

UNICEF AFGHANISTAN SITUATION REPORT – EXTERNAL 1 – 20 DECEMBER

HUMANITARIAN ISSUES AND EMERGENCY RESPONSE

Military operations in Musa Qala and the UNICEF assistance: As a result of a military operation in Musa Qala, around 400 families have been displaced in the neighboring villages. The military operation is ongoing and the displaced families are expected to return after the operation ends. The UN agencies in the south are pre-positioning food and non-food supplies in Helmand for 2,000 families which will be utilized for the current needs and possible future emergencies. UNICEF has dispatched family kits, plastic floor-mats, blankets, 20 litre plastic buckets and tarpaulin sheets for 2000 families. The emergency health kits were already available in the area.

Disruption of Polio NIDs: The military operations coincided with the sub-national polio eradication campaign in the south. As a result, the campaign was postponed in the entire Musa Qala district and some areas of 5 other districts. Whereas missing clusters will be covered at a later stage, vaccination teams were dispatched to cover 5 border locations of Musa Qala for 7 days to vaccinate under-5 children moving across those locations.

Assistance to the vulnerable families in the West: In Herat province (west), UNICEF supported emergency learning centres for IDP children of Badghis to cover grades 1-6. Total of 614 children now have access to basic education, literacy, and social sciences during an eight-week intensive course. These children have missed classes for 3-6 months already. The purpose of this emergency education is to keep them oriented with the basics so that when they go back to their place of origin, they can resume their studies without difficulties.

150 most vulnerable families in Herat from Badghis were provided with 150 each of family kits, 10 litre collapsible water containers, tarpaulin sheets and warm jackets. UNICEF was the first agency to come forward with the assistance.

Psycho-social support to children and families of the Baghlan: As a result of the deadly suicide in November in Baghlan Province (north), killing 75 people, including 52 school children and 5 of their teachers, and wounding 88 other students, UNICEF in collaboration with the Ministries of Public Health, Education and an NGO implementing partner is working to initiate psychosocial support interventions as of mid-December.

HIGHLIGHTS FROM PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES

EDUCATION

School Construction and Classroom Improvement: The construction of 19 cost effective schools completed, ensuring better learning environment for over 20,000 students. Total of 3,520 sets of desks and chairs have been provided to ensure better seating arrangements for over 15,000 school children.

HEALTH / NUTRITION

Polio Immunisation: The Supplementary National Immunisation Days (9-11 December), targeting 3 million under-five children, were conducted successfully in 14 provinces of Afghanistan with the exception of Musa Qala and five other districts in southern region

Nutrition Orientation Sessions: With technical support from UNICEF, the Ministry of Public Health and NGO partners (Action Contre La Faim, Save the Children UK) are jointly mainstreaming community-based management of severe acute malnutrition (C-SAM) in the Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS) in the five provinces. During the reporting period, orientation sessions were conducted for two of the five provincial health departments of the ministry in Samangani and Juzjan provinces (north).

Maternal Health Training Sessions: Three training sessions on quality assurance, basic surgical skills and basic emergency obstetric care (EmOC), were conducted for medical and nursing staff (total of 45) from selected five maternity referral hospitals with the aim of building quality and skilled service delivery in these areas.

World AIDS Day observation: The World AIDS Day was observed at national and provincial levels on the first of December. A report of the situation of AIDS in Afghanistan, which shows that up to 200 cases of HIV where around 75% are drug users, was submitted to the Cabinet on the day. The President also noted the activities and called for coordinated efforts in the fight against HIV/AIDS in Afghanistan.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

Training: A learning programme, from 2-5 December, was conducted by MRRD/UNICEF for 85 technical staff of the ministry in national and provincial levels Kabul. During the training, technical assessment of WES facilities and design of pipe schemes were identified as weak areas (identified during the MYR and EYR 2007) and were covered in this session. This training will lead to quality delivery of quality WES services in 2008.

Access to Safe Water: More than 1000 people were provided with access to safe water due to the completion of a pipe water supply scheme in Qalacha village of Onaba district (Panjshair province- central region).

More than 10,000 students and teachers were also provided with access to safe water and sanitary latrines in 15 schools in central, northern and western regions.

CHILD PROTECTION

Cross-border child trafficking/smuggling interventions- A national workshop with participation of provincial level government and NGOs was held in Kabul to share and discuss the findings of the trafficking and border situation analyses. Key points included: the need to improve evidence based monitoring for trafficking interventions and to emphasise place of origin interventions for vulnerable groups. Several interventions are planned for 2008 that build upon the key findings of assessments and developments from the workshop.

Youth Information & Contact Centre (YICC) - A YICC was officially inaugurated by UNICEF Representative and other government official on 11th December in Herat (west). The centre will provide the opportunity for youth to voice their concerns and discuss how best they can contribute to resolving issues related to their peers.

Social Work regional Coaching-One day workshop on the role of social workers in juvenile justice sector was held in Kabul. The participants - provincial social workers, Departments of Labour & Social Affairs and Juvenile Justice - jointly analyzed the juvenile code in view of potential role and intervention by social workers and refining social work tools such as assessment and interview guidelines.

PROGRAMME COMMUNICATION

Integrated BCC Strategy: the master training for the Behaviour Change Communication for project staff including district social mobilisers and village planning officers of Jabul Saraj (central) and Deawlataad (north) was conducted 10-16December 2007. The focus of this training was on Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) methodology. The main aim of the PLA process is to work with communities to develop positive behaviours at the household level and empower families to improve survival of children and mothers through key household practices.

Polio Communication: The coverage by BBC Pashto language of the polio campaign in southern, eastern and southeastern regions resulted in higher outreach to communities in those areas. Two 'polio true stories' from Pakistan were dubbed into Pashto and aired on popular TV and radio channels targeting populations on both sides of the Afghanistan-Pakistan border. In addition social mobilisation activities through religious leaders, teachers, elders and CHWs were stepped up in the high risk districts. Public service announcements broadcast in the build-up to this sub-national round (9-11 December) and locally organised campaign launches enhanced visibility of polio immunisation among communities.