



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AFGHANISTAN

COUNTRY PROFILE

Fall 2009



Of the six million children enrolled in primary and secondary school, 35 percent are girls. (Photo: USAID/Afghanistan)

USAID'S IMPACT AT A GLANCE

- Infant mortality rate has dropped by 22 percent.
- Over 85 percent of the population now has access to some form of health care.
- Over 50 percent of the judiciary has been trained through USAID-sponsored programs.
- More than 70,000 loans have been extended to women-owned businesses.
- Four mobile phone companies with over 6.5 million subscribers.

OVERVIEW

Twenty-five years of war have devastated the economy, institutions, and people of Afghanistan. The U.S. Government, NATO, and several international partners have combined forces and resources to support the Afghan Government in a civilian-military effort to secure and rebuild the country and combat terrorism.



With the people of Afghanistan as its mission, USAID, as part of the overall U.S. Government effort, is helping Afghans gain the capacity and resources to take charge of their own future and development. President Obama's

Afghanistan-Pakistan strategy and the "Afghan First" initiative call for empowering Afghan institutions to take the leading role in the development and reconstruction of the country. As long-term development cannot take hold in an unstable environment, USAID also supports the joint Afghan-U.S. Government Counterinsurgency (COIN) Strategy to provide rapid-response programs that improve lives and livelihoods throughout Afghanistan's most volatile areas.

PROGRAMS

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Reliable infrastructure and energy networks are essential for economic growth. Viable and secure roads are already paving the way to deliver farmers' products to market, providing access to health and education services, and facilitating regional trade. USAID's rehabilitation of more than 1,677 kilometers of roads has increased mobility and strengthened trade and security. As a result, approximately 80 percent of Afghans now live within 50 kilometers of the newly constructed Ring Road.

Access to reliable, affordable power is also critical to a sustaining private sector. However, fewer than 15 percent of Afghans currently have access to electricity. By allocating financial support and expertise for the North-East Power System, USAID joins in the multi-donor initiative to expand access to reliable, low-cost electricity to more than 20 percent of the population by the end of 2009. It is also building and rehabilitating facilities including the Kabul Power Plant, which will provide power to 600,000 Afghans, and the Kajaki Dam, the principal source of electricity in southern Afghanistan.

Revitalizing Afghanistan's rural economy is also critical to the country's long-term economic growth. By offering new alternatives and cash-for-work incentives, USAID is working to significantly decrease the country's poppy production. In addition, improved access to water for the 80 percent of

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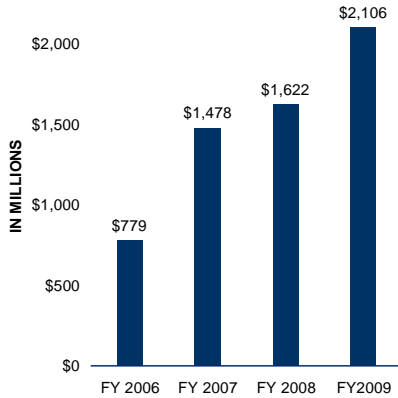


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COUNTRY PROFILE CONTINUED

USAID ASSISTANCE TO AFGHANISTAN



Funding Sources: Child Survival and Health, Development Assistance, Economic Support Funds, Global HIV/AIDS Initiative, and PL 480 Title II Food Aid

For more information, see the *FY2009 Congressional Budget Justification* <http://www.usaid.gov/policy/budget/>

Afghans who farm has enriched irrigation systems for nearly 15 percent of arable land and improved the health of millions of livestock. Afghan farmers now also have access to improved technologies and financial services.

Afghanistan also receives direct assistance to increase revenue collection, improve the legal and regulatory framework to increase private sector investment, and build the government's skills to manage the economy. These improvements have helped to boost Afghanistan's economy, which has grown at approximately 12 percent per year over the past six years.

GOVERNING JUSTLY AND DEMOCRATICALLY

Afghanistan's new constitution was tested in 2009 with the first-ever Afghan-led election. Despite significant terrorist threats, Afghans elected a President and members of Provincial Councils. USAID supports local governments, providing training in management of human and financial resources and ethics in government. To encourage a balanced government, USAID programs trained 50 percent of the members of the judiciary, as well as 4,100 journalists.

In Afghanistan, Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs) coordinate U.S. and international assistance at the grassroots level. PRTs – small, joint civilian-military teams – extend the reach of the Afghan government to improve security and facilitate reconstruction and development in key provinces.

INVESTING IN PEOPLE: HEALTH AND EDUCATION

Under the Taliban, only 900,000 boys and no girls were enrolled in schools. Today, as a result of efforts by the Afghan government, the U.S., and other donors, more than six million children are in school. A third of them are girls. With 80 percent of schools severely damaged or destroyed by the Taliban, USAID constructed or repaired more than 680 schools and printed 60 million textbooks. Beyond its accelerated learning program that enrolled over 170,000 students – more than half of them girls – USAID support to government has translated into a significant increase in female enrollment at secondary and university levels.

The health status of Afghans is among the worst in the world. One out of every five Afghan children dies before the age of five. To this end, USAID and other donors have worked so that now more than 85 percent of the population has access to some form of health care, up from nine percent in 2002. In addition, the infant mortality rate has dropped by 22 percent, partially due to USAID's support of midwife training, that has increased the number of midwives from 404 to nearly 1,700 in six years. Finally, Afghanistan, one of only four countries in the world where polio remains endemic, has seen over 90 percent of children under five years old vaccinated against the disease since 2002, partially due to USAID support.

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On behalf of the American people, the U.S. government has provided humanitarian assistance and economic development to those in need since the Marshall Plan.