BASICS Afghanistan Quarterly Report
FY11 Quarter 1: October 1, 2010 – December 31, 2010

Basic Support for Institutionalizing Child Survival Afghanistan (BASICS)

January 2011

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Basic Support for Institutionalizing Child Survival Afghanistan (BASICS)
Management Sciences for Health
784 Memorial Drive
Cambridge, MA 02139
Telephone: (617) 250-9500
www.msh.org

USAID/BASICS QUARTERLY REPORT AFGHANISTAN

(FY11 Quarter 1: October – December 2010)

BASICS PRIMARY STRATEGIES OF WORK PLAN

- Revise and develop child survival and health-focused policies and strategies
- Improve child health care at the community level
- Improve child health care at the BPHS facility level
- Improve child health care at the EPHS hospital level
- Strengthen cross-cutting health system components to improve child health care

BASICS TECHNICAL AREAS OF WORK

- Essential Maternal and Newborn health
- Community case management (C-IMCI)
- Nutrition: Growth Monitoring and Promotion and Infant and Young Child Feeding
- Pediatric hospital care improvement
- Behavior change communication
- Policy foundations for sound child survival promotion
- National Maternal and Child Survival Committee
- EPI Micro-planning
- Expansion of the Integrated Child Survival Package to more districts

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS (October – December 2010)

I. Support to National Maternal and Child Survival Committee and Provincial Committees

- The second National Maternal and Child Survival Committee meeting was conducted on November 21, 2010.
    - The Child Survival Scorecard has been drafted and reviewed but not yet finalized.
    - Terms of Reference for Provincial Maternal and Child Survival Committees have been finalized.

II. Expansion of the Integrated Child Survival Package (ICSP)

- Training of Trainers (ToTs) were conducted for Community-based IMCI (ARI module) and Behavior Change Communication (BCC)
    - ARI : 78 and C-IMCI : 73
- Conducted training of CHWs and CHW Supervisors (CHS) in expansion sites
    - C-GMP : Plan 879, Actual: 812 (92%)
    - C-IMCI: Plan 616, Actual: 571 (93%)
    - BCC in support of Infant and Young Child Feeding: 100
- A third quarterly review workshop was conducted in October with demonstration project NGOs to improve the ICSP delivery.
- Child survival indicators are now included in routine HMIS reporting (household survey questionnaire).
- A formal review of monitoring reports from the demonstration projects was conducted by BASICS staff.

- BASICS began an evaluation study of the impact of the ICSP—Integrated Child Survival Package. The study design is finalized, sites are selected, preliminary data has been collected and the target children identified. The recruitment of data collectors and development of the field guide are in process.

III. Alternative training approaches and plans for facility-based IMCI training

- The fourth round of data collection/observation was completed.
- Data from the observations of health worker performance was analyzed.
- The report on findings has been started (will be completed by the end of January 2011).

IV. EPI Micro-planning

- Completed the EPI Micro-planning field guide. It was drafted through a participatory process with the involvement of MoPH, UNICEF, WHO and NGOs representation, the EPI taskforce is involved. The last draft has been submitted to MOPH for final approval.
- Completed EPI Micro-planning training package for training health workers. The draft is under review by the MOPH working group.

V. Pediatric Hospital Improvement (PHI) Initiative

- Fourteen people from BASICS, Tech-Serve, the MoPH and provincial hospitals attended a study tour of PHI to BASICS/Malawi in October 2010. Each hospital prepared a plan of action for improving pediatric care in its own hospital.
- BASICS Staff conducted a field visit to Takhar and Bamyan Provincial Hospitals to support the self-assessment process and revise plans of action for improvement.
- A BASICS technical officer continues to assist MOPH in promoting PHI through a working group that is developing a workplan for introduction of PHI throughout the country.

VI. Key Messages on Newborn and Child Health

- Data analysis was completed and the final report drafted and disseminated to the Technical Review Panel members, as well as presented in a stakeholder workshop and the CGHN.
- A working group comprised of MoPH, Save the Children, URC, HSSP, AMA (Afghan Midwifery Association) was established to formulate maternal and newborn care messages. Six messages were drafted and are awaiting endorsement by the MoPH.
- The report with the recommendations is finalized and has been shared with MoPH and stakeholders.

