

**“Hope Breeds Life”**  
**EVALUATION REPORT- CHRISTIAN AID**  
**AFGHANISTAN APPEAL (2001-2006)**



**Michael Paratharayil (Team Leader), Ramani Leathard and  
Engineer Fazl Rabi**

**Christian Aid**

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## ABBREVIATIONS

ACBAR	Agency Co-ordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR) - NGO Network
ACT	Action by Churches Together
BAAG	British and Irish Agencies in Afghanistan
CA	Christian Aid
ETF	Emergency Task Force
MEECA	Middle East, Eastern Europe and Central Asia
UN	United Nations

### **List of Christian Aid Partner Organisations:**

AREA	Agency for Rehabilitation and Energy Conservation in Afghanistan
AHDAA	Agency for Humanitarian and Development Assistance Afghanistan (previously Animal Husbandry Development Association of Afghanistan)
ARF	Afghan Reconstruction Foundation
CHA	Coordination for Humanitarian Assistance
RRAA	Rural Rehabilitation Association for Afghanistan previously
NPO/RRAA	(Norwegian Project Office/Rural Rehabilitation Association for Afghanistan)
SDF	Sanayee Development Organisation (previously <i>Foundation</i> )

# **‘Hope Breeds Life’ - Evaluation Report Christian Aid Afghanistan Appeal (2001-2006)**

## **1 Introduction**

After decades of conflict including civil wars, human rights violations, three years of drought and unfavourable development conditions, Afghanistan suffered the effects of another war. On 8 October, 2001, after the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon, U.S-led Coalition forces attempted to track down and destroy the Al Qaeda network. The subsequent displacement of more than one million Afghans, forced a large number to take refuge in neighbouring countries. Against this backdrop Christian Aid (CA) launched an appeal to help the victims of this complex emergency and raised £3.62 million through the supporters based in the UK and Ireland.

This is an evaluation of Christian Aid’s appeal which funded humanitarian and development interventions in Afghanistan over five years (2001-2006) .

## **2 Background to the Emergency and Christian Aid’s Appeal**

During 2001 it was estimated that as many as 4,000 Afghan civilians may have been killed by Afghan warlords, in addition to the execution of prisoners of war (a violation of the Geneva convention). More than a million Afghans were internally displaced, while over half a million<sup>1</sup> became refugees. Two decades of conflict and three years of drought strangled the development of the country and left it bereft of any rule of law. The wheat stood withering in the fields and over five million people were at risk of starvation. The UN declared the Afghan drought at that time “the worst humanitarian disaster in the world.” The level of human rights violations, the severe restrictions imposed on women by the Taliban regime and the lack of development infrastructure had exacerbated Afghanistan’s position at the bottom of the Human Development Index. It remains one of the world’s least developed countries. Christian Aid had just carried out a drought assessment and was developing a plan of interventions when the events of 9/11 took place. As a result of this complex emergency, Christian Aid launched a public appeal in September 2001 to help the victims of the humanitarian crisis.

## **3 Objectives of the Evaluation: (Full Terms of Reference appended)**

- To evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of Christian Aid’s internal management of the appeal and draw out the lessons that have been learned.
- To evaluate the quality and impact of the work of partner organisations within the various sectors.
- To evaluate the impact of the appeal on the lives of Afghan people.

The aim of the evaluation was twofold:

1. To inform and equip staff of the lessons learned, through a report and a presentation.
2. To report back to supporters on the impact of the appeal.

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<sup>1</sup> The Evaluation Report of ACT International – Afghanistan Appeals: ASAF 11 and 21 (by Arne Strand et al, June 2003).

#### **4 Methodology and process**

Due to the desire to keep learning and experience within CA the decision was made to carry out the evaluation using CA staff members. The review team was made up of: Michael Paratharayil (Emergency Officer, Humanitarian Division - Team Leader), Ramani Leathard (Regional Communications and Information Manager, Asia Middle East Division) and Engineer Fazil Rabi (Programme Manager, Afghanistan, based in Herat - who was involved with the appeal-funded programme from the start.)

It must be stated that this review is limited in its scope. Firstly, the time allocated to carry out work on a five-year appeal was limited. Secondly, limited institutional memory due to staff turnover both at Christian Aid and within partner organisations did not ease the task. Thirdly, a survey of beneficiaries was not possible within the limited time frame and the security situation. This evaluation is also one of a number of reviews being carried out that will feed into the new Country Policy and Strategy document. Interviews were by necessity selective and in-country access to beneficiaries was dependent on the security situation that was prevailing in Afghanistan. (During our visit in April 2006, five partner staff were killed in Badghis). This evaluation covers only CA appeal funded projects and excludes ACT funds. CA appeal funds represent a significant proportion of the overall Afghanistan budget. In view of this the CPSP of 2003-6 also provided the framework for the appeal funded and core funded programmes.

A range of methods was used and included

- Collection of data through questionnaires and discussion with current and former Christian Aid staff who worked on programme, communications and advocacy, based in London and the field office at the time of the appeal. (List appended).
- Collection of data through questionnaire to partner organisations.
- Desk-based work to look at available appeal documents, project updates, reports and financial statements and other related documents.
- Field visits – two weeks in April visiting Herat and Badghis provinces.
- Interviews and focused group discussions with 200 beneficiaries and staff of partner organisations.

For the analysis, we have roughly divided the appeal period into three phases:

1. Relief: 2001-2002
2. Rehabilitation: 2002-2003
3. Development 2004-present time

#### **5 Acknowledgements**

The team would like to thank Sue Turrell for nominating and accompanying them at different stages. Research support from Ian Marden is greatly appreciated. Thanks to CA's Afghanistan country staff members for facilitating our field visit, especially to Jozef van Mierlo, Nisha, and all the other wonderful Afghan staff. The co-operation and hospitality of all partner staff was crucial in completing this study and we are very grateful to them. We are indebted to all the beneficiaries with whom we interacted during our field visit. Thanks to all previous and current CA staff who participated in the research and discussion. We are also grateful to the following

people for their support and guidance in making our field visit possible and in the production of this report: Brian Martin, Sarah Malian and Robin Greenwood.

