



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

November 1-November 30, 2009

AGRICULTURE

Afghan Apples Exported to India: In early November 2009, Afghan farmers made history with the first-ever export of their apples to India. Up to 75 metric tons of apples will be exported each week from Wardak and Paktya provinces until the end of December. The shipments were permitted after the approval of a key document detailing how the country's apples will meet international standards. In partnership with Afghanistan's Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock, USAID completed a pest risk analysis detailing methods to prevent infestations, which was approved by India's Ministry of Agriculture.



A farmer inspects the quality of his apples in Wardak province. Afghanistan's apples, especially those from Wardak, are renowned for their crispiness, color and size.

PHOTO: USAID/ASAP

The opening of the Indian market comes just as Afghan farmers harvest their apples. USAID, in partnership with the coalition forces, provided the farmers with training to improve the quality and quantity of the apples and to introduce proper sorting, grading, and packaging procedures. As a result of the partnership, farmers are also using cold storage facilities that allow them to wait for optimal prices before selling the fruit. "I'm expecting to sell our apples at a good price in India," said Abdul Masood, a farmer who received training from USAID. "That, in turn, will encourage us to grow more apples, export them to India, and get more money, which can contribute to the local economy."



More than 100 families in Logar will have clean, affordable energy this winter thanks to solar panels provided by USAID and Afghan Community Development Councils.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM

Solar Power Brings Heat and Light to Logar: For the first time, more than 100 families in five villages in Logar province will enter the winter season with a sustainable source of electricity and heat. With support from the local Afghan Community Development Council and funding from USAID, the villages are now powered by solar panels. In a strong show of local participation, each Community Development Council paid about 10 percent of the panels' cost, as well as providing bulbs, batteries, and cables.

The low-cost producers of clean, renewable energy are excellent sources of electricity for villages not



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connected to a power grid. Each solar panel generates approximately 40 watts of electricity per household, enough to light four rooms with 10-watt bulbs. Local workers installed the solar panels, which will enable families to heat and light their homes during the cold, dark winter months. The installation of the solar panels in Logar follows similar projects in Paktya and Ghazni, and similar projects in other parts of the country will follow over the next year.

Cleaning the Kabul River: A new project through the Kabul Municipality Government is clearing out waste in the Kabul River. Funded by USAID, the \$3.5 million project provides temporary employment for urban residents who lack a sufficient income to buy food for their families.

More than 1,500 men and women were recruited from provinces throughout the nation to clean 11 kilometers of the Kabul River in northeast Kabul. The first round of garbage collection started on October 15 and provided employment opportunities to 2,738 laborers. Each laborer is employed for 40 days, earns \$6 a day, and is paid once every 10 days through a voucher system.



A worker removes trash from the Kabul River, improving water flow and earning an income to support his family.

PHOTO: USAID/Uruj Perwaiz

“The Kabul River cleaning project will contribute to maintaining a clean body of water through the center of Kabul, as well as being a clean source for irrigation for the country’s agriculture,” said USAID Mission Director William M. Frej. “We are proud to be sponsoring this project for the city of Kabul, and for the city’s residents.”

Tora Bora Residents Gain a Source of Clean Water: With funding and expertise from USAID, an Afghan construction firm has completed a three-pipe network that is bringing clean water to 750 families in Tora Bora. Persistent violence and insecurity in the area had led to a rise in water-borne illnesses, especially among children. Frustrated by the lack of public services in this insurgent stronghold, parents in the community approached the government-supported District Development Assembly, guaranteeing security in return for a solution to the water crisis. At the request of local officials, USAID deployed engineers to assess the problem, shared their findings and proposed solutions with village elders, and contracted with an Afghan firm to build the pipe network. Now, parents are grateful for a clean source of water, children are healthier, and all area residents enjoy a safer place to live.



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INFRASTRUCTURE

On the Road Television Program Premier: The series premier of *On the Road*, a USAID-sponsored national television program, aired on Tolo TV on November 21. Introducing a different region or province each week, the program showcases the diversity of Afghanistan and the progress being made in the country's development. The show profiles the social and economic impact on average Afghans of new and improved roads, infrastructure rehabilitation, and other development assistance. The first of 26 episodes features a visit to Badakhshan and highlights USAID's Kishim-Fayzabad road project, health clinics, and agriculture improvements.



On the Road host Mujeeb Arez on location in Paktya province.

PHOTO: USAID/IRP

Through face-to-face interviews with local leaders and people in their own communities, *On the Road's* host, Mujeeb Arez, explores the social, cultural, and historical aspects of different provinces. Interviews with farmers, doctors, workers, youth, and community leaders provide hope for the future and show the positive impact of development projects coordinated by the Government of Afghanistan in partnership with the international community.



Kajaki Dam's water is used to generate power for Kandahar and Hilmand provinces.