Draft Messages on Maternal and Newborn Health

1. Start breastfeeding the newborn immediately after birth; don't wait to wash your body. Colostrum is like liquid gold, and it is a gift from God to the newborn.
2. Women during pregnancy and delivery need to go to health facilities for health care. Going to health facility is not shameful. Mohammad p.b.u.h said: Seek medication, O slaves of Allah, for Allah has not caused any illness but provided a medicine for it.
3. Women during pregnancy and delivery need to go to health facilities for health care. Don't delay seeking care from health facility.
4. Good behavior with the patient is an essential part of effective treatment.
5. A woman, who feels depressed in the post partum period, needs compassion and support from each of you.
6. Don't give opiates and sedatives to pregnant and lactating women, and newborns, they are very dangerous for them.

VII. Major BASICS Achievements October to December 2010

- Completion of TOT for all five modules of Integrated Child Survival Package (ICSP):
  1. Diarrhea,
  2. Growth Monitoring and Promotion,
  3. Basic Essential Maternal and Newborn Care,
  4. Acute Respiratory Infection (pneumonia), and
  5. Behavior Change Communication

  During this quarter the TOT for second module on pneumonia and module on BCC for C-GMP were completed.
- Completion of data gathering for analysis of performance of health workers training by regular IMCI training compared to those trained in short-course IMCI.
- For EPI Micro-planning, completion of drafting of (1) field guide for health workers and (2) training package for conducting EPI Micro-planning training.
- Completion of BCC formative research on key messages that will impact improved newborn and child health.
- Two BASICS Success Stories submitted to USAID (see end of report):
  1. Preventing Diarrhea that Kills Children in Rural Afghanistan
  2. Improving Afghan Children's Nutrition with a Kitchen Garden

VIII. Challenges Going Forward (January – March 2011)

- Establishing 3 Provincial Child Survival Committees
- Preparing annual report of National Maternal and Child Survival Committee
- Finalization of key BCC messages by MOPH for newborn and child health

IX. Key Project Activities Planned for the Next Quarter (January – March 2011)

Strategy 1 (National and Provincial Committees):

- ✓ Follow-up actions to the second meeting of National Maternal and Child Survival Committee
- ✓ Support MOPH in establishment of three Provincial Maternal and Child Survival Committees

Strategy 2 (Expansion of Integrated Child Survival Package)

- ✓ Monitoring of ICSP scale-up implementation in 28 districts, with a combined population of nearly 1 million, people through increased field visits by BASICS staff.
- ✓ Supervising CHW training
- ✓ Preparing for and beginning refresher training for Child Survival Officers in the 28 districts
- ✓ Formalizing the inclusion of key child survival indicators in MOPH surveys

Strategy 3 (C-IMCI short course alternative)

- ✓ Complete evaluation of the IMCI short-course compared to standard IMCI training course
- ✓ Prepare recommendations on alternative training approaches with MOPH based on IMCI training evaluation.

Strategy 4 (EPI micro-planning)

- ✓ Finalize EPI micro-planning guidelines and training package and translate to Dari and Pushtun.
- ✓ Finalize development of 5 key BCC messages for newborn care and child health based on BASICS formative research,

Strategy 5 (Pediatric Hospital Improvement Initiative)

- ✓ Strengthened support to Bamyan and Takhar Provincial Hospitals in support of PHI through training and field visits.
- ✓ Ensuring that data on newborn and child deaths at provincial hospitals are gathered and evaluated

Strategy 6 (BCC messages)

