

AFGHANISTAN: HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

23 October 2000

*appeal no. 01.21/2000
situation report no. 6
period covered: 1 July - 30 September 2000*

Substantial progress has been made over the quarter in the health programme with the strengthening of maternal and child health care through the decision to introduce an ante natal service in all Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) clinics and a post natal service in selected clinics. Construction work in Samangan and Kunduz clinics is progressing well. 838 volunteers were trained during the quarter through the CBFA programme and the institutional and resource development programme has focused on income-generating projects and a review of ARCS internal systems. However, the drought operation has been hampered by lack of human resources and the disaster preparedness programme by funding constraints.

The context

More than 20 years of conflict have ruined Afghanistan's economy and reduced the living conditions of most of its 20 million population to a bare subsistence level. Afghanistan has the lowest child survival rate and the second highest maternal mortality rate in the world. Only 69.9% of its children survive until the age of five and the average life span is 44 years. The Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) is struggling to maintain its ability to work with all ethnic groups and to reach women through its services. In the present chronic conflict situation, the ICRC is the lead agency, while the Federation takes the lead role in strengthening the ARCS structures and delivering humanitarian services through them. The Federation's objectives are as follows:

- to improve the overall health of the people lacking access to health care, with a special emphasis on services for women and children and reaching those living in remote villages and poor urban areas.
- to strengthen ARCS's disaster response systems and increase individual and community abilities to prepare for and cope with disaster situations.
- to strengthen ARCS's capacity to effectively manage programmes, to develop local resources with special focus on the grassroots level, and to re-establish its governance.
- to strengthen understanding of the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement in Afghanistan.

Latest events

Throughout the reporting period, intense fighting took place in the northern province of Takhar between the Taliban forces and the opposition, with the Taliban militia capturing strategic towns and districts and cutting off vital supply lines for the forces of Northern Alliance commander, Ahmad Shah Masood. On 6 September the Taliban took over Taloqan, previously a stronghold of the Northern Alliance. Fighting is also reported in other districts such as Samangan (north-west) and Dar-i-noor district (east). In July there were several bomb blasts in Kabul and in early September a bomb exploded in Jalalabad. In early August, 7 Afghan de-miners working for a UN-funded de-miners organisation were killed in Herat province. The Taliban authorities issued a decree in July banning women from working in local or international NGOs, causing the temporary closure of WFP bakeries for a few days and triggering intense discussions between UN officials and Taliban authorities. Also, in mid-August, the Taliban closed 23 remaining public baths in Kabul. An earthquake, measuring 6.2 on Richter scale, was felt in Kabul, Jalalabad and Peshawar on 18 July, killing two people in Peshawar, although limited damage was reported. A small flood was reported in Kunar province, damaging several houses and agricultural lands. For the first time the Taliban celebrated the country's independence day on 18 August 2000. There is a possibility of imposition of new sanctions by the UN Security Council and the UN has conducted a survey on the impact of sanctions already in force as of November 1999.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Health Programme •

Health Clinic Data

A total of 1,267,282 health consultations took place from 1 January to 31 August. It should be noted that this figure includes data from an average of 46 of the 48 clinics only. Women and children under the age of 15 form over 80% of the total beneficiary group.

Strengthening maternal and child health care

During an ARCS/Federation health officers' meeting held in Kabul from 25 - 27 July, it was decided to provide ante natal services in all ARCS clinics with appropriate staff, which was available to date in only four of the ARCS clinics. It was further decided to initiate child-growth monitoring for children up to 5 years of age, which is currently carried out in four clinics. Birth spacing activities will continue in sixteen clinics, with only limited expansion for the time being. In view of these decisions, ante and post natal care, child-growth monitoring and birth spacing activities were initiated in Badghis clinic and necessary medical equipment and tools as well as contraceptives provided.