## **6 Decision Making process and Management:**

### **Early assessment and Planning**

**Pre 9/11:** CA had already done an assessment<sup>2</sup> of the drought situation in July/August 2001 and was planning to launch an appeal and had already contacted the Churches in the UK and Ireland regarding this.

**Post 9/11:** Through the Emergency Task Force (ETF) meetings, attended by the directors, heads of teams and representatives from other constituency teams, the decision was made to mount a larger appeal. This appeal was launched on 12<sup>th</sup> September 2001. At this forum it was decided to support partners in Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan, as there was an anticipated exodus of people to these neighbouring countries. In the event there was significant displacement to Pakistan, but Iran closed its borders. Drought and conflict-related food shortages dominated Christian Aid partners' interventions. CA had opened a Field Office in Herat in 1997 and has since maintained a continuous staff presence there

CA sent international staff members from the then Emergencies Unit, Media and MEECA teams to Iran and Pakistan to support partners and help refugee community members to advocate for appropriate humanitarian interventions. The Programme Officer (Engineer Fazl Rabi) based in Afghanistan was able to update CA in London, at some personal risk to himself, regarding to the situation on the ground.

## **7 Management**

When the appeal was launched, the management of the programme was executed jointly by the then MEECA team and the ETF. Subsequently management was centralised in the MEECA Team in June 2002 with the recruitment of the Programme Leader Central Asia. 'The ETF was the group to decide line, position or action, or merely to note it, with decisions then taken by the most relevant staff/authority'<sup>3</sup>. Support from the various teams working cross-organisationally was greatly appreciated by all those we interviewed (especially the Emergencies Unit, PFAST, then Global Advocacy Team (currently GAPD), Media and Communications officers in the geographical team). At this time Christian Aid did not have standardised or formal systems or procedures for humanitarian intervention.<sup>4</sup> CA was one of the largest of the five implementing agencies for the ACT appeal for Afghanistan (ASAF11) that raised more than \$17,721,497. CA's lead role in the ACT appeal was beneficial in influencing the ACT forum of ACT implementing agencies, especially to reduce the relief phase and to advocate for the recovery phase. As the situation on the ground was rapidly changing, access to the country became easier by early 2002. Given the fact that around 1.8 million Afghans repatriated from Iran, Pakistan and other Central Asian republics in early 2002, CA scaled down operations in these countries at that stage.

## **8 Programme Management**

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<sup>2</sup> Assessment Report by Anthony Morton King,

<sup>3</sup> Afghanistan Emergency Response Review, Notes for Discussion on 17.01.02, by Alison Kelly

<sup>4</sup> The Emergency Response Strategy of CA was developed in the year 2002, may be an outcome of the interventions.

As Christian Aid had already carried out basic research and a comprehensive needs assessment before 9/11, it was well placed to deliver the programmes effectively, targeting the most relevant geographical locations and prioritising the sectors for interventions. Sixty per cent of the total appeal budget was allocated to the rehabilitation programmes, with 35 per cent specifically focusing on livelihoods programmes. (Details of the fund allocation is in the diagram 1 on page 8).

CA deployed international and national staff to work with partners in Afghanistan and for the short term in Pakistan and Iran. Partners were given appropriate programmatic and technical support. CA's field offices in three provinces, Kabul (opened in August 2002), Herat and Ghor provided additional opportunities to support partners in monitoring the effectiveness of programme implementation. However, withdrawal of the international staff during the initial phase of the programme and at later stages and difficulties encountered by the national staff due to the insecurity have negatively affected the programme management. Difficulties were encountered in recruiting staff with appropriate skills resulting in delays. In addition, the hostile environment in Afghanistan and the terms and conditions offered by Christian Aid meant it did not prove an attractive place to work for international and national staff (see below section 8.1- HR Management).

### **8.1 Observations**

In general, Christian Aid's decision-making process and management approach was appropriate in helping the victims of the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. Efforts of different team members involved in mobilising appeal funds and managing programmes have to be greatly appreciated. 'The major factor in our success was however the commitment, long hours and hard work put in by so many people'<sup>5</sup>. However there are some lessons that Christian Aid has learned from the Afghanistan experience. Following are some of the key observations:

1. **Appeal Funds Utilisation Plan:** CA should have developed a strategy and an indicative plan of how the appeal funds were to be utilised and monitored. (At the time of the appeal there was no clear policy for the utilisation of the appeal funds or emergency response strategy).
2. **HR Management:** Staff deployment and mechanisms to recruit and retain staff, especially in a very hostile environment have to be clearly worked out with those involved in the recruitment process. It was observed that some staff members deployed to the countries did not have the required skills or CA was not able to attract people with the required skills, due to the less attractive package CA was offering, especially when other INGOs were offering better salaries.
3. **Institutionalisation of Lessons Learnt from Appeal Funded Programmes:** CA should have developed a comprehensive strategy for appeal-funded programmes. This did not take place at the beginning of the appeal. After an internal review in London in early 2002, there was no systematic attempt to understand the impact of CA appeal-funded programmes in Afghanistan from 2002-2006. Plans for a mid-term review of the CPSP in 2004 were shelved because of security challenges.

