USAID FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE | AFGHANISTAN

Stabilization

June 2012

Photo: USAICADG

USAID helps stabilize communities by implementing projects that respond to urgent community needs and address drivers of instability. These Daman District residents are working to save their community's farmland by repairing irrigation ditches damaged by flooding.

STABILIZATION SNAPSHOT

- Implemented more than 5,325 community stabilization activities in the most insecure and unstable communities throughout the country
- Created more than 14.5 million employment days through cash-for-work and short-term income generation
- Provided livelihood assistance to more than 36,000 individuals suffering losses because of military operations

Data as of June 2011

BACKGROUND

Afghanistan elected its first democratic government in 2004, following almost 30 years of war and instability. Since coming to office, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) has engaged in establishing structures of governance at the provincial and district levels, and launching public services that respond to the critical socio-economic development needs of the approximately 29 million Afghan citizens.

Continuing violence in many districts exacerbates severe underdevelopment throughout Afghanistan. Insecurity undermines citizen confidence in the legitimacy of the central government and threatens the hard won gains made to date. Recognizing the nexus of security, governance, and development in establishing stability in Afghanistan, the U.S. government supports GIRoA efforts to establish this environment at the provincial and district levels. The approach recognizes that practices and institutions of democracy, especially popular participation in governance, are essential for Afghanistan's long-term development.

USAID supports Afghans in addressing the drivers of instability and establishing an environment for sustained social and economic development by: 1) engaging/supporting at-risk populations, 2) extending the reach of the government to unstable areas, 3) providing social and economic assistance and income-generation opportunities, 4) building trust between citizens and their government, and 5) encouraging local populations to take an active role in their development.

PROGRAMMING

OVERVIEW

The Stabilization Office unifies USAID's programming under one office to coordinate the Mission's stabilization activities. The office is responsible for responding to U.S. government stabilization objectives and priorities, managing USAID's stabilization programs, and representing USAID in coordination with U.S. and coalition military forces.

COUNTERINSURGENCY CONTEXT

The "whole of government" approach recognizes USAID has a role in civilian and military counterinsurgency (COIN) efforts. USAID designs projects to contribute to political and social stabilization, social cohesion, and better governance. These are essential elements to hold areas "cleared" by military or police action and hamper the insurgents' ability to draw support from the local populace.

Strategically integrated program activities correspond to key phases in COIN operations: 1) Shape – assessing community grievances and assisting coalition forces with shaping activities; 2) Clear – implementing quick-impact activities to meet recovery needs in priority communities; 3) Hold – addressing priority grievances of at-risk populations, and; 4) Build – implementing activities that support the transition from stabilization efforts to longer-term development.

CONTINUES >

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Stabilization (continued)

Unemployment is a significant challenge to Afghanistan's stability and economic development. Here, a young Afghan receives vocational training in bicycle repair.

Photo: USAID/DAI

USAID stabilization activities support at-risk populations that are vulnerable to recruitment by the insurgency. Here, families of victims of violence receive winterization kits provided by USAID.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT OUTREACH & CAPACITY BUILDING

USAID's stabilization activities help GIRoA extend its reach into unstable areas, develop sound relationships with communities by responding to constituents' needs, and build local governance capacity through basic management training to local government officials. Activities include training and mentoring in project identification, proposal writing, monitoring and evaluation, conflict negotiation, and strategic district stabilization planning and budgeting.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Working closely with Afghanistan's National Solidarity Program and community organizations, USAID's stabilization programs empower local communities to take an active role in their own stability and development. Examples include engaging community development councils to identify and prioritize activities or requiring community contributions to support community grants, often in the form of labor, donated land, training expertise, transportation, and assistance with project security. USAID supports the delivery of vocational training accompanied by literacy and numeracy education.

INCOME GENERATION

To address the lack of economic opportunity as a key driver of instability and a motive for joining the insurgency, USAID generates temporary employment and income generation to promote stability. Project activities are typically labor intensive and take on critical infrastructure and economic growth projects, such as orchard plowing, farm-to-market road construction, irrigation system repair, and school rehabilitation.

QUICK IMPACT & EMERGENCY RESPONSE

USAID's quick impact activities respond to immediate or emergency community needs, including recovery from natural disasters, and provide short-term livelihood opportunities in support of broader stabilization efforts. Activities include rehabilitating wells, drainage canals, schools, and irrigation systems; mitigating flood damage; and providing humanitarian aid to local governments for distribution to displaced families.

COMMUNITY RECOVERY FOLLOWING MILITARY ACTIVITY

Recognizing that communities recovering from military operations are highly vulnerable, USAID implements stabilization activities to bring normalcy and assist with the recovery of losses incurred during the operations. Activities include immediate material and livelihood assistance to families suffering loss, rebuilding vital community infrastructure, and rehabilitating playgrounds and sports facilities for youth development.

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