International Development Partners

American Red Cross
Asian Development Bank
Barclays Capital
Chaine de l’Espoir
Czech TV Foundation
Enfants Afghans
European Commission
Food and Agriculture Organisation
Government of Afghanistan
Government of Canada
Government of Germany
Government of France
Government of India
Government of Italy
Government of Japan
Government of the Kingdom of Denmark
Government of the Kingdom of Norway
Government of Portugal
Government of Switzerland
Government of the United Kingdom
Government of the United States of America
International Centre of Agricultural Research in Dry Areas
International Finance Corporation
International Malawi and Wheat Improvement Centre
International Organisation for Migration
Johnson & Johnson
Monaco Telecom International
MCT Corp
MedAid Foundation
Novo
UN Children’s Fund
UN Development Programme
UN Education, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation
UN High Commission for Refugees
UN Office for Drugs and Crime
World Bank
World Food Programme
World Health Organisation

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The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) is a group of private development agencies working to empower communities and individuals, often in disadvantaged circumstances, to improve living conditions and opportunities, especially in Africa and Asia. Its agencies work in over 30 countries for the common good of all citizens, regardless of their gender, origin or religion. Its underlying impulse is the ethic of compassion for the vulnerable in society.

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In Herat, in western Afghanistan, document-ation, conservation and upgrading work has also been carried out since 2005 in surviving historic sections of the old city. Two historic cisterns have been restored, along with an adjoining covered silk bazaar and a mosque. Five houses of particular architectural merit have also been repaired and conserved, while grants and other assistance have been provided to more than 70 households to repair their traditional houses. In addition, restoration work has been undertaken on an important Timurid shrine complex in Gurgarz, northeast of the city.

In another initiative to preserve and develop Afghanistan’s cultural heritage, AKDN has established two schools of classical Afghan music in Kabul and Herat. The disruptions of the war have threatened the disappearance of the country’s classical music tradition. Under the Ustad-Shagird training scheme begun in 2003, master musicians teach stu-dents, selected on merit, to preserve and pass on this musical tradition. Instruments taught include the rubab, delruba, sa-rinda, dutar and sitar.

AKDN works include the restoration of walls and the Queen’s Palace, the re-laying of water channels, the reconstruction of a caravanserai which will offer space for a visitor’s centre, shops and offices, and the replanting of trees favoured by the Mughals. A range of community upgrading activities has also been carried out, improving water and sanitation facilities for 10,000 inhabitants of the surrounding residential area, which has been the focus of joint area-planning initiatives with Kabul Municipality.

AKDN has restored an imposing 19th-century mausoleum in central Kabul over the grave of Timur Shah, the king who made Kabul the Afghan capital. The sur-rounding open space has been reclaimed and landscaped to create a green park in the heart of the city.

Since 2003, war-damaged quarters of the old city of Kabul have been the focus of an AKDN programme to conserve key historic buildings, including houses, mosques, shrines and public facilities. Upgrading works have also improved liv-ing conditions for some 15,000 residents of the old city in the neighbourhoods of Asheqan wa Arefan, Chindawol and Kuche Kharabat.

Social, Cultural, and Economic Programmes of the
Aga Khan Development Network in Afghanistan

At the conference on the reconstruction of Afghanistan, held in Tokyo in 2002, His Highness the Aga Khan made an initial pledge of US$ 75 million to Afghanistan’s reconstruction. To date, AKDN’s assistance to Afghanistan has exceeded His Highness’ original pledge by 80 per cent. With the support of its donors and partners, nearly US$750 million has been channelled through the AKDN for Afghanistan’s reconstruction. Among other things, this investment has helped to produce large-scale rural development, health, education and civil society programmes; the provision of a range of microfinance services; the safeguarding of historic landscapes and neighbourhoods in Kabul and Herat; a rapidly growing mobile phone network; and the renovation of a five-star hotel in Kabul.

In his statement at the Tokyo conference, His Highness identified three priorities for national recovery:

- the creation of a “safety belt” in Central Asia through selective investments in areas within the wider region that remain volatile and fertile grounds for permanent instability; the repatriation of refugees and reintegration of former combatants in a manner that fully recognises and re-spects the rights, cultures and traditions of the country’s ethnic communities; and the establishment of competent, stable, transparent and accountable institutions which emerge from, and respond to, the needs of the majority of the popula-tion, and through which the processes of building confidence, strengthening democracy and fostering development can be channelled.

Humanitarian Assistance

Focus Humanitarian Assistance, an AKDN affiliate, started emergency and relief work in northeast Afghanistan in 1995, before AKDN’s main development programmes began. Rugged terrain and the absence of roads meant that humani-tarian aid often had to be transported on inflatable boats across the Panj River from Tajikistan. At its peak in 2001, Focus delivered more than 20,000 metric tonnes of emergency food and non-food aid to 500,000 beneficiaries in the country. Food aid was later complemented by ag-ricultural support to farmers, and grants, transport, reception services, vocational training and shelter provision to return-ing refugees. High-energy rations and milk were distributed to schoolchildren, and tens of thousands of children were immunised.

Local communities were involved in the construction of more than 1,600 km of irrigation channels and 700 km of roads through food-for-work initiatives. Schools, clinics and other community infrastructure were also rehabilitated through similar programmes. This humanitarian assist-
AKDN is engaged in a number of other development programmes in Afghanistan. AKDN assists villages to establish community development councils organised under the Afghan Government’s National Solidarity Programme. AKDN is a facilitating partner of the programme areas.

In 2002, AKDN's rural development programme responded to food shortages in northeast and central Afghanistan by distributing quality seeds and fertilisers aimed at improving agricultural yields and productivity. Shortly after, AKDN began working with local communities to build infrastructure projects, such as irrigation channels, micro-hydroelectric power plants, roads, bridges, schools and health centres. Such projects are part of a comprehensive approach aimed at enabling people to improve their living conditions and increase their income. AKDN’s programmes have created employment opportunities and improved the living conditions of more than 20,000 people in regions where AKDN has been working.

Building on its work with community development councils, AKDN is making a significant contribution to the development of the agriculture sector in Afghanistan. AKDN has contributed to overall food security in northeast Afghanistan by distributing quality seeds and fertilisers aimed at improving agricultural yields and productivity. AKDN’s programmes have created employment opportunities and improved the living conditions of more than 20,000 people in regions where AKDN has been working.

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