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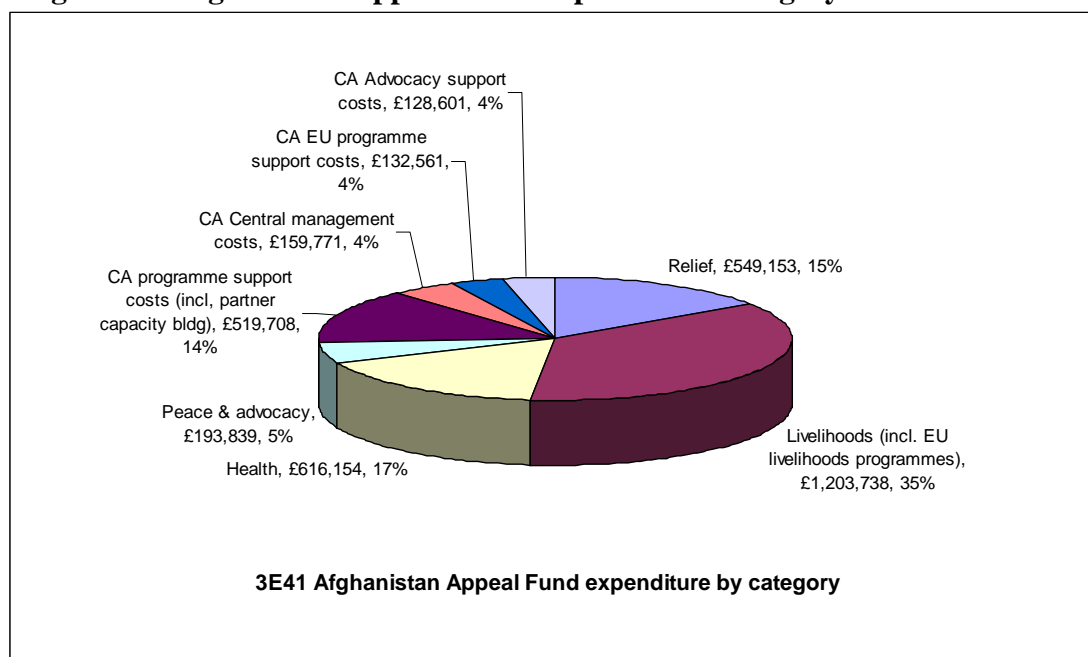
<sup>5</sup> Afghanistan Emergency Response Review, Notes for Discussion on 17.01.02, by Alison Kelly

4. **Better Partner Monitoring Guidelines: At the time of the Afghanistan Appeal, CA did not have a corporately agreed monitoring and evaluation framework, within which partners were expected report on. This led to situations such as** partners changing their plans without prior approval from CA. Most of the partners did not have prior experience in implementing humanitarian programmes, which makes this point all the more relevant.

### 9 Sectors of Interventions

In light of the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan, CA continued to focus its work in western Afghanistan through the funding of emergency projects led by local partners. The appeal enabled CA to expand its programme into other provinces and areas in Western Afghanistan. The CPSP<sup>6</sup> objectives were: securing peace; promoting sustainable livelihoods; ensuring recovery and development based on solutions provided by Afghan men and women. In order to achieve these objectives the appeal supported the work of six non-governmental organisations in the following programme priority sectors: relief, livelihoods, health, peace and advocacy. The following diagram and table illustrate these details.

**Diagram 1 - Afghanistan Appeal Fund Expenditure Category**



\*CA's Central management costs includes the costs involved in media and publicity and fundraising and CA's programme support cost includes staffing and administration cost required to manage the ACT appeal funded interventions (\$1,143,760) and other back donor funded interventions.

**Table-1  
Summary of the Appeal Funded Programmes**

Partner	Sector	Location	Total families	Budget
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<sup>6</sup> Afghanistan country policy and strategy paper, 1 April 2003 – 31 March 2006, *Final Draft*

AHDAA	Relief	Gulran District, Herat	1,000	£7,254
	Livelihoods	Gulran District, Herat	751	£296,253
AREA	Relief	Herat provinces	3,200	£114,859
	Livelihoods	Herat City, Ghor, Badghis Adraskan and Gozhara Districts, Herat	15,571	£167,892
ARF	Livelihoods	Herat	2,191	£166,433
CHA	Relief	Ghor, Farah, Herat provinces	90,500	£264,756
	Livelihoods	Ghor, Farah, Herat, Badghis, Faryab provinces	39,291	£403,062
			not listed/indirect beneficiaries	
ICRI	Health	Herat province		£141,702
	Relief	Afghan refugees in Iran		£16,797
NPO/RRAA	Relief	Gulran District, Herat; Laman Valley, Badghis	5,283	£145,486
	Livelihoods	Kushk Kohna, Badghis Kushk Kohna, Laman Valley, Dar-i-boom in Badghis; Kushk- e-Rabat Sangi in Herat	752	£97,711
	Health	Karukh District, Herat; Farah, Badghis and Herat provinces	197,515	£474,451
SDF	Livelihoods	Farah, Badghis, Herat provinces	1,000	£97,940
	Peace & advocacy		14,000	£193,838
	<b>TOTAL</b>			<b>£2,588,434</b>

## 10 Communications

### Internal

In the first six months, the Geographical team, Communications staff and Media seemed to have worked well together along with the Emergency Unit in providing up-to-date information when the appeal was launched. Co-ordination and communication between the teams, including MSRD was said to have worked better than in previous appeals. There was a great demand from within the organisation for information and case studies from Afghanistan, especially from Churches, Marketing, Schools and Youth and Supporter Relations teams – clearly linked to what was in the media at the time. Before 9/11, Afghanistan had rarely figured on Christian Aid's map but the appeal raised the profile of our programme. After this initial period, work with these teams tailed off and remaining activities were limited largely to the geographical and the CIU team.

### External

During the first six months, as an organisation CA came to be regarded as a credible voice on matters relating to Afghanistan. During this period CA was able to influence:

- The media with the volume of coverage (anecdotal evidence suggests that this amounted to over 100 hours of media time - thanks to the images recorded on a video camera by Anthony Morton-King, then emergency co-ordinator, during his visit in August 2001)
- Financial Times' editorial
- Parliamentarians with the numerous briefings which helped keep the humanitarian issue on the agenda. CA was also called as a witness at two Parliamentary International Development Select Committee reports and CA's inputs are on record as 'parliamentary business'.

Messages with regard to this appeal were for the first time also communicated through at that time 'unusual' or non-traditional CA outlets such as the Sun and other tabloid press. CA learned a great deal about using the Emergency Task Force (ETF) effectively. However we could have spent more time discussing the needs of various target audiences and the messages that should have been promoted. This would have helped with consistency and ensured that messages were being communicated to achieve optimum impact.

Among the CA staff interviewed and involved at the start of the appeal there were differing views on the messages communicated. For example, one view was that some statements were too extreme. For instance saying "thousands will die" should have been "may die" or "are at high risk of dying." There were also references to "ghost villages" which were thought to be exaggerated.

On the other hand some messages were developed in conjunction with other agencies so tended to get watered down or "fudged".

## **11 Advocacy/Policy**

As part of the review process for the CPSP for Afghanistan, a review of all policy and advocacy work is being led by Sultan Maqsood Fazil. For this reason, we have mainly concentrated on the advocacy analysis in the first six months of the appeal period.

