



Afghanistan National Solidarity Project: Promoting Community-Based Development

Overview

A quarter century of war and civil strife in Afghanistan seriously damaged rural infrastructure and fractured local communities. The National Solidarity Program (NSP), a community-driven reconstruction and rural infrastructure development program, has made significant achievements in empowering communities, improving community relations, and increasing public faith in the system of government.

Challenge

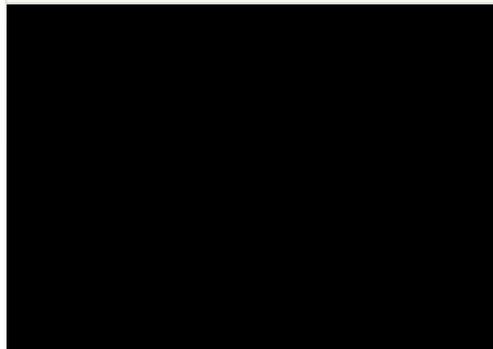
During a post-conflict phase, in which rapid delivery of a "peace dividend" is critical to establish or maintain the credibility of the new government, the challenge is to:

- Generate employment and rehabilitate infrastructure in rural areas devastated by severe drought and over two decades of conflict; and
- Strengthen local governance to foster rule of law.

Approach

The National Solidarity Program (NSP) is a massive effort by the government to reach rural communities across Afghanistan and address their needs using participatory approaches. Implemented by the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, through an extensive network of facilitating partner organizations (mostly nongovernmental organizations), the NSP was originally a component of the International Development Association (IDA)-financed Emergency Community Empowerment and Public Works Project launched in 2002. The program then became a national priority program under Afghanistan's development framework and has grown into the government's flagship rural development program. Elected village-level Community Development Councils (CDCs), in which women play a key role, reach consensus on development priorities, develop investment proposals, and use grants and local labor to implement priority subprojects

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More Results



45,108

projects successfully completed

515

new schools constructed

to meet local needs.

Results

The NSP has established 26,395 CDCs in 34 provinces of Afghanistan, covering a rural population of about 22 million. So far, approximately 24,862 communities received financing to implement their priority subprojects.

-About 55,050 subprojects were financed, and so far, 45,108 subprojects were successfully completed in different sectors.

-About 23,205 kilometers of tertiary and 640 kilometers of secondary roads were constructed/rehabilitated.

-Approximately 39,343 kilowatts (KW) of electricity was produced through the completion of micro hydro and solar power energy.

-The NSP has installed 2,074 hand pumps so far.

-In the education sector, 331 primary schools, 143 secondary schools and 41 high schools were constructed.

-Thirty-four clinic buildings and one pharmacy building were constructed in the health sector and health education has been provided to the beneficiaries.

-The implementation of subprojects in various sectors has generated 27 million labor days.

Women played a crucial role in successful implementation of the NSP. They have been involved in all NSP processes from mobilization to completion of their community subproject. Approximately 38 percent of CDC members are women and they participated in identification and prioritization of their community problems and subprojects together with men. They conduct the meetings and take an active part in implementation of the subprojects. Women are members of community participatory monitoring to assess the progress and achievements of their subprojects.

Voices

“We have a school in the village for both boys and girls, our homes have electricity, and there is no shortage of clean drinking water. All the children attend classes regularly, especially those who couldn’t go to school earlier because of the distance.”

— *Mohammad Yousuf*

Bank Contribution

The NSP was envisioned by the new Afghan leadership after the fall of the Taliban. To help put it into action, IDA drew on its experience designing successful Community-Driven Development (CDD) projects elsewhere, such as the Kecamatan program in Indonesia. As of September 2010, the NSP contributions by all donors were approximately US\$1.5 billion.

An initial IDA grant (under the IDA Emergency Community Empowerment and Public Works Project) funded a US\$27 million community empowerment component that paved the way for the NSP. By September 2010, IDA support to the NSP had reached US\$436 million. The Bank also administered the Japanese Social Development Fund (JSDF) amounting to US\$42 million and the Food Price Crisis Response Trust Fund (FPCRTF) of US\$8 million.

Partners

The NSP is also supported by the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF), which is administered by the World Bank. The ARTF is a partnership between the international community and the Afghan government for the improved effectiveness of the reconstruction effort. Since early 2002, 32 donors have contributed over US\$4 billion (as of November 21, 2010), making the ARTF the largest contributor to the Afghan budget – for both operating costs and development programs. The ARTF’s support for national priority programs, for

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operating costs of government operations, and for the policy reform agenda is contributing to the achievement of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy goals. As of September 2010, the ARTF had disbursed US\$940 million to support the NSP implementation. In addition, the bilateral donors' funding to the NSP amounted to US\$100 million.

The ARTF is managed by a Management Committee consisting of the World Bank (as the administrator), the Islamic Development Bank, the Asian Development Bank, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and the United Nations Development Programme. The Management Committee meets regularly in Kabul, with the Ministry of Finance as an observer, to carry out the day-to-day business of the fund. Once a quarter, ARTF donors meet to discuss broader strategy with the government and ARTF management.

Toward the Future

Over the next five years, the NSP aims to roll out to the remaining 15,800 communities to reach national coverage. This expansion is an increase from the original estimate of 10,300 new communities and it poses a challenge since approximately half of these communities (about 7,100) are in high or extremely insecure areas. The program will also need a significant amount of additional financing to achieve the envisaged full national coverage. So far, over 18,400 communities have fully utilized their first round of NSP block grants (with subprojects that are at least 85 percent complete). But, the NSP will provide second block grants to only 11,900 communities, because of the budget constraint; limited technical, administrative and procurement capacity; and increasing insecurity incidences. It will be important for the Government of Afghanistan to continue engaging these communities to avoid eroding the trust built through the NSP thus far. Apart from financing rural social infrastructure, the third phase of the NSP is focusing on institutional strengthening, through transformation of the CDCs into legally recognized Village Councils, as the lowest level of governance.