

Lecture: Post-Conflict Afghanistan

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session participants will be able to:

1. Analyze the transition in Post-Conflict situations of moving from relief to long-term development
2. Review the delicate balancing process to build capacity of a new national government and its agencies. What is the appropriate role of UN and bilateral agencies, as well as National and International NGOs?
3. Identify priorities to modify the extreme constraints which limit women's participation and empowerment in health development
4. Assess personal and family issues related to living and working in crisis situations

Focusing Paragraph

For the past three years a massive flow of outside funding for BPHS (Basic Package of Health Services) designed by international experts has focused on mortality reduction for mothers (said to be among the highest ever reported) and of children. In five years progress is evident, especially in hospital and health center facility development and midwife training. It has been more difficult, however, to build the community foundation of the new health system which was supposed to be Community Health Workers (CHWs) who are "Mature Women" and village leaders. Future Generations used "shoe leather epidemiology" and listening to the women to define and test five new interventions for Women's Empowerment. They are: Women Only Workshops to recruit and train CHWs, Pregnancy Histories to create self-reliant awareness of what their health problems are, Women's Action Groups in each village, Community statisticians to collect basic data, and a Network of Learning Centers for rapid Scaling Up. Then a one year USAID Operations Research Grant provided funds to test the new model of CHW training in two sites: in Bamian and Ghazni Provinces. Dramatic Women's Empowerment did occur and in just six months extended care services to their villages. In Bamian a follow up survey showed that the women had produced changes in less than one year equivalent to what other NGO services achieved in two to three years. Now efforts are being negotiated to try to scale up in areas where the unpredictable security situation will make that possible.

Reflective Questions

1. The national BPHS program has achieved some coverage in three quarters of the country with a beginning framework of health centers and rehabilitation of hospitals. However the training of CHWs has expanded more slowly. Can and should community based programs and CHW recruitment and training be given more priority?

2. The present momentum in funding health programs is uncertain. After five years a shift from international NGOs to Afghan NGOs is occurring. How hard should Future Generations try to get support for scaling up the community based approach?
3. With the long history of violence in this part of the world but with the people clearly eager for peace is there any chance that international pressures will give these strong people a chance to try to find peace?

Reading

Required Readings

- Afghanistan Seven Tasks