CA took the lead role in the UK in advocating for a 'humanitarian pause to the conflict' to highlight the need for food supplies to reach famine and war-affected families who were soon to be isolated due to the onset of winter. Advocacy work at this time focused on regular briefings for MPs, presentation of findings to the Select Committee, a joint letter by the BOAG agencies to the Prime Minister Tony Blair, discussions with the WFP in London, along with Oxfam to clarify the issues related to food distribution and joint advocacy with British Agencies in Afghanistan Group (BAAG). Over all, the initial advocacy work that was carried out by CA was very relevant although it could have been more contextualised. For instance some of the observations did not relate to the realities on the ground. "We did extremely well in alerting the general public and the government to the problem... the potential scale of an impending humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. We were less convincing in articulating the complexity of 'achievable' solutions both in political and logistical terms".<sup>7</sup>

Policy position: There seemed to have been differences of opinion and levels of agreement on Christian Aid's position from the outset. This position was not arrived at by consensus. It was generally felt that by the time work moved into the rehabilitation phase, the focus moved more towards the issue of 'humanitarian space'.

With regard to the process adopted for arriving at a policy position, the International Director at that time felt that one person should have been charged with drafting positions rather than trying to work this out in meetings. His view was that senior staff should have been more involved due to the sensitivity of the emergency, with 'sign off' being at directorate level. There was also a need to liaise with ACT and BOAG

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<sup>7</sup> Review report by GAP on CA's advocacy and policy work in October, 2002

partners to ensure consistency across major agencies working collaboratively. It also should be clear who leads in shaping policy for each agency.

It is not clear to what extent CA was able to engage with partners on an advocacy strategy to highlight the development issues affecting Afghans in the rehabilitation phase and the development phase.

## **12 Programme Impact**

### **12.1 Relief**

The relief stage of the appeal lasted between the first six months to one year. Christian Aid Partners, (specifically CHA and RRAA) reached approximately 95,083 families with immediate relief, specifically focusing on food needs.

#### **12.1.1 Impact**

In the immediate relief phase partners focused on food distribution with the food-for-work approach. The food distribution was an opportunity to meet the immediate needs of communities and help create assets like roads connecting villages to towns, flood protection walls, community centres etc. This component was both relevant and appropriate as many community members were affected by the severe drought in Afghanistan, and had limited employment opportunities. RRAA distributed the following items: 50Kg wheat, 2Kg Ghee, 2Kg lentil (peas) and 1 Kg Salt. Beneficiaries in Laman, Badghis, where RRAA worked, said this food distribution encouraged some of the IDPs to return back to their villages from Herat and reduced further migration. The programme provided some employment opportunities for men and women. Women were also involved in the food-for-work programme which involved the weaving of gabion wire netting to provide protection from road erosion. This enabled women to gain additional skills.

Food supplies (given by WFP) and the additional income received from CA ensured IDP communities returning from Herat had access to food and provided vital income for the family to start a new life. This approach had a therapeutic effect as well, given the trauma faced during the Taliban regime and post 9/11 situation in the country.

[We were not able to visit the villages where CHA had implemented the relief programmes].

#### **12.1.2 Observation**

The relief programme approach was both appropriate and relevant. However, there were incidents where the most vulnerable women (such as widows, as observed in Laman) were excluded from the cash and food-for-work scheme. Gender insensitivity at community level (selection of beneficiaries was largely carried out by the shura<sup>8</sup>), and the marginalisation of groups like widows by field staff may have been one of the contributory factors for the exclusion of the most vulnerable.

**12.1.3 Recommendation:** Vulnerable groups, specifically women, need to be prioritised when needs are being assessed. RRAA should work with the local

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<sup>8</sup> Local elected bodies that are involved in the decision making process of the village development. Though they are made up of men, in some villages women's shuras are beginning to be established.

community leaders and shura members to ensure that these sections of the community are considered during the planning phase. Equally gender awareness needs to be prioritised not just by partner organisations but within Christian Aid staff working on the Afghanistan programme.

## **12.2 Education**

The education programme has been supported for the entire period of the appeal. CA supported AREA and SDF in this sector, benefiting a total of 93,600 people. While the main focus of AREA was to carry out educational and awareness raising programmes in schools, IDP camps and villages, SDF promoted formal education programmes, specifically for women. Vocational training and skill development was also integrated into the education programme and benefited 102 people – 86 of whom were women. SDF carried out teacher training, emphasising the participatory training methodology benefiting 360 teachers and 7,200 students. In addition to this SDF published an educative magazine called Rainbow, promoting peace, health, environmental and religious values. AREA carried out landmine awareness programmes, specifically focusing on measures to minimise accidents relating to landmines.

### **12.2.1 Impact**

The education and literacy programmes for women implemented in Karukh, Herat, by SDF enabled them to gain basic functional literacy skills. The programme helped them to reach level 4 of the formal education system. This has provided the incentive to attain a higher educational level. The beneficiaries also received vocational training skills in tailoring and embroidery and were given seed money as a loan to buy sewing machines and other materials. Many of the women beneficiaries were able to repay the loans they received from SDF and are now generating income and contributing towards their household income.

One of the main unanticipated outcomes of the project in Karukh was the opportunity for women to emerge from the traditional Taliban-imposed restrictions on freedom of movement. This has resulted in the creation of ‘women friendly space’ and opportunities to participate in the decision-making process at the household level on matters affecting women. The outcome of the livelihood, skill building and educational programme appears to be a starting point for of a process of empowerment for women in the context of Afghanistan. The creation of women friendly space has been instrumental in setting up female shuras in Karukh district covering 55 villages. This is a significant achievement of the appeal. (See Gender Section 13.3).

A total of 22 young men received vocational and functional literacy training. Many have set up their own small business units from the seed money they received as loans, in different income generating fields such as automobile shops, radio repair shops etc. The income earned from these livelihood ventures has enabled them to repay their loans in full. Overall the SDF project loan repayment rate is impressive.

The landmine awareness programme carried out by AREA has contributed to the reduction of casualties by mines/UXOs explosions and thus a reduction in the numbers of disabilities and deaths. This programme benefited more than 100,000

families. The evaluation team was unable to visit the villages where this programme was implemented.

