

Czech Republic making a difference in

# Afghanistan



## HEALTHCARE SUPPORT

THE AFGHAN HEALTHCARE SYSTEM, SIMILAR TO THE SYSTEM OF EDUCATION, HAS SUFFERED DUE TO PROTRACTED MILITARY CONFLICTS AND A LACK OF CENTRAL GOVERNMENT CONTROL.

The consequences are reflected in some statistics: every fifth Afghan child dies of the diseases that are easily treatable elsewhere before his or her fifth birthday. Many areas, including Logar, suffer from a complete lack of medical facilities, basic equipment and doctors.

The shortage of facilities was aggravated by limited transportation possibilities. It was not unusual for people to die because they don't get to the hospital or doctor's office in time. The whole province of Logar has only three hospitals. The remaining care must be provided for by healthcare centers often functioning in improvised field conditions.

The organization responsible for the provision of health services in the Logar province is a non-governmental organization called Medical Refresher Courses for Afghans (MRCA). It was set up to provide for Afghan refugees in Pakistan and after the fall of the

Taliban in 2001 it began operating in Afghanistan as well.

Along with the support to the Logar branch of the Health Ministry, the Czech Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) cooperates closely with the MRCA. The team's largest project was the construction of ward buildings for two district hospitals, one in Pol-e Alam and the other in Mohammad Agha. It helped to significantly add the needed capacity to the wards so that patients no longer need to stay in tents or hallways. A new well was also constructed in the hospital of Pol-e Alam for easier access to clean water.

Czech PRT has also supported health care broadcasting in Logar radios.

***"We have three district hospitals in Logar. Altogether about 300,000 local inhabitants depend on these facilities."*** Aziz Rahman, MRCA

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The Czech PRT also donated seven ambulances to the MRCA. This improved the conditions for the transport of patients from poorly accessible areas and essential transfer between smaller medical facilities and district hospitals. In cooperation with the MRCA, the Czech team also organized training for Logar doctors on managing medical facilities

Apart from a lack of clean water, hospitals also face electricity shortages. In Logar solar energy has proven to be the most effective source of energy, so the Czech team supplied photovoltaic panels for ten medical facilities, including a maternity hospital in the mountains of the isolated Azra district. This enabled medical staff to make full use of vitally important equipment, such as incubators for newborn children.

Since 2009 the reconstruction team has also focused on disease prevention. This includes, among other things, hepatitis vaccine delivery and rabies awareness programs. As a part of complex approach to the system of health care, Czechs have built a provincial veterinary lab that helps to contain diseases spreading from animal to humans.

The most recent project is construction of a mortuary in the compound of Pole Alam district hospital. The building of the mortuary is unique by its system of passive cooling which does not require any electricity.

***- Seven ambulances improved the transportation of patients through the entire province.***

***- Thousands of local residents from two Logar districts are using the services of two new hospital wards.***

***- Thanks to the Czech PRT ten medical facilities received an urgently needed source of energy.***

***- Hundreds of children were vaccinated against hepatitis.***