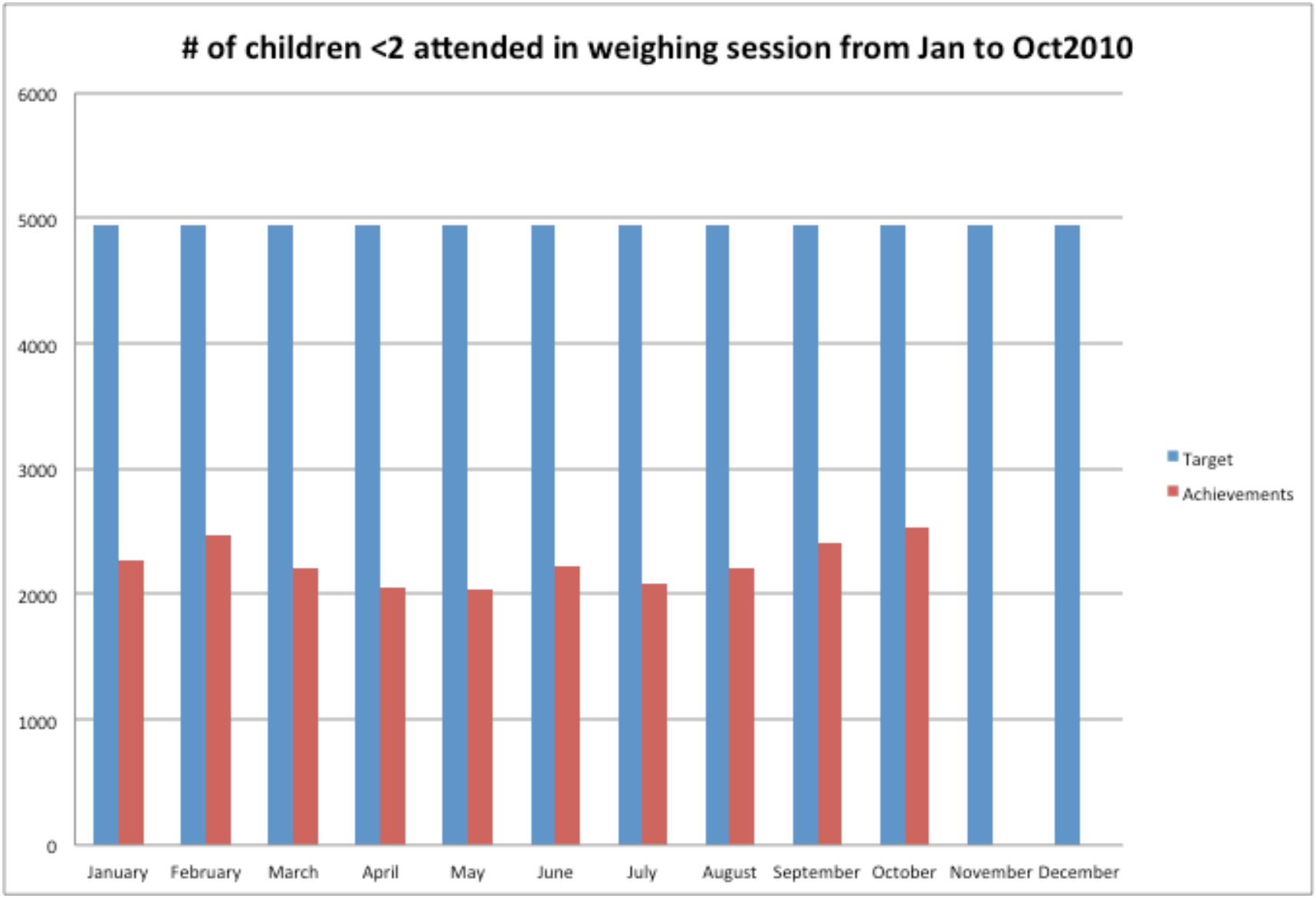
- ✓ Submission of final BASICS BCC formative research report on newborn and child health
- ✓ Work with MOPH and partners to complete development of 5 BCC messages for newborn care and child health based on BASICS formative research