### **12.2.2 Observations**

SDF needs to take a more holistic and rights-based approach to its education work to enable participants to acquire other life skills for development and advocate for them.

### **12.2.3 Recommendations**

SDF should facilitate the shuras to develop and implement needs-based development programmes and ensure the monitoring of how the seed money was used by the shuras.

## **12.3 Health**

The health programmes covered the whole appeal period. CHA and RRAA implemented health programmes in Herat and Farah provinces. They were able to reach 195,900 people.

### **12.3.1 Impact**

The primary and secondary healthcare programmes contributed to the basic health needs of affected communities. Most of these health centres are located in remote rural areas of the country where security of personnel is at risk. There was no other health care delivery system operating in these provinces. Interventions of partners also facilitated the availability of trained health personnel and popularised the concept of trained community health workers (CHW) and traditional birth attendants (TBA) in the villages. In Laman, Badghis, where RRAA operated, the presence of trained female CHW was a very positive step in improving the health status of women in the community. CHA's health technical support unit (HTSU), was set up with CA appeal funds. This enabled the training of paramedics and community health workers and has become a national training programme now implemented by the Ministry of Public Health which is training the paramedics and the CHW trainers.

In April 2006, while we were carrying out the evaluation, five health centre staff members of RRAA were killed in Badghis, in a suspected attack by the Taliban. Staff members of CHA were also killed in 2005. In Laman, where RRAA is working, Roza Mohammed, head of the local mosque said: "We have the clinic, it has solved lots of our problems. Many villagers died of the most simple diseases before, but this can now be avoided." The efforts of Christian Aid partners in providing basic health care services needs to be specifically appreciated.

### **12.3.2 Observations**

Sustaining the delivery of basic health care is a real challenge in the context of Afghanistan, especially when the system has been fully privatised with assistance from bilateral organisations (largely from USAID) and the World Bank. The responsibility for running health clinics in Badghis, where RRAA has been working, will be transferred to other NGOs such as BRAC-Afghanistan and MOVE (a new organisation with no experience in managing healthcare delivery). Though CHA is one of the leading NGOs carrying out health care programmes in different provinces, the health centre that was constructed by CHA in Herat has been handed over to the Advanced Institute for Learning (AIL). The selection of the NGOs by the Ministry of

Public Health has been controlled by the ‘influence and connections of different parties involved’ as explained by RRAA. Internal management problems within RRAA has made it difficult to access funds from government sources. This is even affecting RRAA programmes and currently CA has suspended funding.

The privatised health service is largely run by national NGOs. During the humanitarian crisis phase healthcare delivery by NGOs was a necessity. However during the rehabilitation and development phase, advocacy measures perhaps should have called for a strengthening of basic service delivery through the state. NGOs in general faced difficulties in feeding their knowledge and experience of managing basic service provision in Afghanistan into the formation of national level advocacy strategies.

### **12.3.3 Recommendations**

CA and partners should continue to develop an advocacy strategy to sustain the delivery of basic healthcare and other services through the state after the initial phase.

### **12.4 Livelihoods**

The livelihoods programme has been implemented throughout the appeal period. Livelihoods has been one of the sectors prioritised by almost all partners and has received the greatest proportion of appeal funds. A total of 35,716 families have been reached in Herat, Farah and Badghis, Ghor and Faryab provinces. Livelihood support has focused on: agriculture, livestock and animal husbandry, skill building, handicrafts and asset creation.

#### **12.4.1 Impact**

**Agriculture and Livestock:** In the project areas of CHA, RRAA and AHDAA, farmers were provided with the following agri-inputs: seeds/seedlings, fertilizer, working tools, in addition to the technical capacity building. CHA supported female headed/disabled headed households with milking goats and poultry along with technical support for livestock and poultry rearing. Partner interventions have generated positive outcomes in providing vital family income and ensuring food security for those affected by the drought and war. Through the interventions of CHA, a farmer in Porchaman district cultivated cauliflower and cabbage for the first time. Capacity building support given by partners enabled farmers to learn new methods of drying grapes, and the use and repair of tractor and water pumps.

**Assets Creation:** For example, ARF focused on creating assets for irrigation with building aqueducts and slab culverts, while RRAA and AHDAA focused on constructing canals and flood prevention walls. RRAA constructed a total of 3 km of gabion protection wall, in 34 locations, covering a 25 km stretch benefiting 28 villages. AHDAA has constructed a flood prevention wall in Asiadev village in Gulran that helped to increase the area of land for cultivation from 30 hectares to 150 hectares. Irrigation canals constructed by ARF improved the irrigation for 1700 jeribs, (85% of the irrigated land) in three villages in Gozarah district. CHA set up orchards and nurseries. This has facilitated the availability of water, prevention of land and house erosion, increased food security and minimised the future vulnerability of the affected population.

#### **12.4.2 Vocational Training and Skill Building**

SDF, CHA, and RRAA provided skills training in a variety of ways. SDF's intervention with women and men was integrated into the education programme. Training for women in tailoring and for men in radio and automobile repair helped the beneficiaries to start new livelihoods. Many who received training in the Karukh district of Herat are earning vital income and paying back their loans. Women are proud of their contributions to the family, as they were never allowed these opportunities under the Taliban regime. Provision of vocational training and livelihood opportunities have been a contributory factor for the creation of women friendly space (WFS) which is mentioned in the section on education. The training offered by RRAA in weaving the gabion netting and in constructing the wall provided some beneficiaries with further employment opportunities in Laman, Badghis, in addition to the income they received while the programme was in operation. Capacity building support provided by CHA for tractor repair, water pump maintenance, nursery and orchards management is contributing to the future livelihood measures of beneficiaries.

#### **12.4.3 Observations:**

It is not certain to what extent the wheat and chickpea cultivation has resulted in serving the food security needs of the community, due to the unprecedented drought and pest infestation, especially at the beginning of the intervention. In Los Shbaq village (Gulran district of Herat) villagers said that the harvest was poor for both wheat and chickpea, as most of the villagers were unable to get sufficient seeds from the harvest. There is a need to ensure that regular monitoring and follow up support is given to beneficiaries and that this is built into planning at the outset.

