

Norwegian Afghanistan Committee (NAC)



Annual Report 2003

Preface

The Afghan Government and the donor community, including The Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD) have rightly challenged the humanitarian sector, and especially the NGOs, in order to improve standards, legitimacy and accountability. This is fair because NGOs, which are handling funds contributed from the public or the public purse, should follow the highest standards of probity and professionalism. For us in NAC this means that we will continue to put extra effort in improving the quality of the services we provide.

The working conditions for the NGO community - who previously delivered humanitarian aid and relief in a political vacuum - have rapidly changed during the last two years. Many organizations now find themselves in a highly competitive, politicized and changing environment. Organizations that are unable to fully participate in the reconstruction process and incapable of matching the prescribed qualitative standards will have difficulties to compete with other actors.

Many governmental donors such as NORAD, SIDA, DANIDA and DIFD have chosen to channel much of their funding to Afghanistan through the Afghan authorities and the ARTF. This means that NGOs who previously received a majority of their funding from these donors now must find other ways to finance their programs in Afghanistan. Fortunately NAC has signed a multi-annual agreement with NORAD, which is, and most probably will remain one of the pillars of our funding in the coming years. However, to be able to continue with the current size, NAC will pursue additional donors from 2004 and onwards.

NAC operates with traditional sector-based activities within in health, education, environment and infrastructure/reconstruction. Further NAC operates with more thematic-based and crosscutting activities within partnership development and information/solidarity work. These are also activities that involve the organizational constituency in Norway. The entire NAC program is thus considered as including long-term development activities.

NAC desires to support long-term development efforts within Afghanistan. However, the demand for long-term aid cannot always be easily separated from the need for immediate emergency relief. To face the realities in Afghanistan it is evident that emergency needs will remain vital, especially in the most rural parts of Afghanistan. In such a context it is essential that NAC remains focused on long-term support to reconstruction and development, while at the same time remain prepared to counter short-term crisis situations.



Astrid Everine Sletten
Country Director

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The Year In Review

The enormous task of reconstructing Afghanistan continued vigorously during 2003, and the country has taken great steps toward recovery during the year. The Afghan Government together with the UN are actively preparing for elections to be held in September 2004, and as a step in the nation-building process the Loya Jirga – or the Grand Assembly – ratified a new constitution in December 2003. In this way the Afghan Government and other political actors have shown that they are indeed committed to a more stable future for the country.

At the same time the Afghan population has enjoyed one of the best harvests ever with the result that fewer Afghans are in need of emergency relief. Moreover, with a more prosperous economy in place more and more Afghans are starting small-scale enterprises covering everything from construction to restaurants and food-markets. This shows that there exists a general optimistic opinion regarding the future among ordinary Afghans.

However, during the year there has also been a sharp increase of insecurity in many parts of the country, and many violent acts have been directly targeted at NGOs with the tragic result that several aid workers have been killed while carrying out their duties. As a result aid organizations have had limited access to conduct aid programs in various districts and provinces, especially in the southern and southeastern regions of the country. The increasing insecurity is today one of the greatest challenges to the otherwise positive political developments taking place in Afghanistan.

Even though faced with a growing level of insecurity, NGOs are continuing the task of supporting the reconstruction of Afghanistan. As being a “service providing” NGO, NAC has maintained its support to the Afghan education, health, environment and construction sectors in close collaboration with the Afghan Government as well as government donors, UN agencies and local and international NGOs.

About The Norwegian Afghanistan Committee (NAC)

The Norwegian Afghanistan Committee was established shortly after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979. Local committees were quickly established around Norway through which active members tried to raise national and international opinion against the invasion as well as to raise money to support Afghans living inside the war-zone. In order to better canalize the growing funds as well as being closer to the beneficiaries NAC opened its first office in Peshawar, located in the Northwest Frontier Province (NWFP) in the neighboring country Pakistan, in 1983. During the following years NAC gave medical and educational assistance to Afghan refugees living in vast refugee camps in NWFP as well as delivered emergency health assistance through mobile medical teams, which managed to reach Afghans suffering from the war inside Afghanistan. NAC's increased support in Afghanistan and NWFP was feasible through both local fund raising in Norway as well as financial support from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 1986 NAC opened its first office inside Afghanistan and from Ghazni City, Ghazni Province, the organization continued with medical assistance as well as education support to the devastated Afghan population. Since then NAC has continued to expand its support inside Afghanistan and today NAC runs programs in the north, east and southeast parts of the country with its central office located in Kabul. Moreover, the organization maintains its strong advocacy role in Norway where members actively work on disseminating information to the Norwegian population as well as sharing solidarity with the Afghan people.

After the end of the Soviet invasion and the Afghan civil war the conditions for aid assistance changed in Afghanistan. Many Afghans still needed emergency assistance in order to survive the day, but the main challenge was now to rebuild the ruined infrastructure as well as to restore shattered social and cultural structures. In order for

Afghanistan to re-establish itself as a somewhat functioning country, assistance

had to be given on a more long-term basis. NAC has thus gradually moved from emergency assistance to development aid. Today NAC actively supports a long-term improvement of the country's education, health and environment sectors as well as assists the country with the reconstruction of basic infrastructure. During previous periods of political uncertainty and upheaval this long-term engagement has best been implemented in a decentralized fashion where projects have been determined and carried out in a local context. As part of its policy NAC will at all times keep a direct and close contact with the beneficiaries in order to make sure that the aid recipients are involved in formulating the projects. A strong foundation in the local society will give sustainability to the projects in a long-term perspective.

