

Afghanistan

Back to School & Children's Health

February 2002

UNICEF video B-Roll
Total Running Time: 28'49"

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| 1. | Highlights package | 1'35" |
| 2. | Back to School Campaign | 12'20" |
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1. HIGHLIGHTS PACKAGE

PAL Timecode	Shotlist
01 22 24	Zharguna Girls Lycee, Kabul – Grade One lesson under cover but outdoors in sub-zero temperatures (snow flakes falling)
01 00 37	Wrecked tank in foreground, city of Qala-e-Naw, Badghis Province in background
01 00 39	Hundreds of girls registering for places at Qala-e-Naw Girls School. It was closed for six years by the Taleban but reopening for the new school year starting March 23
01 00 47	Therapeutic Feeding Centre at Qala-e-Naw Hospital – acutely malnourished two and a half-year-old girl is weighed
01 01 13	Malnourished infants fed with therapeutic milk
01 01 18	Trucks crossing the perilous 2,100-metre (6,890 feet) Sabzak Pass to reach Qala-e-Naw
01 01 31	UNICEF Unimix being unloaded into warehouse
01 01 35	Measles vaccination team travel on horseback to reach remote village in Herat Province
01 01 45	Village Mullah with megaphone calling for children to come and be immunised against measles
01 01 50	Baby girl gets measles vaccination

2. BACK TO SCHOOL CAMPAIGN

Introduction

More than two decades of fighting have plunged Afghanistan's formal education sector into crisis. Two thousand schools have been destroyed or fallen into disrepair since 1979. And only about 32 per cent of boys and eight per cent of girls currently participate in some form of primary education.

The Back to School Campaign aims to get at least 1.7 million Afghan children into primary education at the start of the new academic year on March 23, 2002 and provide more than 50,000 teachers with teaching materials by March 21. In 1999 there was an estimated primary school age population of 4.4 million children.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is fully committed to supporting the efforts of the Ministry of Education to provide primary education to the children of Afghanistan, both boys and girls.

As one of the main partners in the Back to School Campaign, UNICEF is supporting the government with the writing, printing and distribution of learning materials, teacher training, renovation of schools and the establishment of 500 tented schools in places where school

buildings have been destroyed. More than seven million text books, eight million notebooks and 18,000 blackboards are being supplied by UNICEF.

Many other UN agencies such as UNDP, UNESCO, WFP, OCHA and a host of international and national NGOs are also supporting the Ministry of Education in making the campaign a success.

For more information about the Back to School Campaign please visit www.unicef.org/noteworthy/afghanistan/

Video Script

This commercial printing company in Islamabad, Pakistan is just one of many printers being used by UNICEF to prepare learning materials and text books for the new school year in Afghanistan. With a total of just 20 days to complete the order, some 35 print workers and compositors are working 24 hours a day. Today (February 9, 2002) they're printing and compiling 142,000 copies of a Grade Two mathematics book in both Dari and Pashto languages. The materials have been designed and written by Afghan educators.

In what is viewed as UNICEF's biggest logistical operation for many years, donkeys, jeeps, trucks and planes will be used to distribute over 6,000 metric tones of learning materials to 3,000 distribution centres in Afghanistan.

Zharguna Girls Lycee in Kabul was closed down by the Taleban for six years. Following the Taleban's demise it was reopened and is currently being used for catch-up lessons to prepare both girls and boys in grades one to 11 for the new school year which begins on March 23. The school is currently used by 2,600 girls and 71 teachers in the morning and 800 boys and 30 teachers in the afternoon. Traditionally girls and boys are educated separately in Afghanistan.

Demand for classroom space has exceeded supply and today (February 6, 2002) this Grade One class of 7-11 year-olds is sitting under cover but outdoors in sub-zero temperatures. Snow flakes can be seen falling as Samira Aniyat teaches the Dari alphabet. The children are huddling together, sitting on the concrete floor trying to keep warm but eager to learn.

When the Taleban banned girls from school and sent female teachers home, many secretly continued their education in private homes. This school in Kartanaw, a suburb of Kabul, is an example of a home-based community school and is popular with the parents of boys as well as girls.

Teacher Habiba Khilwati has been running this school in her home for three years and supervises 26 similar schools in the area. During the Taleban's rule she ensured that classes were staggered so that the arrival and departure of her pupils in large groups did not give her away.

