteers and staff, the ARCS established stronger links with the communities it works with and implemented successful risk reduction and response measures. The methodology learnt by the national society during various workshops can be used for the development of different training manuals for staff, volunteers and communities.

Vulnerability and capacity assessments in two regions helped the national society identify vulnerable areas and communities at risk in order to implement a pilot CBDP programme.

Constraints

The ARCS is going through challenging times, moving from conflict to post-conflict and from relief to development. The lack of well trained and professional human resources did not allow for comprehensive and simultaneous full-scale implementation of the planned activities. While the capacity of ARCS in disaster management has indeed increased, there is still room for improvement in the areas of developing policies and plans. The concept of long-term planning is still relatively new.

High staff turnover, mainly due to low incentives and security, were the biggest internal and external constraints hampering the national society in effectively implementing planned activities. Implementation of CBDP - community hazard awareness - was among some of planned activities revisited due to the security developments which restricted travel to certain districts and villages.

Humanitarian Values

Programme Goal: Young Afghans are less vulnerable to discrimination, violence and intolerance - involving youth as change agents able to shape the present and future of the Afghan Red Crescent Society and targeting vulnerable people in the community.

Programme Objective: The Afghan Red Crescent Society's capacity to advocate and act for tolerance and co-existence and promote humanitarian values among youth is increased.

Progress/Achievements

ARCS recruited and trained youth officers and trainers in each of the five regions of the country - ten new staff in total. In addition the five regional youth programme officers took part in a first aid training course. Youth offices for the programme were equipped and are now functional in all five regions of the country.

A regional workshop was organised by the ARCS and the Federation for South Asia region national societies. Three national society youth officers, eight teacher volunteers and six youth volunteers participated to produce a definitive manual for disaster management. A five-day regional humanitarian values training workshop was held in Kabul. Information and dissemination officers attended from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal, India and Pakistan national societies as well as ARCS youth officers and staff, plus Federation and ICRC personnel.

The youth officers in the regions, with the support of the national society headquarters youth staff, recruited and trained new teacher volunteers, youth leaders and youth volunteers during the year as outlined below.

Table 3: Number of newly recruited and trained volunteers

No	Region	Province	No. schools	No. teacher volunteers	No. youth leaders	No. youth volunteers
1	Central	Kabul	6	12	60	600
		Logar	2	4	20	200
		Kapisa	2	4	20	200
2	Western	Herat	5	10	50	500
		Farah	5	10	50	500
3	Northern	Takhar	5	10	50	500
		Baghlan	5	10	50	500
4	Eastern	Nangarhar	5	10	50	500
		Kuner	5	10	50	500
5	Southern	Kandahar	3	5	30	300
		Zabul	5	10	50	500
Total			48	95	480	4,800

The nine-day training of teacher volunteers included the Movement's history and principles, humanitarian values, first aid, health education, working with youth, how to build a team, the history and concept of the youth programme, and linking youth and humanitarian values. Similar training was carried out for 480 youth leaders by their teacher volunteers. The 4,800 youth volunteers have had training on Movement history, humanitarian values and basic first aid and health education including HIV/AIDS.

There are now a total of 497 teacher volunteers and 14,556 youth volunteers and leaders in 254 schools. Ninety-six per cent of the 2003 target was achieved.

The national society decided to use the youth programme as a vehicle to implement humanitarian values activities; however only 51 per cent of the planned 180 teacher volunteers were trained on the new humanitarian values structure.

A pilot leadership training for 100 youth leaders (60 female and 40 male) from 10 schools in Kabul city was conducted, covering topics such as planning, reporting, monitoring, how to build a team, teaching methodology, motivation, humanitarian values/youth programme plans and activities, and how to lead a team. In Herat, national society youth and disaster management officers visited eight schools in Herat city and trained 80 youth leaders.

