

AFGHANISTAN: HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE

20 December
2000

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period covered: 1 - 31 October 2000*

As of 30 September, 1,440,709 health consultations have been held at the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) clinics. The actual figure is considerably higher since statistics are available from 46 of the 48 clinics only. During the period, the mobile health teams carried out essential work to help vulnerable people affected by drought and 64 families received assistance following floods in Kunar at the end of September. ARCS volunteers played a key role during the National Immunization Days between 10 and 12 October through both health education messages and carrying out vaccination of children. Current funding levels stand at 56.6 per cent only and further contributions are vital in order to continue successful programme implementation.

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 October fighting continued between the Taliban forces and the opposition, especially in the northern province of Takhar, with the opposition Northern Alliance reportedly regaining some territories lost in the previous month's strife. The warring parties agreed to a three day cease-fire for the National Immunisation Days against poliomyelitis scheduled for 10-12 October.

In the western city of Herat, internally displaced people continued to arrive mainly from Ghor and Badghis provinces, fleeing their residential areas as a result of drought. Meanwhile, reports indicate that more people are moving towards Pakistan from different parts of northern and northeastern Afghanistan.

On 5 October a bomb went off overnight inside the Communications' Ministry in the centre of Kabul, shattering windows but causing no casualties. In Kandahar, at the central police office, an explosion injured some people and caused damage to the premises.

Following a decree from the Taliban's Supreme Leader banning poppy cultivation, the Taliban authorities are reported to have destroyed heroin laboratories and to have warned farmers that poppy cultivation may risk imprisonment and fines.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Health Programme •

Health clinics data

A total of 1,440,709 health services were provided from 1 January to 30 September. It should be noted that this figure includes statistics from an average of 46 of the 48 clinics only. Women and children under age of 15 form over 80% of the total beneficiary group.

Strengthening maternal and child health care

A training of trainers' (ToT) course was held in Kabul from 7 to 12 October for five new midwives. These midwives will become traditional birth attendant (TBA) trainers in Logar, Qayak, Badghis and Samangan. The six day course was provided with technical assistance from the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) during the morning sessions, while experienced ARCS midwives from Ghazni, Herat and Mazar-i-Sharif conducted the afternoon sessions. The ToT course was followed by a three-day refresher course for midwives and the ARCS maternal and child health care (MCH) supervisor, conducted by SCA.

On 24 and 25 October, eight female doctors from eight clinics in Kabul participated in a two-day MCH workshop. Another two-day MCH workshop started on 31 October for eight female nurses/midwives.

In Logar, 20 TBAs started their first course on 22 October which was conducted by the newly trained midwife from ARCS clinic in Logar, with assistance from the ToT trained midwife from Ghazni. Ante and post natal care and child-growth monitoring were initiated in six clinics in the northern region (in Balkh and Samangan provinces) and necessary medical equipment and tools provided. In Jalalabad, female child monitoring has begun, in addition to ante and post natal care which was added in September.

Between January and September, the ARCS trained TBAs countrywide and assisted with 701 deliveries, distributed 515 clean delivery kits, registered 1,200 pregnant women and provided 10,379 women with contraceptives.

The Federation MCH delegate and ARCS MCH Supervisor visited various clinics in Kabul and Logar to monitor the different MCH services. No further monitoring could be carried out as a result of the workshops held in Kabul.

Clinic staffing, supplies and running costs

A supply of medicine kits was made to all 48 ARCS clinics. Two additional kits were sent to the ARCS in Badakhshan and Takhar. After the fighting in September in Takhar and the capture of Taloqan city by the Taliban, a monitoring visit was made to ARCS Takhar. The team consisted of the Federation field delegate and the Federation/ARCS regional health officers.

The construction work on the clinics located in Samangan and Kunduz was in the final stages at the end of October. The construction of three additional rooms and one toilet for MCH in Logar has started, while the ARCS branch decided to add one more room from its own resources. Other proposals for renovation work are pending for clinics in Zabul, Kandahar, Helmand Qayak, Jalalabad and Laghman. The order of an additional 350 medical kits (45 for the drought programme), funded partly by the Japanese government and the British Red Cross, has now been placed.

Vaccination

Following consultations in all regions with WHO and UNICEF in preparation for the National Immunisation Days (NID), all vaccinators from 34 ARCS clinics participated in the NID from 10 to 12 October. Federation field offices in Mazar-i-Sharif, Herat and Jalalabad further provided logistics support to the immunisation campaign. Additionally, ARCS community based first aid volunteers in some of the regions were involved in mobilising women and children for vaccination and in some cases carried out vaccination themselves.

General Training

Two female nurses from the ARCS clinic in Herat, the ARCS regional CBFA supervisor, one CBFA trainer and the ARCS regional health officer participated in two two-day workshops on TBA and village health volunteers in Herat, organised by Christian Aid.

Monitoring

Regular monthly monitoring visits to most clinics have been carried out. The Federation health coordinator and the recently arrived health delegate for the drought operation visited Zabul mobile clinic, and made an assessment trip to Uruzgan together with a newly established mobile health team. Plans are underway for a monitoring trip to ARCS clinic in Badakhshan, the only clinic which has yet to be visited during the year 2000 by Federation health staff.