Today (February 6, 2002), she's teaching 62 girls and 28 boys the Dari alphabet.

Winous, a girl aged 12 says "We want to learn something so we can become teachers, doctors or engineers and be like normal students"

Maseh, a boy aged seven, says “This morning I had tea and bread and came to school to learn the alphabet. I want to be a doctor.”

Mirya, a girl aged 10, says “We don’t want to be veiled. We want to come to school with boys, like brothers and sisters, and study together until we become somebody.”

Although the ultimate goal is to get all Afghan children back into formal schools, UNICEF continues to support some 800 home-based schools in the Kabul area, catering for more than 50,000 children. With such high demand for places at formal schools, the home-based schools offer a good alternative until all the formal schools can be rebuilt and reopened.

Asked what it was like to run the school during Taleban rule, teacher Habiba Khilwati says “It was very, very dangerous. If these children were caught (coming to school), their fathers were taken to the police station at night and little girls were harassed and slapped. We told the children not to talk to strangers. If they (the strangers) were Taleban they would have your guts for garters (literally in Dari they would “pull out your kidney”). No one would dare to stop and talk to strangers.”

Since many of the female teachers stopped work under the Taleban, it is vital to retrain them so they can get back to work educating Afghan children. Moyeen Marastial, the Interim Authority’s Deputy Education Minister, launches a Teacher Training Workshop in Kabul on implementation of basic learning skills. These 170 female and 60 male teachers will be retrained in order to work in six Kabul schools reconstructed with UNICEF’s help.

In an interview afterwards he said: “Over 50 per cent of the schools have been destroyed completely. In the rest of the 50 per cent schools which need repair we are trying to accommodate all the children in the schools. I think that if we have 30 student in one class we probably will have 50 and 60. We are trying to accommodate them. Some international agencies and organisations are helping and have already started repairing the schools and hopefully the schools will be ready by the 23rd of March, which is the first day of reopening the schools to boys and girls.”

Qala-e-Naw Girls School in Badghis Province in western Afghanistan, was shut down by the Taleban for six years. But it will be reopening in time for the new school year and today (February 12, 2002) hundreds of girls have come to register for places. As they line up, teachers take down details of their age, grade and address.

UNICEF Assistant Education Officer Musa Naheeb says “To be honest I have never thought of having so many girls for the registration. But as you see the demand is so much, that probably we will not be in a position to accommodate all these students in this building. We may be in need of extra space. Maybe to use whatever is available such as tents, tarpaulins, or any other means to provide the environment for students to be there and to learn something.”

Many of the younger girls have not been to formal school before, while older girls, like 18-year-old Anita Badghisi, started their education here and are hoping to return after six years at home. Anita completed grade eight before the school was shut down when she was 13.

“The past few years have been very difficult,” says Anita. “We have been prohibited from attending school. So now that there is an opportunity to register I have come here to put my name down for school.”

Head teacher Engineer Maliha says “It is our plan to get these children enrolled and get them organized to come back to school and to give them back their education so they can learn to read and write. During this period [the Taliban period] we have suffered enormously.”

Although some Afghan parents are still reluctant to send their daughters to school, Anita is more fortunate than many. Her father Murtaza Badghisi is a former history professor and her mother is a former school teacher. Both understand the importance of education and were able to educate their daughters at home. As a result, Anita hopes to resume her formal classes in grade 10.

“When the Taliban came to power and closed the doors of the schools in Afghanistan, girls stopped studying and just sat at home,” Murtaza Badghisi explains. “Now that there is an opportunity for them to continue their education we are extremely happy and proud that our children, girls and young people can go back to school.”

“I am very disappointed and sad that we wasted six of the best years our lives sitting at home. But in spite of that, I did try to continue my studies with the help of my parents. It wasn’t so bad but now I am truly happy that the schools are reopening,” says Anita.

At Hanzallah Boys High School in Qala-e-Naw, Badghis Province in western Afghanistan, and throughout Afghanistan, work is underway to repair schools in time for the new school year. UNICEF plans to rehabilitate more than 200 schools.

Referring to the global Say Yes for Children survey, Dr Eric Laroche, UNICEF’s Representative in Afghanistan says “The first thing Afghan children wanted was peace and the second thing they wanted was education. Why? Because an education lasts for life.”

UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy says “Virtually all the girls in Afghanistan have been denied an education for five to six years. They’ve lost a whole generation of girls. And yet, we know world-wide that if a girl gets an education, she is more likely to grow to an adult and be a healthy adult. Her children are less likely to die before the age of 5, her family is more likely to be economically secure. So the multiplier effect of girls getting even a primary education is quite dramatic. Here is the first opportunity in 6 years for Afghan girls to come to school, that’s why focusing on girls coming back to school, as well as boys, is so crucial.”

It is estimated that currently only four per cent of Afghan women are literate.

PAL TIMECODE	BACK TO SCHOOL CAMPAIGN SHOTLIST
	ISLAMABAD, PAKISTAN
01 02 05	Printing UNICEF learning materials at Crystal Printers in Islamabad, Pakistan. Printing presses churn out UNICEF school text books for Afghanistan in Dari and Pashtu languages. At this printing shop around 35 men are working 24 hours a day to complete the job in time for the new school year beginning on March 23.
	KABUL, AFGHANISTAN
01 02 37	Ruined streets of west Kabul, women & children walk past camera
01 03 05	Exterior of Zharguna Girls Lycee in Kabul, snow on the ground
01 03 14	Grade One class of children aged 7 to 11 learning Dari alphabet sitting under cover but outdoors as snow falls (sub zero temperatures)
01 03 25	Children sitting on concrete floor trying to keep warm and learn at the same time. Snow flakes falling.
01 04 04	Head teacher Alia Hafizi says “Our primary concern is the lack of chairs and tables, not only for the children but also the teachers, and our science laboratories are also completely empty. Everything was destroyed.” (Dari)
	KABUL, AFGHANISTAN
01 04 24	Children arrive for school at Kartanaw home-based school in Kabul (a non-formal home-based primary school). Kids are greeted by teacher Habiba Khilwati. She’s been running her school for 12 years and supervises 26 similar schools in the area.
01 05 00	28 Boys and 62 girls learning Dari alphabet.
	Vox pops with children
01 05 50	Winous, girl aged 12 says “We want to learn something so we can become teachers, doctors or engineers and be like normal students”
01 06 02	Maseh, boy aged seven, says “This morning I had tea and bread and came to school to learn the alphabet” Questioner says “Why do you come to school?” Maseh answers “I want to be a doctor.”
01 06 20	Mirya, girl aged 10, says “My name is Mirya. I’m 10 and I’m in the first grade. We don’t want to be veiled. We want to come to school with boys, like brothers and sisters, and study together until we become somebody.”
01 06 38	Teacher Habiba Khilwati talking about what it was like to run the school during Taleban rule. “It was very, very dangerous. If these children were caught [coming to school], their fathers were taken to the police station at night and little girls were harassed and slapped. We told the children not to talk to strangers. If they [the strangers] were Taleban they would have your guts for garters [literally in Dari they would “pull out your kidney”]. No one would dare to stop and talk to strangers.”
01 06 57	Kids inside classroom from outside (Dari)
	KABUL, AFGHANISTAN Launch of Teacher Training Workshop on implementation of basic learning skills. UNICEF has helped to complete the reconstruction of six schools in Kabul area. These 230 teachers (170 female, 60 male) in the audience will be retrained to teach in the schools as part of the Back to

