THE ROLE OF VETERINARY PARA-PROFESSIONALS IN CLINICAL SERVICE DELIVERY AND PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS: A CASE STUDY FROM AFGHANISTAN

OIE - AVTA - GALVMed
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Protecting animals, preserving our future
Country background

- Islamic Republic with close ethnic ties to neighboring countries
- Rugged, mountainous terrain and deserts predominate the landscape. Only 12% of the land is arable.
- Traditional social, cultural and religious values prevail.
- The majority of the population lives in rural areas, linked to subsistence agriculture.
- War and civil strife have been the defining characteristics of the last quarter century.
Role of livestock

- Lack of arable land (12%) puts heavy emphasis on livestock grazing
- 80% of rural Afghans depend directly or indirectly on animals for their livelihood
- Sheep and goats predominate
- Meat and dairy products for nutrition
- Fiber for textiles and carpets
- Draft power for agricultural work
- Manure for crop fertilization and kitchen fuel
- Horse, donkey or camel-drawn taxis & wagons to bring produce to market
Livestock Numbers in Afghanistan

- Sheep 8.8 million
- Goats 7.3 million
- Cattle 3.7 million
- Donkeys 1.6 million
- Horses 142 thousand
- Camels 175 thousand
- Poultry 12.0 million

FAO Livestock Census 2003
Status of Veterinary Services - 2004

• Only about 200 veterinarians in the country
• University veterinary faculties were barely functional
• Vet graduates were poorly trained even after 5 years
• Vets were (and still are) reluctant to work in rural areas
• Gov’t clinics were barely equipped or non-functional
• Gov’t was without the resources to reliably outfit its clinics, particularly if providing free service
• Contagious diseases like FMD & PPR were widespread
• Livestock populations were severely depleted by disease, war and drought - over 50% in some regions
• What could be done?
Implementation of the Veterinary Field Unit (VFU) Programme

• Funded by USAID

• $12 million budget and 2.5 year duration

• 31 of 34 provinces covered in a national Veterinary Field Unit (VFU) network based at the district level

• VFUs staffed by veterinary para-professionals trained through the VFU programme

• Programme implemented by an NGO, the Dutch Committee for Afghanistan (DCA)
Rationale for use of community-based veterinary para-professionals

- **Need for field veterinary services was immediate**
- **Pool of available veterinarians was limited**
- **Capacity of veterinary faculties to train was limited**
- **5 years required to train new vets**
- **Infrastructure limitations on mobility**
- **Security and trust concerns favoured local participation**
- **15 or so diseases were responsible for 90% of problems**
- **High school graduates with extensive livestock experience could be trained to recognize and treat or prevent those 15 or so diseases**
Structure of Programme

- VFU programme explained to gov’t & community leaders
- High school graduates with livestock experience were proposed by their communities & trained for 6 months
- They were trained intensively on identification and control of the 15 or so most costly livestock diseases in the country
- A network of veterinary field units (VFUs) was established at the district level, staffed by veterinary para-professionals
- VFUs operated as private sector enterprises
- VFUs were provided with high quality goods that worked well
- Goods distributed initially by DCA, later by the private sector
- VFUs made sustainable by requiring fee-for-service & full cost recovery
Meet Senior Government Officials and Community Leaders
Train veterinary para-professionals

Classroom training

Practical laboratories

Supervised field training

Examination and graduation
Supply Veterinary Instruments
Signboards, Furniture, Utensils
Motorcycles and Cattle Crushes
Solar Powered Refrigerator
Cool boxes with ice packs
Vaccine & Medicine Supply Network

- Main store – DCA Kabul
- Regional Stores
  - Herat
  - Mazar
  - Kunduz
  - Jalalabad
  - Ghazni
  - Kandahar
Main Vaccines Supplied for Ruminants

- Anthrax
- Enterotoxaemia
- PPR
- Sheep/Goat pox
- Pasteurellosis
- Blackleg
- CCPP
- FMD
Establishing the Veterinary Field Unit (VFU)
Opening for Business
Seeing Animals at the VFU Clinic
Making Visits to the Field
Earning a Sustainable Living and…

…Serving their Communities
Results at end of programme in June, 2006

- 274 Districts in 31 Provinces served
- 388 VFUs operating
- 585 Staff working at VFUs
- 16.5 million vaccinations
- 8.9 million treatments
- All on a fee for service basis
- Gradual full cost recovery
- Client satisfaction evident
VFU distribution by end of project
An evolving relationship with government

- **Initial response of government highly negative**
  - Objected to private sector clinical services
  - Objected to use of para-professionals
  - Objected to lack of control of their activities
  - Objected to donor investment in private sector

- Time proved the grass-roots support for and sustainability of the VFU network and government attitudes about VFUs have gradually changed.