In Jalalabad ante and post natal care services were added in the clinic. The ARCS recruited a female MCH supervisor as counterpart to the Federation MCH delegate. Five new midwives were identified to become traditional birth attendant (TBA) trainers in Logar, Qayak, Badghis and Samangan. Two

new midwives from Samangan have been recruited, whereas the midwives from the other clinics were selected from the existing staff. The midwives from Logar and Qayak have been co-facilitators in a TBA refreshment course in Ghazni's Shams clinic as part of the training of trainers (ToT) initiative. The female doctor and midwife from ARCS Badghis clinic received a one week training course in MCH at the ARCS Herat clinic. Finally, ARCS in Mazar-i-Sharif is in the process of recruiting five additional midwives. In Ghazni, 35 TBAs received a 10-day refreshment course in August. The training of 40 TBAs started in June in Herat and Mazar-i-Sharif and was completed early July. This brings the total of TBAs countrywide to 144. Another 17 TBAs have been selected in Logar. Between January and August, ARCS TBAs countrywide assisted in 525 deliveries, distributed 465 clean delivery kits and registered 945 pregnant women. 9,437 females received contraceptives.

The Federation MCH delegate visited various clinics in Kabul, Logar, Ghazni and Qayak to monitor the different MCH services. In Ghazni's Shams clinic, various problems were identified and addressed, including supervision of and reporting by TBAs.

Clinic Supplies and Construction

Medicine kits were supplied to all 48 ARCS clinics, except to Dari-noor clinic in the eastern region which could not be reached because of fighting, following which the clinic was re-located over the frontline. Kits for two months were distributed to Kapisa and Parwan clinics. Most clinics also received stationery kits and reference reading materials. The construction work in the clinics located in Samangan and Kunduz: 2 additional rooms and a bathroom for the female section within the framework of the expansion of maternal and child health care services was 50 per cent completed by the end of the month. The construction work for Kunduz clinic was made possible through a significant contribution from the community. An agreement to construct three additional rooms and one toilet for MCH in Logar was signed at the end of September and proposals for renovation or construction work are under review for clinics in Zabul, Kandahar, Helmand, Qayak, Jalalabad and Laghman.

Vaccination

WHO, Kabul, requested the Federation to identify at least 10 acute flaccid paralysis (AFP) surveillance sites in ARCS clinics. Identification of appropriate sites has been initiated as well as training for respective health personnel from selected clinics which was started in late September and early October. Consultations are held in all regions with WHO and UNICEF in preparation for the National Immunisation Days (NID).

Training

The ARCS/Federation health training team, established in May for the central region, conducted a one-day training session on clinic based micro planning in Kabul for a total 6 male doctors from 6 clinics. The same one-day training was conducted separately for 8 female doctors from these clinics in Kabul. In Mazar-i-Sharif, another medical workshop for 13 male doctors from 13 clinics was held in September. Unfortunately, the clinic doctors from Faizabad and Taloqan could not participate because of security constraints. Topics included clinic based micro planning, human resource management, the importance of preventive health care in relation to curative care, hepatitis and epidemiology. Training in the other three regions is scheduled for September and October.

Monitoring

Regular monthly monitoring visits to most clinics were carried out during the reporting period, with the exception of clinics located in Kapisa, Parwan, Dari-noor, Faizabad and Takhar which could not be reached for security reasons. Ghor and Farah will be visited in the next reporting period. In July, a team composed of one field officer, two field delegates and the health co-ordinator visited the remote clinic in Nooristan - a one day trip on foot. The aim of the trip was to determine the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of this ARCS clinic. After the completion of the assessment expected towards the end of the year, a decision will be made as to whether the support for this clinic will be continued. The health coordinator visited clinics in Hairatan, Balkh, Sherbigan, Sar-i-Pul and the clinics in Mazar: MJM, Central and Ariana.

Disaster Response Programme •

Drought

In early August, the first of the mobile health teams started its activity in Zabul province, one of the worst drought hit provinces. Over two and a half weeks, the team received 720 patients, of whom 274 were women and 282 were children under 15, in 6 districts of Zabul. The team was composed of one male doctor, a nurse, a pharmacist, a driver and a female nurse and her maharam (blood relative). Cultural constraints in this highly conservative area caused some difficulties for the female staff and maharam, as inhabitants are not accustomed to female health staff. It has been extremely difficult for the ARCS to find trained female Pashtu speaking health staff. The second mobile health team made preparatory visits to different districts in Kandahar, following which it started its activities at the end of September. The staff of this team is composed of one male doctor, a male and female nurse, one pharmacist and a driver. The third team will begin its activities in early October.