Youth officers visited all the programme schools in Kabul, Jalalabad, Herat and Mazar, and Kandahar at least every month. They monitored the ongoing training of youth leaders and held discussions with teachers, youth leaders and volunteers about the programme, and encouraged them to organise activities such as school cleaning, creating activities to solve problems in their communities and to address issues such as tolerance, anti-stigma and discrimination. They also discussed the youth activities and programme problems with headmasters and teachers.

Youth officers conducted monthly meetings with all teacher volunteers from the five regions. They collected progress reports and shared information about the introduction of the humanitarian values and youth programme in their respective schools. With regard to dissemination, national society youth and teacher volunteers in Kabul and Mazar talked with over 42,000 people in different communities, principally at mosques and schools, on various Red Cross/Red Crescent topics, including the emblem, humanitarian values and health. They also ran awareness sessions on the dangers of HIV/ AIDS for over 7,000 students.

Youth volunteer first aiders, together with teacher volunteers in Kabul city, provided first aid for 1,906 individuals while volunteers from other regions have participated in social activities such as cleaning their schools, mosques, hospitals and other public places. Teacher volunteers in the north participated in a polio campaign with WHO and the Ministry of Health, as well as a tetanus vaccination campaign.

Space is being renovated for the creation of a new Kabul youth club and this is expected to be completed in early 2004. In Mazar, a youth club is already operating in rented premises. Other youth events have included crossword competitions, outings and picnics.

Art and sports competitions were organised as a prelude to the commemoration of World Red Cross/Red Crescent Day. Representatives from UN agencies, ICRC, IFRC, ARCS, Kabul city schools' headmasters, teachers and youth volunteers attended the event. In Herat, a regional art competition on the topic of "humanity" was organised for girls in 14 schools.



The youth department organised a volleyball tournament among the female youth volunteers of 24 schools of Kabul city – a landmark activity with girls in Afghanistan so long denied the opportunity to play sport. There was an exceptionally positive response to this event. In other regions, various sports competitions were organised for both boys and girls. Female youth volunteers of Faryab province established five volleyball teams in their schools.

In Mazar city, 1,500 youth volunteers as well as 300 volunteer teachers organised a youth rally and celebrated World Red Cross/Red Crescent Day.

A visit by the youth director from the Japanese Red Cross Society gave ARCS youth a chance to discuss the Japan Red Cross Society's youth programme and activities and so broaden their understanding about the work of other national societies. The ARCS youth officer for the central region attended an international youth conference on peace and reconciliation in Iran, attended by youth members from over 50 national societies.

Regular information sharing sessions and coordination meetings were held with the ICRC. Their staff and delegates were invited by the youth officers to most trainings and events.

Preparations for a national youth camp for 250 youths aged 8-12 years were undertaken in November. The camp was postponed for security and weather reasons and has been rescheduled for 2004.

Impact

The ARCS has young, energetic and committed staff in all regions to ensure effective implementation of the programme. As a result, the national society now has increased capacity to advocate tolerance and coexistence and disseminate positive messages to young people throughout the country, offering an alternative to Afghanistan's decades old gun culture.

The national society youth staff and volunteers now feel ownership of the disaster management manual.

The youth officers understand the concepts of humanitarian values and are planning their activities with Afghan youngsters to reduce tension, violence and discrimination among school children and communities. There are now five regional offices established for the youth programme.

The ARCS and its mission have been introduced to another 48 schools. New youth volunteers cover a broad community in which they will act as catalysts for community mobilisation around the ideas of tolerance and coexistence.

The capacity of the national society to advocate and act for tolerance and coexistence and promote humanitarian values among young people has been increased with 5,375 new teachers and youth volunteers in 2003. Trust is being established between the youth volunteers and the communities, helping boost the national society's image. High profile youth participation in the ARCS has had a significant impact on people's awareness of the organisation.

Better coordination with the ICRC has enabled the national society to receive guidance on their youth activities in the sphere of humanitarian values and international humanitarian law.