- The national VFU network became **recognized as an asset** for national disease surveillance & control.

- A **sanitary mandate control scheme** has now begun.
Birth of the Public-Private Partnership

The Sanitary Mandate Control Scheme (SMCS)

Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation & Livestock

Afghanistan Veterinary Field Unit (VFU) Network
Why the Sanitary Mandate Control Scheme (SMCS)?

- Government does not employ sufficient staff to implement disease surveillance and control activities in the field.
- So Government *(public sector)* has contracted Veterinary Field Units *(VFUs – private sector businesses)* to carry out specified services (surveillance, vaccination) on their behalf under a *Sanitary Mandate*.
- Design of surveillance and disease control programmes, sample analysis, contracting, training, monitoring, quality assessment and payments are all performed by government.
Objectives of the SMCS

- Develop an animal disease reporting and control system carried out by private service providers (VFUs)
- Develop government capacity to manage and monitor this system (public function)
- Provide reliable data as part of an active and passive disease surveillance system, including early warning of disease outbreaks
- Develop a system which can be engaged in emergencies and for disease prevention & control schemes
- Support Afghanistan in fulfilling its international animal disease reporting requirements and obligations under the SPS agreement and OIE membership
## Current Situation and Future Plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SMCS Year</th>
<th>No. of Provinces</th>
<th>No. of VFUs</th>
<th>No. of Provincial Staff</th>
<th>Contract Period (Months)</th>
<th>Funded by</th>
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<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>140</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>EU/AHDP</td>
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<tr>
<td>2011</td>
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<td>80</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>EU/AHDP + WB/NHLP</td>
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<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>WB/NHLP</td>
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<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>138</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>WB/NHLP</td>
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<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>168</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>WB/NHLP</td>
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<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>240</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>WB/NHLP FAO</td>
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<tr>
<td>Entire Country</td>
<td>34 (All Provinces)</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>136</td>
<td>3</td>
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</tbody>
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SMCS VFU coverage - 2014
SMCS in Action: National Brucellosis Sero-Survey (NBSS)

- Initial pilot activities were strictly for disease reporting.

- In 2012, **public – private** partnerships for collection of sera were established between government and **210 Veterinary Field Units (VFUs)** using Sanitary Mandate Contracts.

- The tasks of **designing** the survey, **contracting**, **training**, **co-ordination**, **communication** and **monitoring** of field activities were performed by central and provincial government staff.

- **Payments** were made on the basis of work done.
National Brucellosis Control Scheme (NBCP)

- Commenced in 2013 (design based on NBSS results)
- 5 year WB / NHLP funded programme providing vaccine in 29 Provinces
- Vaccination of young cattle (approx. 307,000), sheep & goats (approx. 1,600,000) to protect against Brucellosis
- Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation & Livestock (MAIL) commitment to vaccinate livestock in 5 additional provinces
- Central Epidemiology Department (CED) responsible for planning programme, implementing training & vaccination
- Sanitary Mandate Contracting Department (SMCD) does verification of payment claims & administration of payments
Conclusions (1)

- The VFU system is an effective model to rapidly rebuild clinical veterinary services in a post-conflict situation in a country where livestock are vital to the economy:
  - Community-based (trust, acceptance & accountability)
  - Staffed by para-professionals (rapid, low cost production)
  - High quality goods & reliable services provided (client satisfaction)
  - Operated in the private sector (efficient and responsive)
  - Based on full cost recovery & fee for service (sustainable)
  - First line of contact with animal disease in the field
Conclusions (2)

• The Veterinary Field Units (VFUs) provide a valuable resource to the Afghanistan Veterinary Authority for disease control activities via public-private partnership.
• Afghanistan is currently undertaking a gradual integration of the VFU network into the national veterinary services through sanitary mandate contracts.
• Funding is currently being provided by donor-funded projects but government must take ownership for the Sanitary Mandate Contracting Scheme to remain viable.
Conclusions (3)

- Governments can benefit from sanitary mandate schemes by creating an enabling environment for them:
  - **Laws and regulations** that recognize and facilitate the activities of veterinary para-professionals and allow delegation of official activities to them;
  - **Standards** of practice, certification and licensing through a veterinary statutory body;
  - **Effective monitoring** of Veterinary Field Units & their staff;
  - Streamlined procedures for approval and importation of **quality vaccines and medicines**; and
  - Control of sale of vaccines and medicines in the bazaar, with **enforcement** powers exercised.
Thank you for your attention!