In September, the ARCS, with support from the Federation and the ICRC, assisted 936 displaced families affected by drought (4,680 individuals) with shelter material including tents (Federation) and food (ICRC). These families have fled mostly from Ghor and Badghis provinces. Additional assessments are underway at the end of the month to identify needs of new arrivals, following which the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement will jointly determine its assistance strategy.

As of the end of September, 183 volunteers have been trained in 9 districts in both Helmand and Zabul provinces. The number of training teams has been expanded to six teams (12 trainers) of which two are in Zabul, two are in Nimrooz, one is in Helmand and one is in Uruzgan province. As soon as training is completed, the emergency volunteer training programme can be further accelerated. Following discussions with the ICRC, the ARCS recruited two additional trainers for Ghor province, while re-allocating one additional training team from Herat on a temporary basis. The volunteers that these teams can train until winter makes valleys in Ghor inaccessible, will be able to provide services such as basic health and first aid in this severely affected area, while providing necessary assistance in food and non-food distributions initiated by the ICRC. Some 1,000 bales of used clothes will be shipped from Mazar-i-Sharif to Herat and will be placed at the disposal of the ICRC for the operation in Ghor. Two Federation field officers have been assigned to Ghor to assist in the assessment, registration of and distribution to the beneficiaries.

Major constraints were the re-allocation by the ARCS of human resources to an emergency food distribution in the southern provinces. Problems have been posed by the delays in the recruitment of additional delegates that have been requested in order to support the implementation of the plan of action.

Floods

A joint ARCS/Federation team left in early October for Kunar to assess the impact of a minor flood which occurred in late September. An initial report from ARCS Kunar branch indicated that 60 houses were damaged of which 20 were completely destroyed.

Development Programmes •

Community Based First Aid Programme

A total of 838 volunteers, covering 855 villages were trained during July, August and September. They were recruited from 18 districts of all 5 regions in Afghanistan. This brings the total number of volunteers trained this year to 1,568, or 63% of the annual target. Efforts to make up for the delays in the recruitment and training of volunteers caused by the late signing of the programme agreement and harvesting and drought related activities, are proving fruitful. The new volunteers received a first aid bag and a Dari or Pashtu manual after their training.

Trained volunteers have, in their turn, trained 61 female and 23 male family members in both Balkh and Kabul provinces. The aim of training female volunteers -through their male relatives- is to improve

assistance to women in local communities. Follow-up meetings have been held with 180 volunteer groups in all regions, in which 3,396 volunteers participated. During these follow-up meetings first aid bags are refilled, as needed. A large number of the volunteers received refreshment courses on topics such as hygiene and sanitation, bleeding, mine-awareness, vaccination, burns and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. As of the end of September, 138 follow-up meetings have been held with 330 course groups or 6,093 volunteers.

Aimed at motivating trained volunteers and promoting regional skills and knowledge, competitions were held at provincial and regional level. The volunteers who scored best in the tests have been invited to compete at the national competition scheduled in early October in Kabul.

Based on the activity reports received from all the regions, volunteers handled 10,843 cases, varying from the provision of first aid, referral to hospitals or other health facilities and giving of advice in their respective villages. The total number of cases reported this year is 18,142, but this is far from complete since it is impossible to collect all reports. The cases reported include fractures, bleeding, diarrhoea, burns, the common cold, animal bites, food poisoning and mine injuries. Volunteers also continue to report on the effects of the drought.

- In Kama and Shirzad districts in Nangahar province, volunteers advised how to prepare ORS and flour-salt solutions to prevent possible dehydration in the event of diarrhoea.
- In Chemtal district in Balkh province, 3 volunteers took active part in the reconstruction of 3 small bridges in their respective villages.

In Kabul province alone, volunteers carried out dissemination activities for 495 individuals on topics such as basic health, mine-awareness and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

To enhance the understanding of ARCS branches on volunteer work, the role of CBFA in the sustainable development of the ARCS and to strengthen the link between volunteers, CBFA and the branches, in September two regional workshops were held in Mazar-i-Sharif and Kabul. Senior representatives from the ARCS branches in Logar, Wardak, Ghazni, Samangan and Balkh participated and were invited to participate.