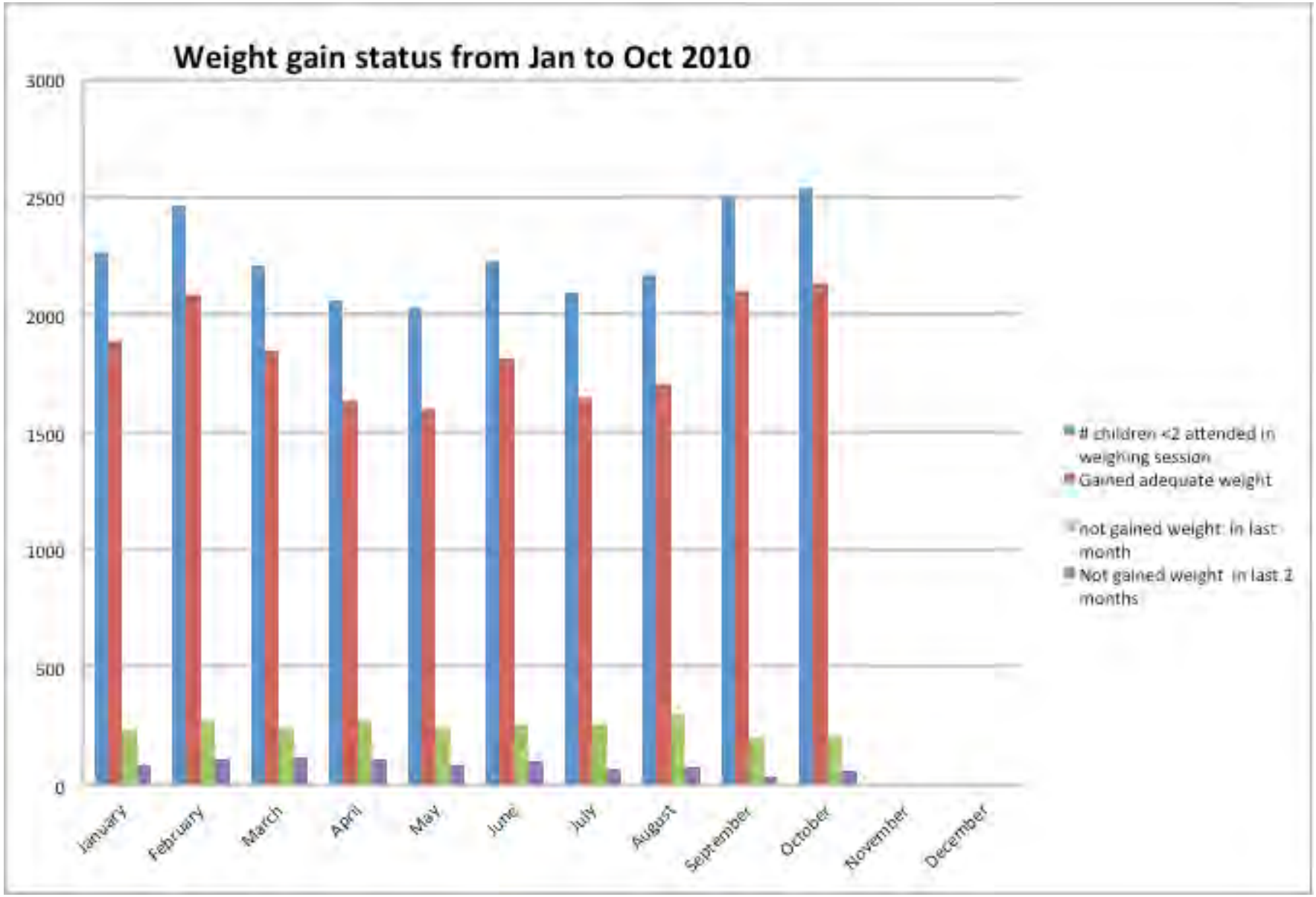
ANNEX 1: Photos from ETAT Study Tour in Malawi

