



Emergency NGO carried out the mass casualty management training exercise in Kabul Kabul 10 February 2015 – This week 25 provincial health directors and staff from NGOs implementing the basic package of health services (BPHS) and essential package of hospital services (EPHS) in Nangarhar and and Wardak provinces took part in a simulation exercise on mass casualty management in Kabul with the support of Emergency INGO. Under an ECHO-funded project, WHO supports the development of mass casualty plans and the training of health managers and healthcare providers on mass casualty management.

WHO supported Afghanistan’s 13 high-risk provinces in developing pre-hospital and hospital mass casualty management plans which were finalized in 2014. The mass casualty training and simulation exercise where participants go through a mass casualty scenario aims to ensure that healthcare providers and provincial health directors have the necessary skills to put their plans into practice.

“Triage and the sorting and classification of casualties is something very new for us. Before we would always send all casualties straight to the emergency room which made the effective handling of the casualties and prioritizing critical patients very difficult,” said Abdul Wazi, nursing director at the Wardak provincial hospital and a participant in the simulation exercise.

The participants have handled mass casualty incidents in their provinces before; however, previously they were lacking the necessary skills to respond effectively. “The last mass casualty incident we had was in November last year. It was a big explosion caused by a vehicle-borne explosive device and the hospital was also badly damaged. We had 130 casualties and 40 of our medical staff were also injured,” said Farooq Mukhlis, provincial health director from Wardak province.

“We prepared this mass casualty management plan on paper but we haven’t put it into practice yet. It’s good that now we are getting the skills to actually do so. For instance, before we didn’t include all of our staff into mass casualty management but now we understand the important role that guards and cleaners play in this as well, and we know we need to utilize and include all of our staff to be more effective and save more lives,” said Mukhlis.

The training participants included nurses who have already received training on triage and surgeons who previously received training on trauma care with the support of WHO. Administrative staff were also included to enhance the operational and logistic side of mass casualty management. With the support of ECHO and WHO, a large-scale mass casualty simulation exercise will take place in Nangarhar province in March to further enhance mass casualty and emergency preparedness.

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