A planning meeting for all ARCS regional supervisors and trainers was held from 15 to 18 July in Kabul. The topics discussed included: annual appeal planning, the 2001 programme description, budgeting and the progress of the programme in the last six months. All trainers were reminded of the objectives for the current year, including the need to enhance female volunteer training and linkage of the volunteers to existing health facilities including those run by the ARCS.

Youth programme

In Mazar-i-Sharif, 31 volunteer teachers have been trained in first-aid, basic health, mine-awareness and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and will start teaching once schools re-open after the holidays. In Herat province, 46 volunteer teachers from 23 schools have been identified. In Kabul and Jalalabad, monitoring of the training programme has taken place in those schools where it has been introduced.

Disaster Preparedness Programme

The ARCS community based disaster preparedness (CBDP) supervisors' meeting was held from 14 to 19 August. The delay was caused as most supervisors were called upon to assist the ARCS in their 2,100 Mt food distribution in the drought affected areas. The meeting dealt with topics such as CBDP training guidelines, the disaster preparedness plan at regional and national level, and the recommendations of the CBDP review team which visited Afghanistan in November 1999. Progress of the programme was hampered by the lack of sufficient funds.

Institutional and Resource Development Programme

In view of the objective of the Institutional and Resource Development Programme to enhance the knowledge of the ARCS staff, in early July, the ARCS development unit, with support from the

Federation, started a computer training course for 25 ARCS headquarters staff. The planned English language classes for 25 ARCS headquarters staff have been postponed given difficulties relating to the course location and delays in the procurement of class materials. From 30 July to 2 August the 6th National Society leadership workshop was organised in Kabul by the ARCS development unit in co-operation with the Federation. This workshop aimed at increasing basic RC/RC knowledge and awareness of 35 new staff who had joined the ARCS since the change of leadership in February 2000.

In July and August, much effort was put into the preparation of the Country Assistance Strategy (CAS) workshop scheduled for 2 - 5 September. A preparatory questionnaire was sent to all branches and was reviewed by an ARCS CAS-commission. The CAS 2000 documents and Strategy 2010 were translated into the Afghan languages. Unfortunately, the workshop was postponed since the regional institutional development delegate who was to facilitate the workshop was not in a position to attend.

The Logar branch revenue generation project, the bakery, made profits of approximately USD 203 over the last three months. Ghazni branch completed the construction of 4 shops and submitted a final report. All 4 shops were rented out by end of September. Bamyan branch purchased three cows for the husbandry project and started the production of milk. The first reported net-profit was however very low, due to high price of fodder (alfalfa). The bakery in Paktia branch started production. Close monitoring will be ensured during the first three months during which these projects are being launched. The Khost branch wheelbarrow project has been approved and will be initiated in October. Following the introduction in the eastern region, the first project proposals have been received from Kunar and Lagman branches. The Head of ARCS development unit and Federation ID field officer visited three ARCS branches in the northern region at the end of September. During these visits, small workshops with key ARCS staff were held on resource development strategies, while introducing income generation methodology. Finally, Kabul headquarters submitted a carpentry project proposal which is under review.

The proposal for the reintroduction of a membership system in the ARCS prepared by the ARCS development unit was reviewed by the Federation head of delegation and institutional development delegate and revisions made. The reintroduction of a membership system falls under the objective to increase understanding of governance and management principles and practices in the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement.

The Federation finance development officer paid a visit to all the branches in the central region to review financial reporting and accounting practices following the implementation of co-operation agreements with the ARCS in March 2000. Results were satisfactory as regards reporting on the Federation and ICRC programme activities and on the core structure. However, it was noted that the internal ARCS accounting system was not practised. It is clear that in the coming year major efforts need to be made within ARCS to design a uniform practical internal accounting system, as well as to provide training to branch administrators. The objective of improving ARCS financial management systems therefore remains a challenge.

During the month of July, the ARCS leadership, helped by its advisory board, developed a new staff grading system, and re-graded all current positions in the ARCS accordingly. Thus, a fair and uniform system has been introduced countrywide. The ICRC and the Federation accepted to increase the incentive levels of ARCS staff, in line with recommendations of several review missions in 1999: health, CBFA, CBDP, and taking into account the depreciation of the Afghani over the last years. It is hoped that this will be a positive impetus for all staff that are working hard in the respective programmes.

