

AFGHANISTAN: ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME

23 December 1998

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situation report no. 2

period covered: 1 OCTOBER - 30 NOVEMBER

ARCS health services were provided to a total of 126,659 patients in October. Training of health and disaster preparedness volunteers continued. Small relief stockpiles have been set up. The arrival of an Institutional Development delegate will boost efforts to reinforce ARCS structures.

The context

Winter has brought temperatures below freezing most nights and from 8 - 10 degrees during the day throughout the country. Normal snowfall has occurred at higher elevations. No significant levels of winter related health problems have been identified nor have any natural disasters hit. Internal strife goes on, especially in the northern region where the balance of power is continually shifting. Some population movement has been noted from this area but increased humanitarian aid has not been required.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Integrated Community Health Programme •

A three-day medical co-ordinators meeting was held in mid-November. A dozen people from the Afghanistan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) and the International Federation Delegation participated. The main agenda item was planning for an increased level of integration of the community based first aid (CBFA) and disaster preparedness (CBDP) programmes. This was the first meeting where CBFA participated and this inclusion will become the norm.

Disease patterns were normal during this reporting period, but the number of patients has increased due to the impact of the withdrawal of NGOs during the summer and the collapsed health care system.

TYPE OF ACTIVITY	PATIENTS RECEIVING SERVICES
Medical cases treated	71,413
Health education - in group sessions	27,089
Health education - individual sessions	12,848
Laboratory tests	2,164

Vaccination - ages 12 - 24 months	2,515
Tetanus toxoid vaccination - pregnant women	970
Tetanus toxoid vaccination - other women	2,432
Vitamin A for children 0 - 2 years	2,508
TOTAL PATIENT CONTACTS - OCTOBER	126,659

The Federation medical staff in Kabul, with specialised training in reproductive health care, are overseeing the enhancement of the mother-child health (MCH) component in the clinics as well as continuing training of traditional birth attendants (TBA) who then take their skills back to the local communities. TBA training was held in the Kabul region during this reporting period.

Following the newly designed procedures, monitoring of the health clinics continues in all regions.

During the first week of October the new Health Co-ordinator arrived in Kabul and has since made several visits to ARCS branches and clinics in Jalalabad, Kabul, and Herat regions.

The Health Delegate focusing on MCH concluded her mission in November.

The 200 medical kits which provide approximately four months supplies for the clinics are due to arrive this month (approximate value CHF 240,000).

Community Based First Aid component (CBFA) •

Volunteer training continued in all regions. In Herat follow-up meetings were held with three groups of trained volunteers who received first aid supplies after submitting activity reports. The classes in Kandahar, Herat, and Kabul were much bigger than usual due to extra efforts to ensure that the target set for 1998 was reached. The trainer's and supervisor's quarterly meeting to review 1998 and discuss implementation of the 1999 Plan of Action is scheduled for this month. A CBFA competition at the group and district level is being prepared. This will be a competitive forum where questions are posed to teams and individuals on first aid, health education, history of the Movement, and other topics related to CBFA. The goal is to further improve the quality of services by increasing team spirit, motivating learning, and educating the volunteers in a friendly exchange.

CBFA	Kabul	Jalalabad	Herat	Kandahar	Mazar*	TOTAL
Volunteers Oct-Nov	121	49	54	60	0	284
To date Volunteers	285	224	230	106	0	845
To date Trainers	7	2	2	2	1	14

*TRAINING BEGINS IN DECEMBER

Disaster Preparedness/Community Based Disaster Preparedness (CBDP) •

A three-day training programme for ARCS and Federation staff from the five regions, including headquarters, has been developed and will be held in mid-December. A senior officer from the Federation Secretariat DP unit will participate as a resource person. Several other workshops will follow at the regional level for staff and volunteers from the branches.

The Norwegian Red Cross provided two rubble halls to the ARCS/Federation. One will be erected in Kandahar and the other in Kabul, and both will be utilised for storage. With the exception of Kandahar, non-food items, including tents, blankets, cooking sets, jerry cans, plastic sheeting, etc. have been repositioned. The ARCS will use these small stockpiles in local disasters. Due to the insecurity in Mazar, additional stocks will be repositioned as the situation permits.

The new CBDP Delegate from the Sudan Red Crescent Society (sponsored by the Netherlands RC) arrived in early October. He since surveyed three of the five regions in addition to planning the December workshop. Regular meetings with his counterpart from the ARCS have begun with a focus on strengthening the fragile ARCS DP section.

Institutional Development (ID) •

An ID Delegate arrived during the third week of October. This new position will focus on strengthening ARCS structures at the headquarters, regional, and branch level. Close co-operation with his ICRC counterpart has been established. The Federation has the lead role in national society development for the Movement in Afghanistan. During the reporting period, the Federation and ICRC reviewed the different types of support provided the ARCS by both institutions. Additional streamlining is planned for 1999. Meetings and training programmes have been planned to begin in late January after Ramadan. Branch profiles and branch assessments will be undertaken using a uniform format to gather data throughout the country.

Capacity building and improved communication with the ARCS will be prioritised. Within the ARCS, staff changes continue, again disrupting continuity of programmes through the loss of experienced staff. Discussions with the ARCS are in progress at departmental levels on a detailed programme agreement for 1999.

Outstanding needs

A Health Delegate with a strong background in maternal and child health is urgently needed. Please refer to the list of positions for details.

Funding support for the last quarter of 1998 and for all of 1999 is required. Further information on programmes next year is presented in the Federation's 1999 Emergency Appeal.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

Conclusion

The development of an integrated health system and efforts to reinforce ARCS structures are continuing, despite an extremely difficult operational context.

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