In the SDF-supported programme on vocational training and income generation, the original plan was to hand over the repaid loan sum to the shura in the presence of the government while the local shuras implemented the development programmes. The role of SDF was to build the capacity of the shuras. However, during our discussion with the community it became evident that the money had been paid back to SDF.

Community participation in the livelihood programme is very crucial. Due to the level of insecurity on the ground it is very difficult to ensure regular contact with beneficiaries. Some communications from CA's internal monitoring show that there could have been better ways to involve the beneficiaries in need identification, especially in the areas where CHA had been working with livelihood interventions. (See Gender section at 13.3 for more analysis)

#### **12.4.4 Recommendations**

Partners should be incorporating measures for technical and monitoring support whenever agriculture programmes are designed.

SDF should help shuras to develop and implement some need-based development programmes and should ensure the monitoring of how seed money is used by the shuras.

Mechanisms for community participation should be highlighted whenever the livelihood programmes are designed and should be followed up regularly.

### **12.5 Water and Sanitation**

AHDAA, AREA and ARF provided services in this sector reaching out to 5,569 families. The main activities focused on construction of water reservoirs, installation of water pump sheds and water taps, drilling of deep wells and hygiene promotion.

### **12.5.1 Impact**

The construction of water reservoirs and the hygiene awareness raising programmes were successful in providing access to safe drinking water within close proximity to the houses of the beneficiaries. As a result, time spent in carrying water for long distances has been reduced considerably and water is being conserved. In Bozan village in Gulran district the impact of AHDAA's watsan programmes was still visible after almost three years. Children enjoy improved health and women have more time available for other income generating activities such as weaving. Community participation has been the key factor in establishing the water supply system and ensuring that water points are easily accessible for everyone in the village. The hygiene promotion component has resulted in a reduction in the incidence of water borne diseases. The provision of separate drinking facilities for animals has contributed positively to the health of the livestock and to public health. Though no health records are available to verify this, perceptions of the beneficiaries do confirm this in Gulran. Water supply systems constructed by ARF in Shirzad village of Adraskan district of Herat province have contributed to resolving local conflicts in relation to the control and access of an open spring.

### **12.5.2 Observations**

The water supply system established by partners appears to be sustainable and inexpensive to maintain. Most of the Sphere standards guidelines were adhered to in terms of the availability of water per household, maximum distance of the nearest water point (less than 200 metres which is more generous than Sphere), access and equity. The spring fed water system is cheap and eco-friendly. AHDAA plans to draw a map of water sources in Gulran and submit it to the relevant government ministry so that it can be replicated in other villages. (For details of the Gender analysis, see section on 13.3).

### **12.5.3 Recommendations**

Establishing a spring fed gravity water system should be promoted where possible and lessons learned should be replicated in other areas of need.

## **12.6 Peace Building**

This aspect was started in 2003 and has continued until the present time. SDF prioritised peace building in the latter part of the intervention. They focused on promoting peace-enhancing behaviour at the community level through training of local teachers, community leaders, NGOs and provincial government representatives.

### **12.6.1 Impact**

The original peace promotion programme funded by the appeal continued as part of the Global Conflict Prevention Pool (GCPP) jointly funded by Trocaire, Cordaid and Christian Aid. SDF staff communicated that the programme had resulted in reducing the number of community level conflicts in their project areas. The evaluation team was not able to verify the impact of the peace building programme, as we did not have

access to any documents on the impact of these programmes and did not have the opportunity to interact with the beneficiaries.

### **12.6.2 Observations**

There is a lack of clarity with regard to SDF's basic analysis and programme approach to peace building and conflict resolution.

### **12.6.3 Recommendation**

Partners should carry out a broader analysis of conflict and develop plans to assess the outcome of their interventions. These findings relating to the impact of the programmes should be documented. Guidelines to support partners in developing and managing conflict resolution programmes are recommended.

## **13 Approaches**

### **13.1 Targeting**

Christian Aid partners ensured that targeting was done on the basis of need rather than any other factor. It is interesting to note that CA partners tried to work with the different social groups in Afghanistan to ensure that benefits reached all sections. While ARF focused on getting benefits for both Pashtuns and Moghols when an irrigation canal was constructed, AHDAA made sure that the nomads (Kuchis) were not denied access to the open spring for drinking water and established a water tap at the location of the spring for easy access. There are good examples for all the partners in this regard (which is not quoted in detail here). RRAA observes that use of participatory rural appraisal (PRA) techniques was very useful in ensuring appropriate targeting, especially in the rehabilitation phase. CHA highlights that the needs of both the Sunni and Shia were equally addressed at the relief and rehabilitation phase.

Involvement of the shuras has been very beneficial in most cases. But it is not clear if the shura leaders in some cases tried to influence the selection process. In Laman, Badghis, where RRAA worked, it was observed that some vulnerable members of the society, for example widows, could have been involved in the food for work programmes. RRAA staff members could have clarified the mechanisms with the shura members to ensure that people like widows were not excluded.

### **13.2 Co-ordination**

A need for better co-ordination of humanitarian response was felt after the fall of the Taliban in 2001. The UN initiated a better coordination process and established a Provincial Coordination Body (PCB). All the agencies (both the UN and non UN, INGO and NGOs) participated in the coordination meetings which were held weekly in the beginning and monthly in later stages. These meetings focused on issues related to the emergency projects, drought related activities and security management. CA and its partners regularly participated in these meetings. CA was the convener for co-ordinating Ghor PCB forum. Later the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR) was established in Herat and coordinated the activities of all agencies including the UN. CA partners became active members of ACBAR and participated regularly in the important meetings. After a period of time when the drought had apparently ended, UN agencies were not part of ACBAR as they organised separate co-ordination meetings.

CA partners had regular co-ordination meetings to clarify programme and management issues and also to provide capacity building support. CA was the lead agency of the ACT co-ordination forum that existed in the country which liaised with other partner led agencies like NCA and Church World Service, Pakistan and Afghanistan (CWS P/A). Since most of the ACT members were implementing through partners, this co-ordination was helpful in avoiding duplication. CA's partner co-ordination forum was helpful in sharing better practices with other partners. For example, CHA and RRAA helped each other with healthcare training and delivery. Based on the lessons learned from CHA, RRAA replicated the good examples of healthcare delivery in their respective areas. AHDAA's experience in supplying water was replicated by ARF. CHA took the lead role in some cases to carry out the capacity-building programmes in the health sector for other CA partners as well.