Outstanding needs

In respect of funding for the programmes in Afghanistan, clarification on the outstanding pledges is required. Additional funds are urgently needed for disaster preparedness stocks.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

In early September, meetings were held with 8 donors and Embassies in Islamabad to provide information on the Federation's activities, humanitarian concerns and progress as regards the programmes in Afghanistan. At the end of September, a joint ICRC and Federation donors' meeting was held on the Movement's approach to the drought situation, activities carried out to date and further response planned. This meeting was followed by a joint ICRC and Federation co-ordination meeting with UN agencies in Islamabad. Finally, both in Kabul and Herat Federation staff had the opportunity to meet representatives from the Swiss Co-operation Department. The Federation field delegate based in Mazar-i-Sharif received a Danish and Norwegian television team. A spot was made on ARCS MCH activities at the MJM clinic and an interview was conducted with the Federation field delegate in both English and Danish.

Contributions

See Annex 1 for details.

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This and other reports on Federation operations are available on the Federation's website: <http://www.ifrc.org>

Afghanistan						ANNEX 1
APPEAL No. 01.21/2000		PLEDGES RECEIVED			10/23/00	
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
CASH						
REQUESTED IN APPEAL CHF ----->				7,576,000		TOTAL COVERAGE 56.6%
Cash carried forward from 1999				2,320,495		
AMERICAN - RC				13,800	28.07.00	CONTRACT EXTENSION FOR 3 MONTHS FOR FIELD DELEGATE
AMERICAN - RC				50,900	28.07.00	SALARY & MISSION COST 12 MONTHS FOR FIELD DELEGATE
BRITISH - RC		30,000	GBP	77,700	19.01.00	HEALTH CLINIC PROG. KITS PURCHA.
ICELANDIC - RC		500,000	ISK	11,209	30.03.00	
JAPANESE - RC		12,000,000	JPY	188,736	26.06.00	
KUWAIT - RC		2,440	KWD	12,626	15.05.00	
NETHERLANDS - RC				30,900	18.01.00	DELEGATE
NORWEGIAN - RC				22,000	23.06.00	DELEGATION CORE COSTS FOR HOD
NORWEGIAN - GOVT/RC		2,178,649	NOK	414,691	20.09.00	ID & RD/DP, HEALTH, ID/RD DELEGATE
NORWEGIAN - GOVT/RC		496,607	NOK	94,526	20.09.00	HOD COSTS, ID/RD DELEGATE
SWEDISH - GOVT		2,800,000	SEK	527,240	29.05.00	HEALTH PROGRAM - CLINIC SUPPORT
SWEDISH - GOVT		600,000	SEK	112,980	29.05.00	CBFA / YOUTH
SWEDISH - RC		120,000	SEK	22,596	29.05.00	CONTRIBUTION FOR HOD/ DELEGATION CORE COSTS
UNFPA		18,349	USD	31,193	22.06.00	20'000 CLEAN DELIVERY KITS & TRANSPORT TO KABUL
UNFPA		2,437	USD	4,143	22.06.00	100 TBA KITS & TRANSPORT TO KABUL
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN CASH				3,935,735	CHF	52.0%
KIND AND SERVICES (INCLUDING PERSONNEL)						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
Belgium	Delegate(s)			30,061		
Denmark	Delegate(s)			60,123		
Japan	Delegate(s)			40,410		
Netherlands	Delegate(s)			99,055		
Sweden	Delegate(s)			40,246		
SWISS - GOVT/RC				36,300	19.07.00	LOGISTICS DELEGATE
USA	Delegate(s)			45,174		
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED IN KIND/SERVICES				351,369	CHF	4.6%
ADDITIONAL TO APPEAL BUDGET						
DONOR	CATEGORY	QUANTITY	UNIT	VALUE CHF	DATE	COMMENT
SUB/TOTAL RECEIVED				0	CHF	
THE FOLLOWING PROJECTS ARE LINKED TO THIS APPEAL:						
PAF000, PAF004, PAF006, PAF160, PAF503, PAF506						