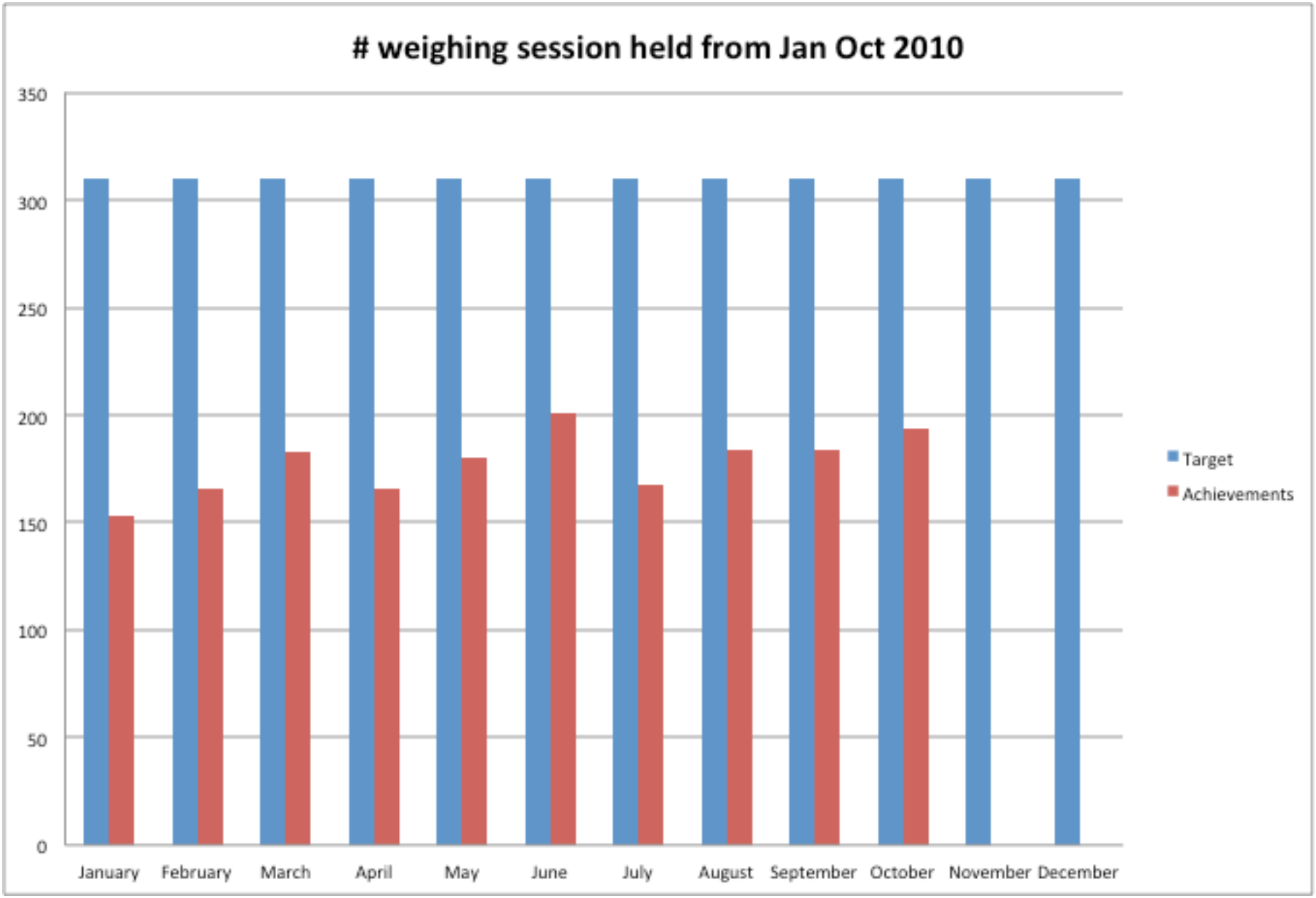
The Afghan team visiting the Pediatric Ward of the Malawi Central Hospital

The Afghan team visiting the ETAT emergency room in Queen Elizabeth Hospital Malawi

ANNEX 2: October 2010 data from CGMP




Weight gain status from Jan to Oct 2010
3000
2500
2000
1500
1000
500
0
January
February
March
April
May
June
July
August
September
October
November
December
children <2 attended in weighing session
Gained adequate weight
not gained weight in last month
Not gained weight in last 2 months


weighing session held from Jan Oct 2010
350
300
250
200
150
100
50
0
January
February
March
April
May
June
July
August
September
October
November
December
Target
Achievements

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SUCCESS STORY

Preventing Diarrhea that Kills Children in Rural Afghanistan

Teaching mothers that simple hand washing will spare their households unnecessary illness

Photo: BASICS/Afghanistan

Female community health worker teaching mothers to improve hygiene and preventing diarrhea in their homes through regular hand washing.