Constraints

The original plan envisioned recruitment of one male and one female trainer in each region. This appears to be impossible in Kandahar and Jalalabad, as it is difficult to find qualified female staff in these areas. The ARCS has female officers in Mazar, Kabul and Herat regions, boosting the reach to female youth. Due to cultural limitations, it is difficult for the female youth officers to travel to monitor the programme.

Kandahar and Mazar assistant youth officers left their jobs immediately after they were trained which has caused problems and delays to the regions' activities. To date, replacements have not been found and this has prevented facilitation of the programme in the Kandahar region.

It was planned to develop a Red Crescent national youth policy. Because many of the youth programme staff were new to the programme, this policy work was postponed to 2004. By then youth officers in the regions will have gained sufficient knowledge to be able to contribute more effectively.

Longer than expected recruitment, training and negotiating processes caused delays and the loss of new recruits. In Kandahar the youth programme could not achieve its targets to recruit and train volunteers because one staff member was insufficient. The programme was being introduced for the first time in Kandahar and negotiations with stakeholders took longer than expected.

Activities in 2003 focussed on the youth themselves. In 2004 the focus will shift to their work with communities.

Organisational Development

Programme Goal: A strong civil society has reduced the vulnerability of millions of Afghans.

Programme Objective: The Afghan Red Crescent Society has increased its ability to run needs driven, volunteer-based services and programmes.

Progress/Achievements

The plan in 2003 was to address challenges on a number of fronts, including strengthening of branches, reviewing headquarter's structures and capacity, programming practices and governance and constitutional issues. Progress has been made in all these areas to varying degrees and the bulk of the planned activities carried out.

At the national level, the Federation facilitated the process of vision and mission definition by the ARCS. The outputs of this process, if applied consistently, will give the national society and its partners a reference point in planning and policy/strategy formation; the vision and mission have the potential to influence ARCS profoundly over coming years, by providing a common direction and shared sense of purpose.

Great effort has been invested in the development of other important strategic documents - a new draft constitution for the national society has been written, as has a strategic plan. The Federation is now assisting in finalising these documents and will provide support in their implementation and dissemination.

Branch development has been achieved through a variety of initiatives - investments in simple building maintenance and office equipment, training in various technical and management areas, exchange visits with sister national societies and the introduction of regional meetings for training, team building and the sharing of experience. However branches are subject to political interference at the provincial and district levels and there is high staff turnover. Further work is required to address these challenges and build better functioning branches with good management systems and real governance.

At the national headquarters, there is now a functioning training centre while the general office space and equipment have been improved through the year. An external review of the headquarters, conducted at the start of the year, provided the basis for some of the inputs at Kabul level and highlighted opportunities and threats that needed attention regarding management systems, structure and functions. Following up the recommendations from this and other reviews has not been automatic; further efforts will be needed to move forward in this area

and to influence management to take a systematic approach to the analysis, discussion and implementation of recommendations – whether external or internal.

At the start of 2003, a number of workshops and meetings were organised for the heads of provincial branches in all regions to review objectives and develop a plan of action for the year. The analysis of the 2002 branch assessment survey was finalised and recommendations made for future branch development. The planning process for 2004 activities were completed in the latter half of the year through a series of consultation sessions among branch, headquarters and Federation staff. Subsequently the organisational development (OD) department held further meetings, looking particularly at programme plans for 2004 and considering the division of responsibilities between national and regional levels.

A new type of forum was inaugurated during the year with regional meetings now held periodically in the five Red Crescent regions. The gathering of branch personnel, Federation and ICRC staff is used to review implementation, discuss progress and share lessons and experience. It also provides a natural opportunity for brief training sessions. The different regions have varying numbers of branches and run the gatherings to suit their own needs.

To encourage generation of local funds, the OD department provided funding for income generation projects in all regions. Before initiating the projects in 2003, a preliminary policy was prepared for establishment of income generating projects in the branches, based on priorities recommended by the heads of sub-delegations. The proven method of building shop units for rental to local traders has been the most popular approach to income generation in this round of funding.