Community Based First Aid

A total of 378 volunteers, covering 372 villages were trained during October. They were recruited from 11 districts of all 5 regions in Afghanistan. This brings the total number of trained volunteers this year to 1,946, or 78% of the annual target. The new volunteers received a first aid bag and a Dari or Pashtu manual after their training. An overview of volunteers trained so far, cumulative to 31 October and excluding family members and volunteers recruited under the drought programme, is given below:

	Provinces	Districts	Villages	Volunteers
Eastern region	2	19	1,078	1,081
Central region	4	21	1,933	1,792
Western region	2	6	1,057	1,062
Northern region	3	11	817	874
Southern region	2	6	549	560
Totals	13	63	5,434	5,369

Trained volunteers have trained 162 female and 168 male family members in both Ghazni and Herat 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 57 volunteer groups in all regions with the exception of the northern region, and a total of 1,092 volunteers took part. During these follow-up meetings, first aid bags were refilled, as required. A large number of volunteers received refresher courses on topics such as hygiene and sanitation, fractures, bleeding, shock, mine-awareness and the importance of vaccination. As of 31 October, 168 follow-up meetings had been held with 387 course groups. Finally, from 21 to 25 October a four-day workshop was held with 39 volunteer group leaders from 12 districts in the central region. Topics included the history of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, disaster preparedness and response, how to lead a team and reporting.

Aimed at motivating trained volunteers, the second National Skill and Knowledge Competition was held in early October. This followed similar competitions held in September at provincial and regional level. The volunteers competed in first aid, ARCS history, the fundamental principles, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, health education.

Based on the activity reports received by the end of October, volunteers in the eastern, central and western regions handled 3,176 cases, varying from the provision of first aid, referral to hospitals or other health facilities and giving advice in their respective villages. The total number of cases reported this year is 21,318, but this figure is far from complete due to difficulties in collecting all reports. The cases reported are made up mostly of fractures, bleeding, diarrhoea, burns and fewer common cold, animal bites, food poisoning and mine injuries.

On the occasion of the National Immunisation Days (NID) from 10 to 12 October, volunteers in the various regions participated actively in mobilising women and children for vaccination and carrying out immunisation. 247 volunteers in Kabul, Ghazni and Wardak provinces vaccinated 12,528 children. In Herat's districts Enjeel, Gulran, Shindand and Gozara, ARCS volunteers encouraged 7,018 mothers to send their children for vaccination, and as a result, 6,597 children came forward to vaccination centres where the volunteers themselves immunised 1,056 children. Finally, ARCS CBFA volunteers participated in the NID in Nadi-Ali, Marja, Nawa and Khanishin districts in Helmand.

To enhance the understanding of ARCS branches concerning volunteer work, the role of CBFA in sustainable development of the ARCS, and to strengthen the link between volunteers, CBFA and the branches, 3 one-day workshops were held in October in the eastern region. Senior representatives from the ARCS branches in Nangahar, Laghman and Kunar participated and were invited and encouraged to participate in the different aspects of the programme, training sessions, graduation ceremonies and monitoring.

Youth programme •

In Kabul, 40 volunteer teachers have been identified from 20 schools and their training will commence in November. ARCS supervisors paid follow-up and monitoring visits to schools in Kabul, Jalalabad and Mazar. A football competition was organised in 12 schools in Kabul.

Disaster Response Programme_●

Drought

By the end of October, three of five planned mobile health teams were active in Zabul, Kandahar and Uruzgan provinces. The fourth team commenced its activities in early November in Farah province. Farah was not initially one of the provinces in which the mobile health team would be active. The assignment to Farah followed recommendations from an assessment carried out by ICRC's nutritionist and hydrogeologist and Federation field officers to that province. The fifth team can only be made operational once an additional land cruiser reaches Afghanistan. As of the end of October, the mobile health teams had treated 6,980 patients: 17% were children under 5 years of age, 26% were between 5 and 14, 23% were male adults and 34% female adults. Mobile health services have so far been provided in 10 districts. Of the same group of beneficiaries, a total of 1,511 persons received health education, a coverage of 22%, which it is hoped can be improved. On a national level, the reported incidence of diarrhoea is relatively higher according to statistics from the mobile health teams compared to the statistics from the ARCS static clinics. However, no conclusions as to the reasons for this have yet been drawn. As of the end of October, the ARCS with support from the Federation and the ICRC, assisted 1,878 displaced drought-affected families with shelter material and food. These families have fled mostly from Ghor and Badghis provinces. Assistance has been coordinated with other organisations and the UN agencies which will continue their assistance in the camps where the internally displaced are being accommodated. Meanwhile, two Federation field officers continued to provide assistance in the relief operation led by the ICRC in Ghor province during the month.

As of the end of October, 255 volunteers have been trained in 12 districts in Helmand, Zabul, Uruzgan and Ghor provinces as part of the drought response programme. Strategies will be further examined with a view to linking the volunteers to the mobile health teams.

Floods

The ARCS/Federation assisted 64 families in Nowabad village in Kunar following a flood at the end of September which destroyed some houses and damaged others. The beneficiaries were supported with tents, blankets and cooking pots; jerry cans and plastic sheeting were also distributed. The ARCS also provided food: wheat, edible oil, beans and rice from its own resources.

Disaster Preparedness Programme ●

Copies of the disaster preparedness guidelines received from the Secretariat have been distributed for review to all CBDP supervisors. The draft national DP plan has been provided to ARCS headquarters for review and comment. The annual budget for this year has been revised, mainly reflecting the lack of funding support for required supplies. Within the budgetary limit, procurement of essential relief items for preparedness stocks was initiated during the month for around 26,000 blankets, 14,000 jerry cans and 4,500 cooking pots. This is partly funded by the Swiss Red Cross and the Norwegian Red Cross. However, this quantity of supplies is insufficient for minimum stocks for which the target is provision for 15,000 families.

External relations - Government/UN/NGOs/Media

In mid October, representatives from the Embassy of Japan to the Islamic Republic of Pakistan were received in the Federation office in Kabul.

Outstanding needs

Based on forecast expenditure and funding presently available, serious financial constraints can be expected in early January. Current appeal coverage stands at 56.6 per cent only and further funding is therefore essential in order to continue successful programme implementation.

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			12/19/00	
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						