	School initiative.
01 07 02	Speech by Interim Authority's Deputy Education Minister Moyeen Marastial.
01 07 06	Cutaways of the audience -- note not one woman is wearing a burka
01 07 23	Interview with Interim Authority's Deputy Education Minister Moyeen Marastial (in English). "Over 50 percent of the schools have been destroyed completely. In the rest of the 50 percent of the schools which need repair we are trying to accommodate all the children in the schools. I think that if we had 30 student in one class we probably will have 50 and 60. We are trying to accommodate them. Some international agencies and organizations are helping and have already started repairing the schools. Hopefully the schools will be ready by the 23 rd of March, which is the first day or reopening of the schools to boys and girls." (English)
	QALA-E-AW (PRONOUNCED "KAL - EE - NOW"), BADGHIS PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN
01 08 03	Tank in foreground, city in background
01 08 09	Qala-e-Aw Girls High School (this girls school was closed for six years under the Taleban and will be reopening for the new school year starting March 23) It has room for 960 pupils.
01 08 19	Young girls line up to register for a place at school for the coming year
01 08 28	Teachers take down the girls' age, grade, address etc.
01 08 49	Interview with Musa Naheeb, UNICEF Assistant Education Officer: "To be honest I have never thought of having so many girls for the registration. But as you see the demand is so much, that probably we will not be in a position to accommodate all these students in this building. We may be in need of extra space. Maybe to use whatever is available such as tents, tarpaulins, or any other means to provide the environment for students to be there and to learn something." (English)
01 09 29	Older girls line up to register. Girl filmed registering is Anita Badghisi, aged 18.
01 09 37	Engineer Maliha, Head Teacher taking the names down
01 10 06	Interview at the school with Anita Badghisi, aged 18 "The past few years have been very difficult. We have been prohibited from attending school. So now that there is an opportunity to register I have come here to put my name down for school."
01 10 21	Interview with Engineer Maliha, Head Teacher "It is our plan to get these children enrolled and get them organized to go back to school and to give them back their education so they can learn to read and write. During this period (the Taleban period) we have suffered enormously."
01 10 37	At the home of Anita Badghisi. She arrives home and is greeted by parents and family
01 10 53	Anita pouring tea for the family - family chatting over tea
01 11 36	Interview with Anita's father Murtaza Badghisi "When the Taleban came to power and closed the doors of the schools in Afghanistan. Girls stopped studying and just sat at home. Now that there is an opportunity for them to continue their education we are extremely happy and proud that our children, girls and young people can go back to school." (Dari)

01 11 54	Interview with Anita Badghisi. She says “I am very disappointed and sad that we wasted six of the best years our lives sitting at home. But in spite of that, I did try to continue my studies with the help of my parents. It wasn’t so bad but now I am truly happy that the schools are reopening.” (Dari)
	Anita’s house at dusk
	QALA-E-AW (pronounced “kal – ee – now”), BADGHIS PROVINCE, AFGHANISTAN
01 12 35	Kids in foreground, wrecked APCs/tanks in background
01 12 44	Hanzalah High School for Boys in Qala-e-Naw – wrecked classrooms
01 12 58	Workmen fixing up the place in preparation for new school year.
01 13 21	Interview with Dr ERIC LAROCHE, UNICEF’s Representative in Afghanistan. “During the time of Taleban, we made a survey of 40,000 kids and they all said that the first thing they want is peace. And the second thing they want is education. Why? Because when you are educated, you get skills, knowledge, a know-how, forever.” (English)
01 13 42	Interview with Carol Bellamy, UNICEF’s Executive Director. “Virtually all the girls in Afghanistan have been denied an education or five to six years. They’ve lost a whole generation of girls. And yet, we know world-wide that if a girl gets an education, she is more likely to grow to an adult and be a healthy adult. Her children are less likely to die before the age of 5, her family is more likely to be economically secure. The multiplier effect of girls getting even a primary education is quite dramatic. Here is the first opportunity in 6 years for Afghan girls to come to school, that’s why focusing on girls coming back to school, as well as boys, is so crucial. (English)

3. FIGHTING MALNUTRITION

Introduction

One out of every two Afghan children is malnourished. Half of Afghan children are stunted in height while 10-15 per cent are wasted (well below average weight). In some provinces, as many as 20 per cent of children are wasted.

Under-five mortality is estimated at 257 per 1,000 live births, or one in every four children. This is the fourth highest child mortality rate in the world after Sierra Leone, Angola and Niger.

The nutritional situation has deteriorated as a result of more than two decades of fighting, three years of drought, the loss of livestock and near exhaustion of all coping strategies. A lack of basic health care facilities and poverty are largely responsible for the high incidence of infant diseases like measles, diarrhoea and acute respiratory infections. A shortage of safe drinking water as well as poor sanitation and hygiene add to the already weak health status of many children in Afghanistan.

Even before the events of September 11, some 45-59 per cent of Afghan children were stunted or chronically malnourished due to lack of food as well as poor feeding and child caring practices. Stunting is a cumulative process that begins before a baby is born and continues up to the age of three. The consequences are learning and physical disabilities as well as a tendency to become sick due to diarrhoea and respiratory infections.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is fully committed to assist Afghanistan's Interim Authority, World Food Programme and NGOs in preventing children starving to death and to stop further deterioration of nutritional status through the establishment of therapeutic and supplementary feeding programmes, carrying out nutritional surveys and providing education.

