

CRS
Afghanistan Relief Program

Final Narrative Report to OFDA

Grant # HDA-G-00-02-00026-00

November 2001 – March 2002

I. Executive Summary

Under the original project proposal, CRS anticipated providing 200,000 beneficiaries with blankets for the winter season. During the first phase of the project, CRS and its implementing partner, CoAR, provided blankets to 20,000 vulnerable families in Logar, Wardak, Ghazni and Kabul provinces. Each family received three blankets, with 4,000 of the most vulnerable also receiving three-month food packages provided by CRS private funds.

CRS discussed an expansion of the winterization package and areas of operation with the DART team soon after the initiation of activities based on updated information from the field. Verbal approval was given, and both a no-cost grant extension request and an amendment of the package and target population were subsequently submitted to OFDA. Under the amendment, 8,500 additional families in Herat and Bamyán Provinces were to be provided with expanded winterization packages, including winter clothing and blankets/quilts along with a three-month food package. CRS used private funds and in-kind donations to increase the initially anticipated clothing packages and food, as described in Section III below. Purchase of the non-food items for the second phase of the project was initiated at the end of December 2001, and distributions were completed in March 2002. Overall, 28,500 families (171,000 beneficiaries) were provided with relief items through this project.

II. Operating Environment

During the initial phases of the project, widespread fighting between Taliban/Al Qaeda and coalition forces was on-going throughout Afghanistan. At the outset, the Taliban was in control of major cities within Afghanistan, including Jalalabad and Kabul, which lay along the transport routes from Pakistan to CRS operational areas. The Taliban were driven out of Kabul by the middle of November and from Kunduz by the end of the same month, falling back primarily toward the South. Two weeks later, the Taliban pulled out of Kandahar, giving up their last urban stronghold. Pro-Taliban forces moved into the countryside where anti-Taliban militias continued to pursue them with coalition support. Throughout the project period, air strikes continued on suspected Taliban/Al Qaeda hideouts in eastern Afghanistan.

The road network continued to remain precarious during the project period. Difficulties along transport routes from Peshawar in Pakistan to the central highlands and the west stemmed principally from security threats from different warring factions. Drivers could only move during certain times of the day, which delayed delivery of commodities. This was primarily true for the transport to the West where transport was held up for over two weeks in February due to security threats along the Kandahar/Herat portion of the road. While target areas in the central region were mountainous and transport was occasionally delayed for short periods due to inclement weather, snowfall was not great enough to close road access to the distribution areas.

III. Activities Highlights

District site selection was coordinated with other NGO and UN agencies, both on the Islamabad/Peshawar and local levels, to ensure that overlap in the provision of emergency assistance was kept to a minimum. Beneficiaries were selected based on vulnerability, with the assistance of local elders and religious leaders. Families receiving emergency packages included the displaced in addition to those with elderly members, disabled, and children under five. Blankets and winter clothing were purchased from local suppliers in Pakistan. Following quality inspection, the items were dispatched from CRS warehouses in Peshawar to distribution points within Afghanistan. Commodities were transported on Afghan trucks and, during the initial stages, the convoys were accompanied by staff members from CoAR, CRS' implementing partner, who were familiar with the security/logistics environment along the routes. CoAR distributed the blankets, quilts and clothing while CRS staff monitored activities.

During the first phase of the project, from November to December 2001, CRS and CoAR delivered 60,000 blankets to 20,000 vulnerable families in four provinces: Logar, Wardak, Kabul and Ghazni. The 4,000 most vulnerable families within the targeted population also received a three-month food package that was provided by other donors.

Table 1: First Phase Distributions - Central Region

Province	District	# of Villages	# of HHs	NFI Distributed Blankets (pieces)
Logar	Baraki	138	2,436	7,308
	Pul Alam	18	1,264	3,792
	subtotal	156	3,700	11,100
Wardak	Sayed Abad	157	2,450	7,350
	Jeghatu	133	1,050	3,150
	subtotal	290	3,500	10,500
Ghazni	Zanakhan	36	308	924
	Moqor	183	1,031	3,093
	Gelan	40	826	2,478
	Nawa	123	825	2,475
	Ab Band	116	510	1,530
	subtotal	498	3,500	10,500
Kabul city	District 1	--	6,647	19,941
	District 2	--	2,653	7,959
	subtotal	0	9,300	27,900
	TOTAL	944	20,000	60,000

Initial dispatches took place in late November with blankets for Logar and Wardak reaching their destination by the end of the month. Final consignments for all four provinces were dispatched in mid-December reaching distribution points before the end of the year. While transport took an average of four to five days, losses reported were minimal and related solely to food commodities supplied through CRS private funds. All commodities were distributed to the target populations within these Districts by the beginning of January.

Upon finding that the transport and distribution mechanisms were functioning well, and based upon further assessments from the field, CRS requested permission from the DART to use the remaining grant funds to purchase a wider package of winterization materials for distribution to vulnerable populations within Afghanistan. Target areas were also revised to include highly vulnerable districts in Bamyan and Herat Provinces due to a lack of coverage discovered from coordination meetings with other NGOs operational in the target areas. Following verbal approval by DART, an amendment for the packages and target populations was subsequently submitted to OFDA-Washington in early January extending the project period to March 2002. CRS began procurement with private funds for this aspect of the project in December and initial items were dispatched in January.

Table 2: Second Phase Distributions - Bamyan and Herat Provinces

Province	District	# of HHs	NFI Distributed			
			Blankets (pieces)	Quilts (pieces)	Sweaters/Socks (sets)	Jackets/Shawls (pieces)
Bamyan	Saigan	1,500	4,500	4,500	4,500	4,500
Herat	Guzara	7,000	21,000	0	21,000	21,000
Total		8,500	25,500	4,500	25,500	25,500

During the second phase of the project, CRS and CoAR distributed winter clothing in addition to blankets/quilts and food to 8,500 families: 1,500 in Saigan District of Bamyan Province and 7,000 in Guzara District of Herat Province. Each family received a minimum of three blankets and a basic clothing package consisting of sets of three socks and a sweater and three jackets or woolen shawls as shown in Table 2. Given that the winter is colder in the mountain areas of Bamyan, households in this location were also supplied with three quilts. A need for 1,000 tents in Guzara was anticipated in the amendment, but this did not materialize and the tents were therefore not distributed. The funds allocated for the tent purchases were utilized for blankets and clothing.

IV. SUMMATION

Overall, OFDA funds were used for the purchase and transport of the items indicated in Table 2. These OFDA monies were supplemented by in-kind donations of 10,000 blankets and private donor funding. Private funds were also used to provide three-month food packages for all families and additional winter clothing for the more vulnerable members of these communities.

In Bamyan delivery of the items was slowed due to the weather conditions although no security issues were encountered. All items reached Bamyan and distributions were completed in February. Transport to Herat was more difficult, with trucks being delayed along the road via Kandahar due to insecure circumstances. Distributions in this area were therefore completed in March. Losses for both locations were minimal and were related to food rather than the non-food items.