Many children in Afghanistan die each year of easily preventable diseases. Nearly 25% of those deaths are due to diarrhea. However, it is not only the fatal cases of severe diarrhea that are important. Between a quarter and a half of mothers of children less than five years report their child having diarrhea in the previous two weeks. These frequent attacks of diarrhea are among the main causes of undernutrition, which delays development and is implicated in over half of all childhood deaths.

One of the most effective ways of preventing diarrhea is to improve hygiene in the home, especially through regular hand washing with soap before preparing and eating food, after using the toilet or handling a child's feces. USAID's BASICS project (Basic Support for Institutionalizing Child Survival) is working with NGOs to train community health workers (CHWs) in the importance of teaching hand washing and hygiene to families. Pictorial books have been developed for the CHWs to use in teaching families since most CHWs and family members in rural areas are illiterate. The CHW, when visiting families, discusses how improved hygiene and hand washing with soap at critical times can improve the health of all family members, and how and where to set up a place for washing hands in the home.

Nafeesa, a mother in Shingan village in Takhar province, tells how she and her family have benefited from this simple intervention: "Before, my children were often getting sick, especially with diarrhea. But from the time the CHW Hajira made a home visit and, using pictures, explained how to use soap to wash our hands properly, my children are much less sick than in past years." Simple information presented clearly to mothers can have a large impact on the health of children. Teaching older children the importance of all the critical times for hand washing can also have short- and long-term benefits. Girls, especially, often have to help their mother feed and care for the younger children. And in the future, when they themselves become mothers, the good home and personal hygiene practices they learned will benefit the next generation.

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SUCCESS STORY

Improving Afghan Children's Nutrition with a Kitchen Garden

Showing mothers what foods can be grown that will be good for their children

BASICS/Afghanistan

Young boy shows the fruits of the kitchen garden that will provide a variety of nutritious vegetables

The carefully irrigated and shaded kitchen garden provided welcome splashes of different shades of green against the surrounding dry brown soil and rocks. We congratulated Shukria, the community health worker (CHW), on the lush vegetables and ripening fruits as we entered her home.

Shukria explained that the gardens that she and other women were growing started with the community-based growth monitoring program through the Family Health Action Groups. The growth monitoring was successfully identifying children under two who were not gaining enough weight or were undernourished. After that, she and other mothers spent time counseling the mothers of the underweight children. They use stories and pictorial books that were developed by USAID's BASICS project (Basic Support for Institutionalizing Child Survival) to show mothers what to feed their children to have a balanced diet, how to prepare the food for children of different ages, and how often to feed them.

The emphasis is on locally available foods that do create a balanced diet for children. In Bamyan, potatoes and wheat are easily available, but carrots, spinach and other needed vegetables are scarce. To overcome this problem, BASICS has partnered with the UN's Food and Agriculture Organization to provide local vegetable seeds to CHWs to start demonstration kitchen gardens. Now, the CHWs can show mothers and the community that a mix of healthy vegetables and grains can be grown locally and enjoyed by the children.

This effort is critical to attempts to reduce illness and death in children. Undernutrition slows physical and mental development. It also weakens children's immunity and makes them more susceptible to infectious diseases such as diarrhea and pneumonia. These are the main killers of children in Afghanistan. The undernutrition is caused by insufficient food intake as well as an inadequate mix of foods. The demonstration by the CHWs that it is possible to grow the additional healthy vegetables has raised the enthusiasm for the growth monitoring program. More mothers are now attending with their children. They are no longer shamed because they cannot give the correct food to their children. They listen carefully to the advice about a balanced diet because, with the seeds provided by FAO, they can now start their own kitchen gardens.