Video Script

The villages of the Laman Valley are on the main road between Herat and Qala-e-Naw in Badghis Province, western Afghanistan. Yet in spite of their proximity to the main trucking route there are still high levels of malnutrition among children living there. After three years of drought and two decades of fighting, about half the villagers have left for Herat where there are camps for internally displaced people and enough food to go round.

Sadat, the village chief of Abdulh Village, says that at least four children and some adults have died in the last 10 days due to a lack of medication.

Having heard about severely malnourished children in the area, UNICEF Nutrition Officer Cyridion Ahimana and World Vision Nurse Rose Awando have come to the Laman Valley to conduct weight for height assessments on children living in these villages. Snow has stopped them (and food aid) reaching more remote villages in the area.

Five of the 10 children in Abdulh Village they assessed were severely or acutely malnourished (less than 70 per cent of normal weight for height). They referred the children to the Therapeutic Feeding Centre at Qala-e-Naw Hospital which is run by World Vision and supported by UNICEF.

Both Cyridion and Rose have worked extensively with malnourished children in Africa, but what they are seeing here in western Afghanistan is worse. Due to the cold weather, these children are bundled up in many layers of clothing. It's not until you strip them off that you realise how thin they have become.

UNICEF Nutrition Officer Cyridion Ahimana says "We discovered that most of the children are really in a bad situation, a bad nutritional situation. They need to be transferred to the Therapeutic Feeding Center. If not in a few days they can die."

Back at the Therapeutic Feeding Centre at Qala-e-Naw Hospital, Cyridion and Rose talk to a mother who has just arrived that day. Fatmeh brought her one-year-old son Wazir to the hospital because he was sick and was then referred to them for a weight for height assessment.

Breast milk is the most nutritious food a baby can get and lactating women are encouraged to continue breastfeeding. However, not all women are willing (due to poor breast feeding practices) or able (due to their own state of malnutrition) to breastfeed their children.

Jowarher is two and a half years old and the youngest of six children. Her parents brought her here from their village, 20 hours away by donkey. She is showing classic symptoms of marasmus or chronic hunger. Doctors believe her rapidly wandering eyes may be due to brain damage caused malnutrition early in life.

Like many of the other children here, it is only when you remove their clothes that you realise how malnourished they are. At only five kg, she is considered acutely under weight for her age.

Once at the Therapeutic Feeding Centre, the children are treated for any infections and fed with therapeutic milk up to seven times per day. Mothers are also encouraged to breastfeed them if they can. Therapeutic treatment will reduce the risk of death and facilitate the curative process to correct the child's metabolism and get their weight up. If started early enough, a child can recover fully.

After a week the child continues to receive slightly more fortified milk. If parents don't want to keep their children in the feeding centre overnight, their parents are given high nutrition bars to feed them with at home. These bars are special ready-to-eat products suitable for children recovering from malnutrition. Once children are beginning to recover more fully, they need three to five meals of Unimix porridge (a fortified cereal mix) per day in addition to normal family food (bread, rice, vegetables etc) . Once the child can maintain at least 80 per cent of its normal weight for a week, it can be discharged.

World Vision runs the Therapeutic Feeding Centre while UNICEF provides the therapeutic milk, fortified food, equipment, technical assistance, training, salaries and monitoring.

One of the reasons for the malnutrition of children in this area is the difficulty in getting food aid here. Trucks carrying food aid from Herat (the administrative centre of the region) have to cross the perilous 2,100-metre (6,890 feet) Sabzak Pass to reach Qala-e-Naw, the distribution centre for Badghis Province.

Today (February 13, 2002), a convoy of aid trucks have arrived at the main warehouse in Qala-e-Naw. As well as sacks of wheat provided by World Food Programme they're unloading 247 metric tonnes of Unimix, a nutritious porridge-like mixture, oil, sugar and family cooking sets in which to cook it.

