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AFGHANISTAN

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FACT SHEET

Child Survival Support Grant: Better Health for Afghan Mothers and Children Project (BHAMC)

OVERVIEW

The Better Health for Afghan Mothers and Children (BHAMC) is a four-year project implemented in five districts of Hirat Province. The project has reached more than 157,000 children under five years old and approximately 294,000 women of reproductive age, especially pregnant and lactating women, to support sustained improvements in maternal, newborn, and child health outcomes.

ACTIVITIES

- **Increasing immunization coverage:** Train vaccinators to monitor vaccine distribution, injection safety, and waste disposal practices. Conduct supervisory visits of vaccination sites with NGOs and the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) to ensure quality control; and an adequate supply of vaccines, vitamin A, syringes, and safety boxes.
- **Improving infant and young child feeding practices:** Train mothers to provide nutritious and inexpensive food for their children, increase growth monitoring in local health facilities, and mobilize women's groups to support breastfeeding.
- **Improving maternal and newborn care:** Train midwives and doctors in maternity units on using partographs¹ to manage labor, infection prevention, active management of the third stage of labor, and proper care for prolonged labor and post-abortion complications. Midwives, community health workers, and mothers receive training in the proper care of low birth-weight babies; as well as ensuring vitamin A supplementation for new mothers. Additionally, the project reaches out to community leaders and councils to promote antenatal care and the presence of skilled attendants during birth.
- **Preventing and controlling diarrhea:** Ensure adequate supply of zinc for children with diarrhea; provide chlorine water purification materials and instruction to remote households; promote exclusive breastfeeding and introducing food at age six months; and counsel mothers on care and feeding for ill children.
- **Preventing pneumonia:** Supply essential drugs and referral care and train licensed healthcare providers and community health workers.

RESULTS

- Distributed zinc supplements and other medicines to supported health facilities to improve diarrheal disease prevention and management
- Conducted health facility and health staff assessments and provided training to correct the problems identified by the assessments
- Trained maternity hospital staff from Hirat on baby-friendly hospital initiatives at the Malalai Hospital in Kabul and began implementing improved infant care practices in Hirat Maternity Hospital
- Trained 16 midwives, nurses, and doctors working at Hirat Maternity Hospital on using partographs during labor

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¹ The partograph is a graphic tool used by midwifery personnel to assess the progress of labor and to identify when intervention is necessary. Studies have shown that partographs can be highly effective in reducing complications from prolonged labor for the mother and the newborn.