

Work by physical therapists in Afghanistan gets new recognition



The work of physical therapists including Alberto Cairo, winner of WCPT's Humanitarian Award three years ago, was the focus of a new television documentary broadcast in Australia in July.

For 20 years, Cairo, an Italian, has worked in Kabul, Afghanistan, helping people living with the scars of long-term conflict – particularly limb loss because of landmines. He has headed the International Committee of the Red Cross Orthopaedic Centre through five regime changes in the country.

His centre treats an average of 300 people every day – 80% of them landmine victims. It offers them treatment, training and counselling to help them re-integrate in society. Since 1988, the ICRC programme has helped over 43,000 people, including 25,000 amputees. Around 70% of them are civilians.

"I've seen people standing up for the first time crying," says Cairo in the documentary. "You could see the tears in the eyes. It's a very dramatic moment."

The deadline for nominations for the 2011 WCPT Awards is 31st July 2010. If you would like to nominate someone for an award, go to www.wcpt.org/awards

The film can be viewed at www.abc.net.au/foreign/content/2010/s2946383.htm