In an interview UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy said "There is a high rate of severe malnutrition in Afghanistan. A very high rate of stunting. One of the highest rates of under 5 mortality in the world, in fact outside of Africa, the highest rate of under 5 mortality, much of it contributed by malnutrition. We are interested in this because if these children are going to survive, if there will be future leaders in Afghanistan, the children have to live. This is a question of life or death in many cases."

PAL TIMECODE	FIGHTING MALNUTRITION SHOTLIST
	LAMAN VALLEY, near QALA-E-NAW, BAGDHIS PROVINCE
01 14 30	UNICEF vehicles drive along Laman valley near Qala-e-Naw, Badghis Province
01 14 50	Abdulh Village chief Sadat says “During the past fortnight four or five children and some adults have died due to lack of medication”
01 15 07	UNICEF Nutrition Officer Cyridion Ahimana and World Vision Nurse Rose Awando walking into Abdulh Village to conduct weight for height assessments on children
01 15 27	Young child being weighed and measured
01 16 02	Girl is weighed and then measured / calculations are made
01 17 04	UNICEF Nutrition Officer taking calculating level of malnutrition
01 17 11	Mother with skinny child waiting assessment
01 17 29	UNICEF Nutrition Officer Cyridion Ahimana “We discovered that most of the children are really in a bad situation, bad nutritional situation. They need to be transferred to the Therapeutic Feeding Centre. If not in a few days they can die.” (English)
	Therapeutic Feeding Centre at QALA-E-NAW, BAGDHIS PROVINCE
01 17 44	Exterior of Qala-e-Naw Hospital, where UNICEF and World Vision have set up a Therapeutic Feeding Centre
01 17 56	UNICEF Nutrition Officer Cyridion Ahimana and World Vision Nurse Rose Awando talking to new arrival
01 18 09	Mother nurses her baby
01 18 24	Jowarher, aged two and a half years, shows signs of acute malnutrition
01 18 36	Jowarher is stripped and weighed – a very thin child
01 19 27	Nurse records her weight (she should be 20kg but in fact she’s five kg)
01 19 34	Mothers feeding their children with therapeutic milk
01 20 49	UNICEF Nutrition Officer Cyridion Ahimana and World Vision Nurse Rose Awando give high-nutrition bars to a family leaving Centre
01 21 01	Boy and baby tasting high-nutrition bars
	UNICEF AID ARRIVES IN QALA-E-NAW
01 21 24	Trucks navigate snowy pass on way to Qala-e-Naw
01 21 45	Trucks await unloading at warehouse in Qala-e-Naw
01 15 15	Workers unload sacks of UNICEF Unimix porridge from truck
01 22 45	Sacks of UNICEF Unimix porridge stacked in warehouse
01 22 51	Interview with Carol Bellamy, UNICEF’s Executive Director “There is a high rate of severe malnutrition in Afghanistan. A very high rate of stunting. One of the highest rates of under 5 mortality in the world, in fact outside of Africa, the highest rate of under 5 mortality, much of it contributed by malnutrition. We are interested in this because if these children are going to survive, if there will be future leaders in Afghanistan, the children have to live. This is a question of life or death in many cases.”

4. MEASLES CAMPAIGN

Introduction

Measles is a highly-contagious disease that can cause disability and death among children. In the past eight years measles immunisation has been very low in Afghanistan (under 40 per cent) and the measles mortality rate was the second highest in the world.

The current emergency measles immunisation campaign was started in Afghanistan in July 2001 by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), The World Health Organisation (WHO) and Afghanistan's Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) and continued even during the U.S. bombing of Afghanistan.

Weak, hungry children are particularly at risk of measles and other life-threatening diseases. With growing concern about malnutrition following several years of drought, the aim of the measles campaign is to immunise at least 90 per cent of Afghan children (about nine million) between the ages of six months and 12 years old. The campaign will run until August 2002 and is intended to save more than 35,000 children's lives.

Working with Afghanistan's Ministry of Public Health (MOPH), UNICEF and its partners have helped train MOPH workers to ensure vaccines are correctly administered and stored. WHO provided training to ensure safe handling of vaccines, injection practices and proper waste disposal. During the campaign, UNICEF also pays the salaries of the staff and pays for all the vaccines, auto-disable syringes (which cannot be re-used), storage equipment, transportation and publicity campaigns.

