



PRESS KIT

Series on Canada in Afghanistan

#4: Development Needs in Afghanistan

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The Link between Security and Development

The ability of insurgents to draw new recruits is greatly dependent on the economic vulnerability facing Afghans. The Taliban, Gulbuddin Hekmatyar's Hezb-e Islami, and other armed factions find easy recruiting grounds among a poverty-stricken population. Therefore, prioritizing access to basic services should be on par with defense priorities for the Canadian government's policy in Afghanistan. There is a gradually closing window of opportunity for lasting reconstruction.

Basic services where Canada should be making more significant contributions include:

- Education: professionalization and training of teachers; protection of schools from attack; provision of safe transportation from rural areas to schools; building and repair of school facilities.
- Water: building of wells; access to safe drinking water.
- Sanitation: equipping of modern sewage systems.
- Healthcare: establishing a network of primary healthcare clinics in all parts of the country; rebuilding hospitals; training midwives; technical and financial assistance for medical education.
- Rural livelihoods: assistance to farming communities with new agricultural technologies; access to replacement crops over poppy cultivation (rather than crop destruction); access to markets; support for women's agricultural participation.
- Rule of law: professionalization of the legal system; legal aid; technical and financial assistance for legal education; legal education in rural areas.
- Recreation: providing public space for recreational activities for women, men and children (sports, public parks, gardens, etc.).
- Culture: Reaffirming Afghanistan's cultural heritage through support to museums, educational activities, art classes, libraries and other cultural activities.

Are We Meeting the Development Needs of Afghanistan?

In addition to the defense contribution, Canada has committed a substantial amount of funding to development in Afghanistan. Canada has committed \$100 million in development assistance from 2004 until 2011. Between 2001 and 2011, this will amount to nearly \$1 billion. Since 2002, Afghanistan has been Canada's largest recipient of bilateral aid. Afghanistan is considered by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) to be a post-conflict state receiving humanitarian aid.

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The majority of Canada's development assistance is allocated to:

- The World Bank
- UN agencies (UNDP, UN Mine Action Service, etc.)

The World Bank administers the Reconstruction Trust Fund (\$60 million from 2005-2008), the National Solidarity Programme (\$30 million from 2005-2009), a micro-finance programme (\$52,350,000), and several other projects. UN agencies implement projects ranging from mine removal, support to the parliamentary elections, and human rights treaty reporting.

Funds reach the government of Afghanistan through the projects administered by the UN agencies and the World Bank. Most projects are intended to support the capacity of government ministries to fulfill their roles. Several Canadian government institutions with active projects in Afghanistan are Correctional Services of Canada and Rights & Democracy.

A relatively smaller amount of funding has been allocated for Canadian non-governmental organizations (NGO) working in Afghanistan. Currently, the Aga Khan Foundation Canada is the only Canadian NGO managing an active project funded by the Canadian Government. Previous implementing organizations include IMPACS, CARE Canada and Alternatives.

Currently, only one project funded by the Canadian is focused specifically on women. No projects provide direct funding to independent Afghan organizations.

It is important that Canadians are also attentive to Canada's development efforts in Afghanistan, remembering that defense is not the only component of Canadian assistance to that country. It is critical that CIDA also have a clear, long-term strategy for over-coming poverty and underdevelopment in Afghanistan, which are inherently linked to conflict and insecurity.

Dr. Barnett Rubin, the Director of the Center for International Cooperation and one of the world's leading experts on Afghanistan argues that stabilizing Afghanistan requires, among other things, at least doubling reconstruction aid, channelling more of it through the Afghan government budget, applying more of it to building basic infrastructure, and rural development and employment creation. He also calls for urgently strengthening the police and judiciary.

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