Five branch presidents and the OD department manager visited branches in Sri Lanka in order to see other approaches and learn new techniques. An analysis of the mission is in preparation and will be used to guide such exchanges in future.

A national fundraising workshop run by an external consultant was held, examining fundraising issues and theory with the administrators of most of the branches as well as some headquarters staff. This event has laid the groundwork for further exploration of the possibilities for fundraising, particularly at branch level. Follow-up work by the consultant is envisaged in early 2004 to begin the development of fundraising policies and tools.

The Federation employed an external consultant to carry out a review of the ARCS headquarters. Recommendations were developed to streamline the headquarter's structure and to ensure effective support to branches. Leadership of the national society has stepped up its efforts to develop closer relations with branches. The ARCS president/secretary general, along with heads of departments, visited branches across the country to discuss future plans and priorities of the national society.

ARCS, with Federation support, has translated and printed the national society branch assessment documents and the governance booklet. These have been distributed to all branches.

English language and computer skills classes have been conducted for headquarters staff, with financial support from the Federation. English training has also been given to branch staff throughout the Kandahar sub-delegation. The Federation has invested in the training centre itself with refurbishment of meeting rooms and dormitories, equipment and staffing.

A high-level ARCS delegation visited the Federation Secretariat to attend a partnership meeting, the General Assembly, Council of Delegates and the 28th International Conference of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Outside the agenda of the conference, the president/secretary general of the ARCS had several meetings with sister societies of South Asia and the Middle East, as well as with the American, Russian and Ukrainian Red Cross Societies. The ARCS delegation also participated in an informal South Asia secretaries-general meeting which followed up on the Kabul Pledge and Manila Action Plan commitments.

The OD department has held meetings with the inspection department about programme monitoring. The inspection department has submitted a plan of programme monitoring to be further improved with the cooperation of the Federation programmes.

The capacity building of the national society has been advanced through having a number of people working as staff-on-loan in disaster management, CBFA, health and youth programmes. There has been much training in the areas of disaster management, CBFA, vulnerability and capacity assessments, and human resources.

As a part of the IT/telecom capacity building project, the Federation trained ten ARCS staff during a workshop on the installation and use of PC hard and software and telecommunications equipment. The trained teams have already been engaged in installing high frequency radios in some branches and teaching the branch staff how to use the equipment.

Several meetings have been held with the cadre and personnel department of the ARCS regarding the issue of human resource development policy. The manager is eager to work closely with the OD department. This liaison will be continued in 2004 to work towards the adoption of the regional human resources manual in the national society.

Discussions about the re-establishment of membership were held between the Federation and the heads of OD and dissemination. The plan for a new membership system is being developed.

Impact

Branches have become more active in the planning process, giving them a greater sense of ownership. The vision and mission workshop was an important exercise in the demonstration of a participatory approach to planning. This has had the desirable effect of branches being more assertive. At the same time, it has established a vision and mission which has given a basis for strategic planning in programming. These impacts will enhance the move towards more bottom-up planning in future.

Branch renovations have helped ensure that there is a viable ARCS centre of operations in these areas. Without adequate accommodation, the effectiveness and credibility of branches is undermined. Many branches still operate out of rented and inappropriate buildings. Similarly, the provision of furniture and other basic equipment can make a big difference to the functioning and status of provincial branches.

The fundraising workshop gathered 29 administrators of various branches who learned the principles and methodology of fundraising. New activities will be initiated after a national policy has been adopted and further tools developed. The follow-up process will commence in February 2004.

The headquarters review provides a planning and analytical resource for the national society to improve its performance at this level. The real impact will be dependent on the commitment to implement the recommendations.

Middle management staff were trained on how to write activity reports for donors. Close cooperation has been established between the OD department and the inspection department which will be built on in future for monitoring purposes.

The top management of the national society has become convinced of the need to re-establish membership in the ARCS and to develop and adhere to a new constitution reflecting Movement norms.