PHOTO: Lizette Potgieter

Kajaki Dam Powerhouse Boosts Power in the South: The Kajaki Dam in Hilmand province is now providing more power thanks to the activation of a refurbished turbine generation. The rehabilitation of the Kajaki Dam Powerhouse has resulted in the combined generation of 31 megawatts (MW) of power – the most power Kajaki has produced in the past three decades. Thousands of citizens in Kandahar and Hilmand provinces will benefit from the newfound electricity created by the power increase.

The Unit 3 turbine generator started providing power on October 4, despite an increase of insurgent activity in the war-stricken south. Afghan powerhouse

workers, machinists, and subcontractors participated in the refurbishment of Unit 3, further building the capacity of Afghans to rebuild their country. "We are now generating more power out of Kajaki than approximately three decades before," said Head Engineer Rasoul, who has been directly involved with Kajaki for the past 30 years. The increase of power will lead to significant cost savings for electricity consumers, since hydro-generated power is much less expensive to run than diesel.



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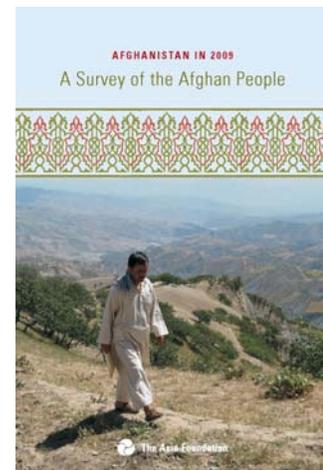
In late October 2009, USAID laid the massive earthquake-resistant foundation for Sardar Kabul Girls' High School.

PHOTO: USAID/Afghanistan

Earthquake-resistant Foundation Laid at Sardar Girl's High School: In late October 2009, USAID laid the immense earthquake-resistant foundation for Sardar Kabul Girls' High School. Over a period of 72 hours beginning October 22, 212 cement trucks delivered 1,700 cubic meters of concrete in the largest concrete placement in USAID's building history in Afghanistan. Engineers worked around the clock, ensuring a successful construction operation to establish a well-engineered foundation for the school. "The massive foundation is required to ensure that the three-story, 53-room building is able to resist strong earthquakes that occur in Afghanistan," said USAID representative Jeff Hepler. "Sardar Kabul Girls High School is one of the first large buildings in Afghanistan being constructed in accordance with the International Building Code (IBC) and is scheduled for completion in June 2010." When completed, the school will serve more than 4,000 girls in Afghanistan's capital.

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

Afghan Public Opinion Survey Released: On October 27, The Asia Foundation released the findings from its most recent public opinion poll in Afghanistan, covering all 34 provinces in the country. *Afghanistan in 2009: A Survey of the Afghan People* is the fifth poll conducted by The Asia Foundation; previous polls were released in 2004, 2006, 2007, and 2008. Collectively, the five surveys establish an accurate, long-term barometer of public opinion across Afghanistan to help assess the mood and direction of the country. The fieldwork for the survey was conducted during June and July 2009, prior to the presidential election. Pollsters conducted personal interviews with a random sample of 6,406 Afghan citizens 18 years of age and older, both women and men, from different social, economic, and ethnic communities in rural and urban areas.



The survey respondents pointed to insecurity – attacks, violence, and terrorism – as the biggest problem facing the country, followed closely by unemployment, a poor economy, and corruption. Findings also indicate that 42 percent of Afghans think the country is headed in the right direction (compared to 38 percent in 2008, 42 percent in 2007, 44 percent in 2006, and 64 percent in 2004); while 29 percent feel it is moving in the wrong direction. The remaining 21 percent have mixed feelings.



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HEALTH

Polio Eradication Campaign: Afghanistan is one of only four countries with endemic polio virus. USAID and the Ministry of Public Health are working together to eradicate the debilitating disease from the country. On November 15, President Hamid Karzai and Deputy U.S. Ambassador Francis J. Ricciardone marked the final round of Polio Eradication National Immunization Days with a ceremony at the presidential palace in Kabul. The program is designed to encourage Afghans to vaccinate their children under the age of five against polio.



Deputy Ambassador Ricciardone, President Karzai, and Minister of Public Health Dr. Fatimie supported Polio Eradication National Immunization Day by administering polio vaccination drops to an Afghan child.

PHOTO: Debra Boyce

Afghanistan is prone to virus transmission because of a broad border with Pakistan and regular movement of people across the border. Cross-border coordination between Afghanistan and Pakistan is in place, and several initiatives are further strengthening polio eradication efforts, including the establishment of permanent vaccination posts at border crossings. Additionally, USAID supports the World Health Organization in improving quality of the vaccination campaigns and supports UNICEF in disseminating polio messages and raising awareness for introducing polio eradication strategies.



