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AFGHANISTAN

CASE STUDY

School Provides Government Legitimacy

USAID helped address constituents' needs in Khogyani



Photo: USAID/ASI-East

Local workers build a protection wall around Arghach Boys and Girls Primary School in Khogyani District

CHALLENGE

The Afghan government is struggling to extend its presence at the national, provincial and district levels and gain legitimacy in the eyes of a disenfranchised population. This is particularly true in Khogyani District, where recent political turmoil, allegations of corruption, and repeated replacement of the district governor have significantly undermined the public's perception of the Afghan government's ability to govern. Khogyani residents view the lack of adequate education for their children as a major problem in their community. In the village of Arghach, the primary school serves 1,200 students, including 240 girls. The school building did not have a boundary wall and was not deemed secure enough. Parents were worried about their children's safety, and community leaders cited the construction of a boundary wall as a priority.

INITIATIVE

USAID enabled the district governor to address this issue by providing funding for building a boundary wall to enclose the school compound. To incorporate community involvement, the District Education Director held a biweekly school shura to oversee local labor selection, manage the community's contribution of labor costs and monitor implementation. The shura also oversaw the distribution of payments to the laborers. This ensured strong community ownership of the project.

RESULTS

In addition to successfully building a 300 meter boundary wall for the school and securing the compound, this project provided short-term employment for 34 local workers; six of which received vocational training. The training in basic construction skills, such as masonry, will help community members maintain the wall and benefit the laborers.

By enabling the district government to address a community concern, USAID reinforced the Afghan government's legitimacy in Arghach. Linking shura meetings with an infrastructure project was an effective way of gaining strong stakeholder buy-in and increased interaction between government representatives and the local community.