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## SNAPSHOT

# Freedom From Danger

**USAID economic development projects have brought a reason for laborers to feel secure while at work**



Photo: USAID/CDP/CADG

*Laborers reconstruct a culvert as a security guard in the distance monitors the work site.*

***By adding reliable security personnel to the USAID-funded irrigation project, laborers were able to conduct their activities without harassment from anti-government forces.***

Sperwan, a village located in Panjwai District of Kandahar Province, relies on agriculture for its livelihood. It is also an area of vital significance for the region's security. Residents are often the victims of harassment and intimidation inflicted by anti-government forces. These distractions hinder progress on the municipality's efforts to rebuild the rural infrastructure. When local farmers summoned the courage to approach the district governor with a request to repair their canal, they learned that their government lacked the resources to assist with this initiative.

To rejuvenate the agricultural sector in Panjwai, the District Development Assembly asked for USAID funding to reconstruct an 1,800 meter section of an irrigation canal.

Government officials understood that in the insurgency-plagued district, the laborers' security would be an essential component of any successful undertaking. To mitigate disruptions to the project and ensure safe working conditions, the District Development Assembly helped select 25 guards employed directly by the USAID project. Despite constant threats outside of the project area, the laborers did not encounter harassment on project sites. This was due, in part, to the security provided by the district government. Adequate levels of protection made the laborers feel comfortable doing their work. "We saw the guards, and we appreciated it," said one worker. "Without them, we couldn't have done anything," added another.

The District Development Assembly has always been aware of the protection the laborers needed. "It is important that laborers feel secure," said one government official. "Without good security protection, it would have been difficult to recruit laborers for the project."

After the project was completed, the area's farmers began to cultivate their fields and expect to harvest better crops in the future. Soon, their fields will abound in grapes, wheat, melons, and other produce that will sustain the local economy.

The Afghan government's efforts to respond to residents' needs will also be rewarded with increased support and respect for the rule of law.