Minister of Public Health Dr. Fatimie and U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry shake hands at the launch of the Partnership Contracts for Health Service program.

PHOTO: USAID/Afghanistan

New Health Services Partnership Puts Afghans

First: The Ministry of Public Health and the Ministry of Finance launched a new Partnership Contracts for Health Service (PCH) program on November 4 after signing 16 contracts with 10 NGOs totaling approximately \$72 million over two years. Through these contracts funded by USAID, the Ministry of Public Health will support 462 health facilities and more than 4,000 health posts in twelve provinces. The PCH program is expected to be implemented for five years, with a total value of \$236 million, not including essential medicines that will also be provided by the U.S. Government.

At the signing, Minister of Public Health Dr. Said Mohammad Amin Fatimie, Minister of Finance Dr. Omar Zakhilwal, and U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry spoke of the importance of health services



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packages to improve the health of the Afghan people and how the program will improve access to quality health care, especially for women and children.

“Today is an important step in improving the lives and the health of the Afghan people,” said Ambassador Eikenberry. “Through these host country contracts with the various NGOs, this program will make available basic health services and hospital services to more than 35 percent of the Afghan population. We have already seen a significant rise in accessibility in health services for the population rise from just nine percent in 2001 to approximately 85 percent today.” Minister of Finance Dr. Omar Zakhilwal added, “The Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan by taking this opportunity would like to make sure that it would do the best to ensure that the funding is executed in the most effective, transparent and accountable manner.”

EDUCATION

In-service Teacher Training Bolsters Quality

Education: From July to October 2009, Afghanistan’s USAID-supported National Program for In-Service Teacher Training trained 15,000 Afghan educators in humanities subjects for grades seven to nine. This training, which took place in 11 of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces, is crucial to improving the quality of teaching in Afghanistan, as many teachers lack standard teaching qualifications. It improves teachers’ skills in subjects such as geography, history, Islamic studies, Dari, Pashto, and English, and enables educators to teach in more a participatory way using student-centered techniques.



Teachers in Balkh province work in groups to devise student-centered teaching techniques.

PHOTO: USAID/BESST

Significantly, twenty-seven percent of those who completed the training were female. Under the Taliban, women were forbidden such opportunities, and USAID’s training provided a leap forward in their capacity to educate the next generation of Afghans. Miss Bilqis, a Pashto-language teacher from Khost province, noted, “Since I completed the in-service teacher training, I can claim that my teaching has strongly improved and my students can learn the lessons much faster than before.”

Female University Students in Nangarhar Learn IT Skills: Young Afghan women face many challenges getting an education, especially in conservative areas in the country’s east and south. In Nangarhar Province, 35 female university students recently completed a course to learn basic computer skills. They overcame issues of security, the need to get permission from their families, and lack of transportation in order to learn valuable skills that will help them succeed in their future careers.



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Female students learn IT skills at the Nangarhar University Afghan Next Generation eLearning (ANGeL) Center.

PHOTO: USAID/AeQA

The 35 students make up nearly half of the female student body at Nangarhar University. USAID and the university hope to enroll the remaining female students in IT courses by the end of the academic year. To increase female enrollment, Nangarhar University offers separate USAID-supported classes for female students and faculty members. This approach has clearly been successful in increasing participation in the IT courses offered at the Nangarhar University Afghan Next Generation eLearning (ANGeL) Center. The center, established by USAID and the Afghan e-Quality Alliances program, make the internet and e-learning opportunities more accessible to university students, faculties, and staff.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Afghanistan Central Business Registry Launched in Hirat:

Small and medium businesses are the backbone of economic growth in many countries, including Afghanistan. To enable small businesses to legally register and thrive, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry recently opened a provincial Central Business Registry Office in Hirat with the support of USAID. The new office – the third provincial business registry to open this year – provides businesses with the opportunity to complete all steps of the registration process in one location. Additionally, the new computerized registry system helps to bring Afghanistan's business registration practices up to international standards. It is one more step that the Ministry of Commerce and Industry is taking to create a healthy business environment and support Afghan enterprises in the country's provinces.



Ambassador Wayne, USAID Mission Director Frej, and Minister of Commerce and Industry Shahrani inaugurate the Hirat ACBR.

PHOTO: USAID/Afghanistan

“Afghan organizations such as the Central Business Registry in Hirat encourage greater economic prosperity and the creation of new jobs,” noted Ambassador E. Anthony Wayne, Coordinating Director for Development and Economic Affairs, at the launch event. “We are pleased to support this project. Together, through organizations such as this one, we will continue to promote Afghan-led efforts to build a brighter future and to deepen the Afghan-U.S. partnership.” Minister of Commerce and Industry Wahidullah Shahrani also welcomed the new office and added, “This process that used to take more than one week has been reduced to one to two days, and has resulted in greater transparency, reduced corruption, and increased efficiency.”