CA also co-ordinated with the provincial and national government level structures at different levels. Whenever capacity building programmes were planned for sectoral interventions, government level officials were invited and participated as well. Training in agricultural management and monitoring was greatly appreciated in this regard. Contact with government level officials by CA staff – both national and international - needs to be specially recognised as well. It was thanks to these contacts, that when there were issues with government authorities and once with the former CA country representative in Afghanistan, diplomatic resolution was possible without hampering CA operations and partners.

### **13.3 Gender**

There were many positive outcomes within the programme and these included: increased knowledge of hygiene, availability of basic health services (especially maternal and child health), employment opportunities – and recognition of women's roles in contributing to family income and skill building. However, it remains unclear whether many of these 'positive outcomes' are in fact additional burdens on women resulting in increasing their workload and decreasing their leisure time. Enabling women to generate incomes from carpet weaving means they have additional workload while their husbands get more money to spend. Further analysis on these issues should be prioritised.

Christian Aid's own field office has only had one national female programme staff member and has made very slow progress in addressing the gender gap although some progress has been achieved through the intern scheme. Equally many of our partner organisations in Afghanistan are entirely male dominated even when working specifically on projects with women. For instance NPO/RRAA's 'Cash for Work' on the Gabion project, women's health. However equal numbers of men and women were trained as CHW. While receptive to being made aware of their lack of inclusion of women, there is no evidence that partners took the initial steps towards bridging the gender gap at organisational or community level (For example NPO/RRAA's sub-field office staff were largely male, the only female staff member, a midwife, was not present during our visit). In addition, there were incidents where the most vulnerable women (such as widows) were excluded from the cash and food for work scheme. The gender insensitivity at community level (selection of beneficiaries carried out by the shura which is male dominated), and the inadequate attention paid to gender issues

by the partner field staff may have been one of the contributory factors to the exclusion of the most vulnerable.

Robia, a widow in the village of Nethomi said: “We were vulnerable and unable to work. My son was just nine years old at the time, I was sick and did not benefit from this employment programme. The shura needs to make sure that people like us are also included.”

Within the community health education element of the programme, the presence of trained female health workers seemed to contribute to the improved health status of women in the community. Despite the lack of literacy and education, creative ways have been found to enable women to take on the role of health workers. For instance Khadija, a health worker in Badghis Province, is illiterate. However, she has been taught to dispense medicines and vaccinations using a colour code. Despite the odds, she is able to provide a service and improve the quality of life within her community.

An SDF staff member and leader of the female shura in Karukh spoke eloquently about the challenges facing the women of Afghanistan:

- Address levels of illiteracy and increase educational opportunities for all women. If education is improved other aspects of life will also improve.
- The economic status of women needs to be improved with training and opportunities to generate income.
- Basic rights to education.

She said: “It is not that we want to give up wearing the burqa, we want to be involved in making decisions that affect our lives. We don’t want to give up our cultural practices but are keen to have education and opportunities for generating income.”

Within Christian Aid it was felt that though the Taliban had prevented women from working, the whole climate changed after the war. In view of this, partner organisations had to re-frame their activities in more creative ways.

### **13.3.1 Recommendations**

Partners should adopt a higher gender profile involving women in non-traditional sectors, rather than involving them only in integrated development programmes. Christian Aid should prioritise improving national staff’s gender awareness and include a gender mainstreaming strategy in the new CPSP. It is likely that a ‘WID’ (women in development) approach is most appropriate in an Afghan context. CA should prioritise a more indepth and nuanced analysis of the gender impact of its work in Afghanistan.

### **13.4 The Sphere and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Code of Conduct**

Most CA partners are aware of Sphere Standards, although there are varying degrees of clarity in terms of applying these standards as the level of knowledge has been very much limited to quantitative indicators. All CA partner staff were very cautious about the initial relief programmes, as they felt that it might create some dependency syndromes among the beneficiaries, given the arrival of new NGOs and the emphasis on long term relief interventions. Hence the concept of participation was very much encouraged in many ways and to some extent CA and partners succeeded in achieving this.

CA popularised the Code of Conduct among the partners and advocated how important it is for CA and partners to adhere to these Codes.<sup>9</sup> This was useful in gaining the trust of the new partners and community members and external stakeholder for CA's approaches, given the 'Christian' basis of Christian Aid and the Islamic background of partners and community members. Partners in their operational areas did adhere to them, especially in the selection of beneficiaries, ensuring participation and linking relief with development and ensuring that impartiality was adhered to at all levels.

But there is still a lack of clarity for some partner staff on the implications of these codes, especially among middle and lower levels of management. It is also important to note that due to staff turnover among some partners, there is a need to organise training on Sphere and the Code of Conduct with new partner staff.

In the immediate aftermath of 9/11, did CA exaggerate the situation in Afghanistan and numbers affected in our advocacy materials with some of the advocacy materials out of context? If so, it could be interpreted that CA was not able to consistently uphold No.10 of the Code of Conduct to portray the victims with dignity in the agency campaigns. It might be because of this lesson that CA's field staff in the country raised concerns with the ACT journalist sent to Peshawar in 2002 to ensure that portrayal of the humanitarian situation did not violate the Code of Conduct.<sup>10</sup>

### **13.5 Security Management**

Given the volatile situation prevalent in the country, pre-, during and post-Taliban, CA has emphasised the importance of appropriate, proportionate and people-centred measures. After 9/11, almost all international staff members in Afghanistan were evacuated to London, Iran and Pakistan. National staff members who were in the country were given the option to be evacuated to safer locations within Afghanistan. National staff members remained in their homes in Afghanistan and had occasional contact with CA through satellite phones.

International staff members were redeployed to the country once the situation improved. CA's office and staff have always been equipped with adequate measures and strict guidelines on security protocols. Whenever staff members travel to the field, they have a route map, en-route contact points and have to establish contact with the office base every hour either through coda phone or satellite phone. Periodic security assessments on the security of CA's office and security training provided to the staff by CA London are very useful in this regard. As we write this report in May 2006 there are serious security incidents being reported in Afghanistan, specifically targeting I/NGO staff.

