



Rebuilding Afghanistan

Weekly Activity Update for February 25 – March 2, 2004

Issue 48

United States Agency for International Development

STRENGTHENING THE GOVERNMENT

Program Goals

- Support the Bonn process: the Constitutional, Human Rights, and Judicial Commissions; the elections scheduled for June 2004; and a free and independent media.
- Strengthen government budgeting, revenue generation (e.g., customs), monetary management, private-sector related legal and regulatory frameworks, and promote private enterprises.
- Build capacity to carry out other legitimate government functions and support reconstruction of health, judicial, education, economic, agricultural and transportation infrastructure.

Recent Progress:

- **Customs Reform and Training:** Afghanistan's customs service staff is receiving training from USAID on the introduction and use of the new tariff classification system. Training began at the Ministry of Finance with a class of 26 candidates representing the regional offices. USAID provided the materials for the project as well as the advisor who taught the course. Once the new classification system is implemented, consistent importation statistics will be collected—leading to improved economic data that will benefit Afghan policymakers.
- **Inauguration of Radio Station in Kabul:** On February 21, USAID, working with Internews and the government of Afghanistan, supported the launch of "Radio Qara-Bagh Shura," the 11th of 14 planned stations. The inauguration was attended by Kabul Governor Mullah Taj Mohammad, USAID's Acting Mission Director Robert Wilson, village elders and community members. USAID provided the necessary funding that enabled Radio Qara-Bagh Shura to open. The station reaches more than 150,000 people and is broadcasting ten hours per day.



The Parwan women's resource center with an expected granite sign in Dari and Pashto stating that the center is a gift from the US Government.



USAID's Acting Mission Director Robert Wilson making an address at the inauguration of Radio Qara-Bagh Shura located in Kabul province.

REVITALIZING AGRICULTURE/CREATING JOBS

Program Goals

- 100% increase in average productivity for 500,000 farm families through improved technologies, better infrastructure, and access to markets.
- 615 irrigation structures repaired/constructed to increase water use efficiency by 50% and agricultural productivity by 20%.
- Up to 1,000 km of improved village feeder roads rehabilitated.
- Construction of village agricultural market centers

Recent Progress

- **Rural Financing of Agricultural Associations:** Currently, USAID's microfinance program enables small Afghan businesses to take out loans averaging \$200 in value. Afghan entrepreneurs use the credit to develop and grow their businesses. USAID is investigating whether it can work with Afghan agricultural associations to expand this credit program. Afghan farmers have traditionally formed associations to purchase bulk amounts of agricultural products. Many of these associations have a core agricultural sub-sector focus, such as seed purchasing or the use of irrigated water.

Recent Progress (continued):

- **Rural Financing of Agricultural Associations (continued):** Through USAID, agricultural associations have demonstrated that they have the capacity and potential to utilize credit, either for the organization as a whole, or to be shared among its members



Agricultural Association in Nangahar.

EXPANDING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Program Goals

- 1,000 schools and 17 provincial women's centers rehabilitated or constructed.
- 15 million textbooks printed & distributed for 2004 school year
- 30,000 classroom teachers trained.
- 80,000 students enrolled in accelerated learning programs to reach their appropriate grade level.

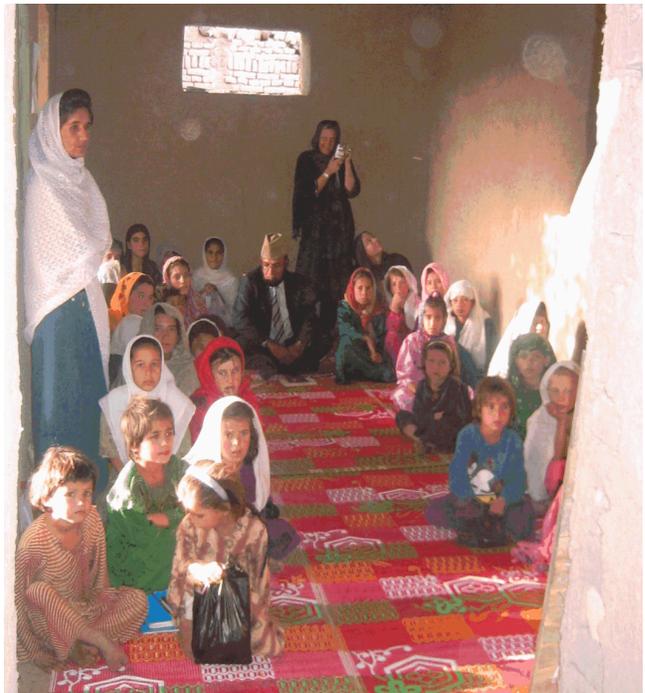
Recent Progress

Afghanistan Primary Education Program (APEP) is a three-year USAID program designed to provide education opportunities for communities that demonstrate a commitment to education. The program trains teachers, provides textbooks, implements accelerated learning programs, and provides advisers to the Ministry of Education. Primary education programs are underway in the Nangarhar, Faryab, Baghlan and Kunduz provinces.

- **Textbook Production and Distribution:** A total of 660,000 USAID-funded textbooks are required to meet the needs of Afghanistan's accelerated learning program and 15 million for the primary education program. For future years, USAID is working to build Afghan publishing capacity in order to print all the books in country. USAID subcontractors will use a computerized distribution system to ensure that the books are equitably distributed throughout the district.
- **Women's Resource Centers:** The Ministry of Women's Affairs has prioritized the construction of provincial women's resource centers in 17 provinces. These centers will enhance the ministry's ability to respond to local needs across the country, and will provide women with access to education and literacy programs, as well as information about basic health issues, job skills training and job opportunities. The centers will also enable the ministry to advocate for the legal, economic, political and social rights of Afghan women and girls.
- **USAID Funding for Women's Resource Centers:** USAID will construct 17 provincial women's resource centers and provide training and educational opportunities before, during and after their construction. To date, \$3.85 million has been set aside to build the 17 centers and to fund activities within them. Two of these centers are described in more detail below.
- **Parwan Provincial Women's Resource Center:** The provincial women's resource center in Charikar district of Parwan province will be completed by the end of April 2004. It will be staffed by the Ministry of Women's Affairs, and will provide classroom space and daycare facilities that will enable local women to use various resources, including training facilities. The center will provide work for 25 Ministry of Women's Affairs female employees, and an estimated 360,000 women in Parwan will benefit from the center's outreach.

Recent Progress (continued)

- **Farah Provincial Women's Resource Center:** The provincial women's resource center in Farah province will be staffed by the Ministry of Women's Affairs, and will provide classroom space and daycare facilities, enabling classes in tailoring, carpet weaving, literacy and health. The Governor of Farah has welcomed the construction of the new center and stressed the need for literacy and health education. The center will provide employment for 25 ministry employees, and will benefit an estimated 170,000 women.



Afghan children in the middle of a school session.



Women's resource center in Parwan province.