Video Script

Due to winter snows, mud and a lack of accessible roads, vaccination teams from Afghanistan's Ministry of Public Health often have to travel to villages on horseback carrying their vaccines and auto-disable syringes, stored in bulky cold boxes (the measles vaccine needs to be kept between two and eight degrees Celsius). UNICEF pays for all transportation including the cost of hiring horses.

Today (February 16, 2002) the vaccination team is heading back to Qalasharbat Village, Karukh district, Herat Province in western Afghanistan for the second time in two months. It's a "mopping up" exercise. The first time they were here they immunised some 350 children against measles but, according to their calculations, they believe they only covered about 60 per cent the children in the village. That is why they're going back, because it is as important to reach the last child as it is the first.

It's a long two-hour journey on horseback but, without all-terrain vehicles, this is the quickest way of getting themselves and their equipment here.

Planning vaccinations in advance is hampered by the lack of radios or telephones in the area. The teams simply turn up. UNICEF Health Officer Ayadil Saparbekov explains why horses are such a vital part of the Measles Campaign.

Nazir Ahmad, the village mullah (mullahs are often the only literate person in a village), plays a key role in mobilizing the community and persuading parents to bring their children for immunisation. After roving the village with the vaccination team's megaphone telling people that the vaccination team is at the village mosque, only two children are brought forward, a six-month-old baby girl and 10-year-old Jalil Ahmad.

The vaccinators take their details, prepare the auto-disable syringes and give the children the measles shot before moving onto the next village. Depending on the distances and mode of transportation, one team of three vaccinators can immunise about 200 children per day. The measles vaccine is safe and even sick children can be vaccinated against measles.

Afterwards, the village mullah Nazir Ahmad says that he believes that all the children in the village have now been covered. The villagers know that their children could die if they don't get them immunised.

In an interview, UNICEF Executive Director Carol Bellamy said "UNICEF has been involved in immunisation in Afghanistan for some time, even during the bombing of 2001 we were working with WHO in a polio immunisation campaign. But in the long run the worst disease is measles because measles kills and so we are very involved working with the Ministry of Health, WHO and many of the workers in the country to try and reach upwards of 10 million children throughout Afghanistan with the measles vaccine. Already we believe we've reached close to five million children from the beginning of the campaign until now. This will not only protect them, it actually saves lives."

PAL TIMECODE	MEASLES CAMPAIGN SHOTLIST
01 23 26	Villagers help load Cold Storage vaccine box onto horse
01 23 37	Vaccinators on horses / heading off on journey to Qalasharbat Village
01 24 14	Wide shot of Qalasharbat Village
01 24 21	Vaccinators set up for immunisation
01 24 41	UNICEF Health Officer Ayadil Sapparbekov "Afghanistan is a very mountainous country. There are many parts of Afghanistan that are impossible to reach by road or by vehicle. There are many places where there is snow now, and its impossible to go there by car. That's why local communities mobilize horses, donkeys. They put the vaccine in the cold box and put the cold box on the donkey, or on the horse, to reach the village." (English)
01 25 08	Village Mullah tours village with megaphone shouting "Dear Friends we are inviting you to bring your children aged between six months and 12 years old to register for immunisation"
01 25 34	Old man with baby girl and 10-year-old Jalil Ahmad come to register for measles immunisation
01 26 01	Vaccinators take down their details
01 26 13	Old man prepares baby's arm for measles jab
01 26 22	Vaccinator prepares auto-disable syringe with serum
01 26 58	Baby gets measles shot

01 26 58	10-year-old Jalil Ahmad gets measles shot and then walks away
01 27 26	Village Mullah Nazir Ahmad says “350 children were immunised the last time the vaccination team came and two have been done today. I don’t believe there are any more children here left to be done.” (Dari)
01 27 40	Old man takes baby home after measles shot
01 27 55	Interview with Carol Bellamy, UNICEF’s Executive Director. “UNICEF has been involved in immunisation in Afghanistan for some time, even during the bombing of 2001 we were working with WHO in a polio immunisation campaign. But in the long run the worst disease is measles because measles kills and so we are very involved working with the Ministry of Health, WHO and many of the workers in the country to try and reach upwards of 10 million children throughout Afghanistan with the measles vaccine. Already we believe we’ve reached close to 5 million children from the beginning of the campaign until now. This will not only protect them it actually saves lives.” (English)
	ENDS

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