
Rebuilding Afghanistan

Weekly Activity Update for July 06 to July 21, 2004

Issue 63

United States Agency for International Development

STRENGTHENING THE GOVERNMENT

Program Goals

- Support the Bonn process: the Constitutional, Human Rights and Judicial Commissions; the 2004 elections; 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:

- **Afghanistan's International Chamber of Commerce (AICC) Round Table:** On June 23, USAID, in collaboration with the Center for International and Private Enterprise, funded a public policy round table that was hosted by Afghanistan's International Chamber of Commerce. The round table was entitled "The Future of Banking and Finance in Afghanistan" and was held at the Amani High School in Kabul. President Hamid Karzai attended the forum, as well as an overflow audience of over 250 business, association and government leaders. The AICC is a confederation of six business associations committed to becoming the voice of the country's private sector. With USAID assistance, the AICC will become the central organization of support for the private sector by initiating trade promotion, advocacy, and technical assistance initiatives. The AICC will work on behalf of all businesses regardless of size, and its inclusive nature will ensure that all genders, ages and ethnic groups are involved.
- **Short Wave and Satellite Radio Programming:** As of June 15, USAID is supporting three hour-long daily broadcasts of Dari and Pashto programming. The programming—available until October 15 to encourage participation in elections—covers Kabul-produced news, civic/voter education and entertainment. The broadcasts can reach anyone with a short wave radio in Afghanistan, as well as Afghan communities in Pakistan and Iran. After October 15, programs will be broadcast via satellite receiver. In an effort to make programming widely available, receivers will be installed in the 15 USAID-funded radio stations in Afghanistan, other independent stations, as well as some state-owned stations. Further, USAID is developing up to 20 new stations with such receivers. All of the stations will be able to broadcast live or recorded material.



Afghanistan President Karzai addresses the AICC round table.

Audience of the AICC forum.

Boys in Kabul listening to short wave radio programming.

EXPANDING EDUCATIONAL OPPORTUNITY

Program Goals

- 1,000 schools and 17 provincial women's centers rehabilitated or constructed.
- 16 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 educational 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 Nangarhar, Faryab, Baghlan and Kunduz provinces.

- **Girls' enrollment increases from 18 to 75 Percent:** USAID is making a concerted effort to educate girls and young women who were formerly denied the opportunity to attend school during Afghanistan's recent troubled past. During APEP's first year, however, the number of girls who were enrolled remained disappointingly small, especially in Nangarhar province (eastern Afghanistan). But those girls who did attend proved to be excellent promoters of USAID's accelerated learning program, which rapidly moves over-age students through basic education, teaching them two grades in a year. The young women explained to their friends what they were learning, and helped alleviate parents' concerns in the villages.

Recent Progress (continued):

- **Girls' Enrollment Increases from 18 to 75 Percent (continued):** When the second year of classes began, the percentage of girls enrolled increased from 18 to a stunning 75 percent—3,746 girls out of a total of 5,000 students. Although separate classes and same sex teachers for boys and girls are the norm throughout Afghanistan, in Nangarhar, enthusiasm for girls' enrollment in accelerated learning programs is so great that communities and parents have given permission for male teachers to lead girls' classes.



Girl reading from a USAID funded book in an accelerated learning class.
