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# Afghanistan's Health Development: What has Changed?

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## Outline

1. Why has USAID been successful in improving health?
2. What is different today due to the insurgency?
3. What challenges does the Afghan health system and USAID face in this new situation?
4. What are the outstanding questions faced by USAID in Afghanistan?



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## What have been the major gains by USAID and MOPH?

1. Mortality reduction
  - Infant mortality reduced nearly 25%
  - Under 5 mortality reduced nearly 25%
  - Gains in maternal mortality
2. Access increased
3. Good HMIS system
4. Increased community involvement



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## Why has USAID been successful in improving health?

1. Made saving lives a priority
2. Committed to long-term development of health system
3. Supported Basic Package of Health Services and its priorities from the start
4. MOPH and USAID's partnership has been strong
5. Used existing and national NGOs to provide services rather than rebuilding government health service delivery system
6. Stressed community-based approaches to health delivery
7. Has helped build capacity for the entire health system—not just USAID-supported elements



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## What is different today due to the insurgency?

1. Security is overriding factor in strategies, planning and implementation
2. Monitoring is much more difficult
3. Training is more centralized rather than decentralized (most training requires people to come to Kabul)
4. Grappling with how to maintain gains in improving health system and protect major investments made
5. Focus on community-based approaches more important but more challenging to undertake



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## What challenges does the Afghan health system and USAID face in this new situation?

1. **Political:** Situation now is much more political and about perception than it is about health
2. **Aid fatigue**—Afghanistan support is in its eighth year and it becomes increasingly difficult to get substantial support needed for health
3. **Redirection:** COIN-All aid efforts are redirected to support counter-insurgency efforts
4. **Control:** How to maintain consistency when changes in approval chain and control—ambassador, military, civilian-military
5. **Gains:** How to shift focus shifting to eastern and southern provinces without compromising gains and protect major investments made in northern, central and western provinces
6. **Priorities:** How to keep priorities focused on mortality reduction



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## What are the outstanding questions faced by USAID in Afghanistan?

1. COIN is about working with communities to battle insurgency—BUT this means providing curative health services (e.g. clinics, hospitals) when long-term health of population depends on prevention
2. COIN seeks to increasing government legitimacy—BUT this is challenge for community-based initiatives in insecure provinces
3. USAID has focused on improving health for health's sake—BUT shifting purpose as health is seen as means for achieving end of good governance and stabilization