

[Report]**Role of health professionals and community volunteers
for Maternal, Newborn, and Child Health
in a post-conflict and fragile state – A case study of Afghanistan**Noriko Fujita ¹⁾

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Abstract

Educational system for health professionals deteriorated during the internal conflict in Afghanistan. In 2002, female health professional for maternal, newborn, and child health was in a big shortage: 1 midwife, 1 female doctor and 1 female nurse per population of 500,000. Because of socio-cultural barrier, female health professionals play an important role for providing health care to women and children. Since 2004, the government restarted education in 24 schools by the standardized nursing and midwifery curriculum and started to increase female enrollment of medical school. New graduates are deployed at hospitals and health centers at provincial and district level.

Besides re-establishing educational system, basic package of health services (BPHS) were expanded by contracting to NGO since 2004. Population coverage of BPHS increased from 5% in 2002 to 85% in 2008. Under BPHS, health professionals are mostly at health facilities and community activities are largely on the shoulder of Community Health Worker (CHW). They are volunteers without government salary but delivering a variety of health services. Around 20,000 CHWs (half male and half female, 45% of them are literate) were trained by the standard curriculum and placed in work. CHWs are supervised by NGO supervisor and linkage is little between health professionals deployed at health facilities and CHWs. BPHS is widely available at facility and community by CHWs, but access to health services is still low (Antenatal coverage 30%, contraceptive prevalence rate 15%). Furthermore, service delivery by CHW is not as much as expected. Now government started to try mobile service or home-visit by health professionals following the successful results of home-visit program by professional midwives by local NGO.

keywords : Post-conflict, Contract services, Voluntary worker, Home visits