Constraints

The leadership of the national society at branch and headquarters level is from diverse backgrounds. There are varying commitments to, and understanding of, the Movement. These factors were apparent during the visioning process and are reflected in the outputs from that – to map out the future of an organisation requires a firm grasp of its nature, both the scope of possible operations and the boundaries. Generally, the ARCS defines itself by its existing activities and is conservative about new ways of working, either with beneficiaries or institutionally. It will be a gradual change process rather than a paradigmatic one.

The allocation and management of resources, such as computers and vehicles, has proven challenging. Inevitably these assets are prized for status as well as capacity reasons and this leads to political considerations influencing allocation - whether among branches or departments. Vehicles present particular management problems and, too often, they are not used for the intended purpose. The delegation is working with ARCS to follow up and address such instances.

Staff levels at headquarters remain excessive. There is movement towards a more rational human resource policy and this will be a major focus for 2004. A particular problem in human resources is that the technical departments are usually not involved in hiring decisions in their own departments.

The quality of reports received from the ARCS remains low. The national society urgently needs to develop a clear system for internal reporting and information management. The inspection department has responsibility for monitoring of activities of the national society in both headquarters and the branches but needs to clarify its role. Security constraints have meant the OD team could not monitor or support the branches as intensively as had been hoped.

The draft constitution requires approval from Geneva before it can be adopted; there is likely to be substantial further process before a new constitution is put into force and this would have secondary effects on advancing, such as membership issues.

5. Federation Coordination

Programme Goal: The Afghan Red Crescent Society develops sustainable capacity building and programming.

Programme Objective: The Federation has facilitated longer strategic partnerships between the national society and wider Movement and non-Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement partners.

Progress/Achievements

ARCS has defined its mission and vision which, amongst others, sets out its broad strategic goals. The branch assessment exercise of 2002, a consultancy review of headquarters, and the Federation Secretariat assessment of the health and OD programmes were central in the process of the visioning exercise. To accomplish its vision, the national society leadership appointed a commission which has been working to develop its long-term strategic plans to be discussed with international partners within the Federation's cooperation agreement strategy (CAS) mechanism. A draft plan has been submitted and is being translated. It will require further development though, and dissemination to the wider internal stakeholder audience.

A partnership meeting with PNS was held in Geneva in November 2003. The discussion was mainly on the programme strategy for 2004 and beyond, and the ARCS sought commitments for support. The national society leadership and senior staff, eight PNS representatives, ICRC, the delegation management and Federation Secretariat were among the participants.

The South Asia Secretaries-General meeting, held in Kabul in July 2003, reviewed progress of the implementation of the Movement strategy in the region. The CAS has helped to facilitate the national society's understanding of regional programme priorities such as disaster management, HIV/AIDS and population movement, including drawing on support from the other national societies in the sub-region.

A tripartite memorandum of understanding (MoU) final draft has been submitted to the Federation and ICRC Secretariat for endorsement, prior to being signed off at the field level. The MoU will provide a framework for long and medium-term planning and define the roles and responsibilities of the Movement components and the support to national society resources, in order to ensure the development and long-term sustainability of effective structures and programmes.

In line with the Federation's support strategy, bilateral annual programme agreements between the Federation and the ARCS were signed for 1 May to 31 December 2003. The previous agreement had expired on 30 April 2003. A separate agreement was signed for each programme area and harmonised with the 2003 appeal.

There was not much progress in negotiating a new tripartite core structure agreement as efforts were concentrated on finalising the tripartite MoU which is the overarching guiding framework for the agreement. This agreement defines the scope and level of Federation and ICRC financial support to the ARCS national headquarters and provincial branches, thus enabling all programme departments to efficiently and effectively deliver humanitarian services. The exercise to complete the new agreement will be undertaken in the first quarter of 2004.