The security situation in Afghanistan has always had a profound impact on implementing the programmes and will continue to do so until there is a degree of stability within the country.

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<sup>9</sup> This is also highlighted in the Evaluation Report of the ACT International – Afghanistan Appeals: ASAF 11 and 21 (by Arne Strand et al, June 2003).

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

Partner staff have been heavily targeted in some provinces. In Farah five CHA staff were killed in 2005. Five RRAA staff were killed in Badghis in April 2006 when we were doing the evaluation field visits. CA staff in the country tried to help the partners to ensure the security incidents were reported to concerned authorities such as the ICRC, the UN and government departments and to ensure that the bodies were identified and released to family members. CA field staff and London staff strongly advocated for the security of national and international aid workers through both policy and media advocacy in national and international forums.

Partner staff members, though, have only a basic understanding of security management processes, and need to be encouraged to invest in better security management processes. For example, the RRAA office in Laman did not have any communication facility even though staff members live there five days a week to implement programmes. AHDAA's Gulran office was not equipped with any communication facility.

### **13.5.1 Recommendation**

Christian Aid needs to consider what kind of mechanisms ought to be put in place to make sure partners are able to have improved security management systems with basic communication facilities.

### **13.6 Capacity Building**

CA's capacity building support to the partners has been very much recognised. CA staff members based in Afghanistan helped partners to conceptualise and formulate their humanitarian programmes as well as giving management support. In addition to this, different capacity building programmes using external facilitators were carried out in the following areas: agriculture, animal husbandry and forestry; health and hygiene promotion programmes.

CHA, the largest NGO in Afghanistan, with more than 4,000 staff, acknowledged that CA has been a leading partner in investing in capacity building since its establishment. Partner staff also acknowledged that the capacity building support they received from CA has helped them to improve the quality of their interventions and to ensure that the benefit reaches many others. CA's appeal and the efforts of CA's staff have been very beneficial in strengthening civil society.

It is observed that partners should have been given more capacity building support in the initial phase of the operations as some of them had limited experience in humanitarian operations. They should have been also supported to develop appropriate disaster risk reduction and peace and reconciliation programmes.

#### **13.6.1 Recommendations**

CA should consider a capacity building plan that works with partners on developing appropriate disaster risk reduction programmes linked to livelihoods.

There should be clear guidelines on developing appropriate peace and reconciliation programmes.

## **14 Lessons Learned**

### **14.1 Positives**

1. Christian Aid as an organisation founded on Christian values and working in a predominantly Muslim country gained a great deal of **credibility and recognition** as a serious voice on Afghanistan, with an innovative media and advocacy strategy. CA proved how it could work in a different and difficult cultural context, respecting local culture and faith.
2. **Cross organisational management support**, especially at the initial phase of programme management, was very impressive, though there was scope to improve this at a later stage.
3. CA's prior presence in the country and the analysis carried out before the war in 2001, enabled it to develop **need-based humanitarian and development interventions** targeting appropriate geographical locations.
4. **A total partnership approach** – CA built partner capacity to ensure they could effectively implement programmes and meet the needs of the affected communities, in a very insecure environment.
5. The appeal-funded programmes enabled CA to **expand the scope of its programmes** in Afghanistan and to link with back donors in the UK and Europe and develop joint development interventions with other INGOs.
6. The humanitarian interventions led to the **development of better systems and procedures in CA** as a whole. For example, CA's emergency response policy (which is being revised now), guidelines for the utilisation of appeal funds, need for flexible financial management systems in crisis situations, and realisation of the greater need for adherence to Sphere standards and Code of Conduct etc.

#### 14.2 Not So Positive

1. **Insufficient clarity within the organisation** that the appeal-funded programme was guided by the overall CPSP for the country. This probably led to the perception that there was no specific strategy for the appeal-funded programmes in Afghanistan
2. **Documentation of lessons learned:** no systems were in place to enable documentation and easy retrieval of information and to review and evaluate the programme implementation. Five years after the launch of an appeal institutional memory is vague and piecemeal. This is true both within Christian Aid and of partner organisations where several new staff have taken over. The budget should have included costs for any outputs such as publications for reporting back to the supporter base
3. **Consistency in messaging:** although the forum of the Emergency Task Force was used effectively, more could have been done to ensure this in the early phase of the appeal. Staff time could have been allocated to discuss respective target audiences and look to co-ordinating better to make sure everyone was working for 'greatest' impact, whether in fundraising or seeking policy change.
4. **HR Management:** while the appeal was managed effectively, it seemed to require high human resources. An appeal of this size, particularly with regard to the coverage in terms of media and policy, should perhaps have had a

dedicated person at the outset. This would have meant the on-going development programme work was not sidelined (a lesson implemented in other emergencies). HR policies should have been more flexible to attract people with required skills, especially to work in a hostile environment and HR management should have been firm at times.

5. **Larger group in the decision making body:** Although the forum of the Emergency Task Force was used effectively, more could have been done to ensure quicker decision making with small groups in programme management, policy or fund raising.
6. **Away from the contextual realities:** Though CA's advocacy messages were widely recognised, it has been observed that on many occasions CA tried to exaggerate the situation on the ground in the immediate aftermath of the crisis.<sup>11</sup> CA should have engaged more partners and field staff members whenever a strong position was taken.
7. **Better Partner Monitoring Guidelines:** CA should have clear and consistent guidelines for partners' reporting and monitoring standards. This should ensure that misunderstandings are minimised and that partners do not deviate from approved plans.
8. **Theological basis:** as an ecumenical agency we should have developed a position in relation to "war". A clear and explicit stance would in turn enable CA to assess each situation against this thought out and agreed position

## 15 Conclusion

CA's Afghanistan Appeal Funds have contributed to making a positive difference in the lives of those affected by war, conflict and drought in Afghanistan. The various programmes implemented by partner organisations have helped improve the quality of life for many communities. Given the ongoing insecurity and development challenges in the country, recommendations that are made in this report will contribute to reshaping the future of Christian Aid's programme strategy in Afghanistan.

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<sup>11</sup> Afghanistan Emergency Response Review, Notes for Discussion on 17.01.02, by Alison Kelly