Coordination continued to be a key undertaking in an effort to build strategic partnerships during the year. The ARCS has been engaged in dialogue with the Ministry of Health regarding the policies defined in the BPHS (referred to in the Health and Care section). The position of ARCS in the health sector is becoming clearer with the Ministry of Health recognising the complementary role of the national society. The ministry and the health consultancy group have now endorsed the services of the national society in the national plan and a protocol to this effect will be developed in 2004. In the meantime, the draft National Disaster Management Plan has been completed. It includes and articulates clear roles for the ARCS, the government and other partners. The draft will be discussed by cabinet and endorsed by the head of state.

The ARCS is involved in many regional initiatives facilitated or coordinated by SARD. The Secretaries-General meeting hosted by the ARCS in July, saw progress and consensus on a range of common issues, such as strategy development, human resource management, constitutional and legal bases as well as debate on other key challenges. By going through the progress of the implementation of the Movement strategy of each national society, the secretaries-general forum has contributed to the ARCS taking stock of the necessary action points to achieve the intended expected result; for instance, the national society develops a plan to implement the objectives and action points of the strategy of the Movement in line with the regional cooperation strategy.

The 2004 annual appeal was developed with a fully participatory process. Branch presidents, national society programme heads, field programme officers and management staff met for four days to commence the process. There was a follow-up two-day fine tuning meeting involving national society management, all Federation delegates, ICRC and the ARCS president. A further four-day workshop was deliberated on implementation planning following the appeal launch.

Impact

The CAS is still a work in progress so it is difficult to assess impact at this stage. It is anticipated it will help the national society to articulate in what areas it requires support and how its actions will fit into a broader and coordinated humanitarian effort to assist vulnerable Afghans. It will be a key tool in the Federation's efforts to coordinate the programming of various partners.

The partnership meeting helped the ARCS engage its partners in planning for new developments and assessing needs. It was also a step forward in securing future commitments.

The regional strategy will help the national society to be proactive in longer-term planning and have a better understanding of the Movement strategy, including prioritising its own objectives to serve the vulnerable in a more sustainable and systematic manner.

The MoU will lay the foundation for a coordinated approach to the intervention of the Movement components in Afghanistan and provide support to the national society.

Good coordination between the ICRC, the Federation and the ARCS is making a strong Movement presence in Afghanistan even more potent. Coordinated support to the national society is helping the ARCS deliver better services to the vulnerable communities it serves.

Strategic partnerships between the ARCS and other country-based, as well as international, organisations are helping the national society strengthen its position as a key humanitarian player in the country.

Constraints

Security, public sector reforms, political progress and the general stability situation in Afghanistan present major challenges for the national society in terms of long-term planning. The ARCS strategic planning process, though emerging, is nevertheless slow and still requires support from the Federation.

The national society's strategic understanding is still at the early stage of development and is not assisted by the complex, evolving political and security situation in Afghanistan. Ongoing Federation efforts and support is therefore necessary in increasing the ARCS' strategic capacity through facilitation, coaching, discussions, consultations and personal contacts with counterparts.

The signing of the MoU is overdue. The delay is justified on the one hand in order to have solid guiding document. However, the delay has affected the progress on the core structure agreement. In the absence of a new MoU, there is continued understanding that cooperation is based on the 2002 MoU which involves bilateral arrangements between the Federation and the ICRC and is complemented by a general tripartite agreement with the ARCS.

The ARCS, through effective programmes, is recognised as a credible partner in disaster response. It has a comparative advantage, through a national network of branches and volunteers, to forge partnerships with many willing national and international organisations as well as the government. However, the national society needs to fully understand the implications of taking advantage of the large national rebuilding efforts and seize on prevailing opportunities. The Federation will, therefore, continue to strengthen coordination with the UN and NGOs, as various international organisations - several hundred in Kabul alone - seek to optimise their support to vulnerable people.

6. International Representation

Programme Goal: The Federation and its policies are well known in the international arena.

Programme Objective: The Federation's role in Afghanistan as an effective coordinator of programmes in the core areas is maximised.

Progress/Achievements

In addition to constant efforts made by the delegation programme and management, the complementary liaison in March by the head of regional delegation in SARD made an enormous impact in putting international representation of the Federation at the top of the agenda. The efforts for higher visibility of the Federation and ARCS activities were followed by the decision to create a new liaison delegation position in October. This was reinforced by the high level visit of the Federation head of the Asia Pacific department in August who held discussions with several government ministers, representatives of international organisations and ambassadors. Although the country advocacy strategy has not been developed, good progress has been made in 2003.

After six months of negotiations, the Federation delegation signed a legal status agreement with the Afghanistan Transitional Government (ATG) on 8 October, 2003. This agreement will enable the Federation to be more influential when dealing at government and diplomatic levels.

The Federation has become a member of the consultative groups of the ATG which consists of various ministries, major donors and international organisations. The health department attends weekly meetings of the consultative group in health and nutrition while playing an important role in the emergency health preparedness task force. A government initiative to incorporate humanitarian agencies into the government policy framework was strongly pursued in 2003. The Federation's disaster preparedness department and the ARCS have fostered a productive relationship with the Government Office of Disaster Preparedness which coordinates 12 key ministries in the sector. Individual meetings were held with the Deputy Ministers of Education and Planning as part of developing contact with the government in order to increase the Federation's profile and highlight ARCS activities.

The ARCS continues to produce and distribute to the general public a bi-monthly newsletter and a quarterly magazine to disseminate Red Crescent messages. The Federation produced a comprehensive brochure of Federation supported ARCS programmes and distributed this to donors and the humanitarian community. Numerous articles about the national society were produced and made available in public via the Federation's website. A 14-minute ARCS video was produced and contact with national television was initiated at the end of the year to explore new areas for promotion of the national society.

The Federation attended the Afghan Development Forum in Kabul in March. This was a crucial meeting as a follow-up to the Tokyo Meeting in 2002 with very senior attendance from 12 key countries plus the World Bank, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) as well major donors and UN agencies. The delegation regularly attended the UNAMA's weekly emergency task force meeting, ACBAR coordination meetings, and ICRC team meetings. A number of meetings took place with ECHO, WHO, DFID, EC and sister Red Cross societies such as the Norwegian, British, Danish, American and Japanese Red Cross Societies. Networking was facilitated through frequent consultations with UNAMA, and bilateral meetings with key players in Afghanistan including international organisations and donor governments.

Bilateral meetings with the country director of the ADB took place in November to discuss cooperation between the two institutions. The ADB is willing to develop relations with the Federation/ARCS.

The ARCS work is mainly supported by the Federation and the ICRC. However extensive meetings are held with other donors such as ECHO, EU, the Swiss Agency for Development and the Japanese embassy in Kabul.

Impact

Effective networking with the national authorities helps the ARCS better position itself as an auxiliary to secure government support.

The visibility and credibility of the Red Crescent as an important humanitarian actor and partner is being increased and improved.

The ARCS has stronger links with key UN and international agencies to better coordinate humanitarian activities, thus avoiding duplications and providing adequate, more effective support to vulnerable groups.

Networking with new stakeholders is enabling the ARCS to become known among key development partners for Afghanistan who could be the basis for new partnerships and long-term cooperation.

The donor base is being diversified which will help ensure sustainability of programmes and services to vulnerable Afghans.

Constraints

The ARCS still needs to further build capacity to effectively represent the voice of vulnerable Afghans at various local, regional and international levels. The national society needs to demonstrate more vigorously its added value as a nationwide, indigenous, community-based organisation by meeting the humanitarian challenges in Afghanistan and through its unique role as a community representative in Afghanistan's emerging post-war civil society. Its profile needs to be lifted locally.

There are no major constraints in terms of advocacy material. However measures for advocacy should be explored further and diversified.

More contact and better coordination is required. The Federation will be assisting the ARCS in developing a communications strategy which will help strengthen links with other humanitarian actors in the country and advocate more vociferously on behalf of the vulnerable.

The complex political climate, as well as prevailing security problems, hinder transparent and accurate analysis of the resources of the national society across the country. Accountability systems are yet to be developed.