Since the signing of the Bonn Agreement in December 2001 the political context has rapidly changed in Afghanistan. Since 2002 there is a legitimate government in control and the central authorities are thus in the driver's seat when it comes to all reconstruction projects carried out in the country. NAC wishes to support the positive political process in the country and will hence follow the priorities and goals set out by the Government of Afghanistan (GoA). As an independent country Afghanistan should be in charge of the reconstruction and development of the country. For the time being the country needs extensive external support in order to carry out required tasks and the presence of international organizations is thus still needed in the country. In a short-term perspective NAC will thus make sure that projects are in line with national priorities and plans. However, when the GoA and the Afghan society possess the appropriate capability to fully take-over the reconstruction process NAC wishes to become "redundant" in the country. This

means that NAC wishes that all activities presently carried out by the organization will continue without external support. Furthermore, in order to support a strong Afghan civil society as well as encourage local initiatives, NAC will work through and with Afghan local partners that will – wherever possible – implement projects with active support from NAC. A close collaboration with Afghan organizations will improve the possibility for a smooth future hand-over of program/project activities and will enhance the opportunities for local NGOs to develop their capacity.

Moreover, in order to create the best possible situation for an Afghan take-over NAC will actively co-operate and pool resources with other international organizations. Not only will this enhance the creation of a more integrated development process, it will impede costly and unnecessary cases of overlapping.

Organization/Administration in 2003

As a Norwegian solidarity organization NAC has its head office in Oslo, Norway. The Secretary General, appointed by the NAC Board, is based at the head office and has the overall responsibility for the entire organization, which includes overseeing the implementation of programs in Afghanistan as well as leading the activities in Norway. The scope of activities in Norway is mainly threefold: fund raising (including donor contacts), dissemination of information and membership activities organized by local committees.



During 2003 all program implementation in Afghanistan was carried out from the NAC central office in Kabul and the field offices in Faizabad, Ghazni City and Jalalabad as well as the sub-office in Keshem and liaison office in Peshawar, Pakistan.



Moreover, during the year the organization in Afghanistan was operating with four different categories of staff: (a) expatriate staff, (b) permanent local employees, (c) local project staff and (d) local partner staff. In 2003 NAC comprised of 99 permanent local employees, 329 project staff and 5 expatriates, which were based at the central office in Kabul. Three of the expatriates left the organization during the year and one expatriate was employed to spend half his time in Kabul and the other half in Oslo. As a consequence the Oslo office has two and a half expatriate positions.

During 2003 NAC was forced to shift all field offices to new buildings due to large increases in rent. Also the central office in Kabul had to change location from Shash Darak to Shar-e-Now after the landlord demanded an unacceptable increase in rent.

NAC Policy and Strategy

To be able to work in a country such as Afghanistan, where both politics and security might change within a short time-span, it's important to maintain a certain level of flexibility and preparedness for changing conditions. However, it's equally as important to preserve core principles and sustain a clear strategy, which can direct the organization through periods of uncertainty. Established as a reaction against the Soviet occupation along with solidarity with the Afghan people, NAC will continue to be a solidarity organization with the main goal to create a better and more stable future for Afghanistan and all its citizens.

The Norwegian Afghanistan Committee will therefore always remain

- ✓ Non-political, non-religious, non-profit and non-governmental

And will always be founded on the principle of

- ✓ Strong solidarity with the Afghan people

NAC will always abide by the principle of ethnic, religious and political impartiality and will include this aspect in all project implementation. NAC will pursue its advocacy role by

- ✓ Actively support the rights of Afghans by speaking out when these rights are endangered
- ✓ Advocating for the implementation of decisions/decrees/actions that will enhance the possibilities for a stable peaceful future of Afghanistan
- ✓ Always primarily consider the well-being of the Afghan population when engaging in advocacy issues, thus making sure that decisions –even though morally justifiable- will not have a negative side effect on Afghan lives.

Considering the current situation where male domination constitutes the governing norm in Afghan society, women's basic rights will receive special attention and female participation will be encouraged in all program activities. NAC will thus

- ✓ Actively promote women rights -as stated by the declaration of universal human rights and the Afghan Constitution- by creating access to basic requirements
- ✓ Actively encourage female participation in all program activities while maintaining an understanding and sensitivity for Afghan culture and religion
- ✓ Actively seek to apply a gender balance within the organizational structure
- ✓ Protest against any forms of abuse based on gender

In order to ensure sustainability of all activities carried out NAC will

- ✓ Plan, discuss and formulate projects together with local Shuras, community elders and the direct beneficiaries
- ✓ Plan and get approval from the legitimate authorities
- ✓ Actively participate in the long-term reconstruction of Afghanistan by supporting national plans issued by the GoA and advocating matters, which NAC considers to be of importance for a stable development of the country
- ✓ Plan activities in a way that they suit Afghan realities
- ✓ Ensure that a majority of all staff consist of Afghan nationals
- ✓ Enhance the capacity of local staff by providing qualitative training in needed areas
- ✓ To the highest possible extent use local materials and produced goods and make sure that the implementation cost of projects are in line with the present Afghan economy
- ✓ Actively try to combat inflation of both market prices and salaries due to competition between international organizations

Moreover, considering the organization's origin NAC will continue to

- ✓ Maintain a close link between the members in Norway and the work carried out in Afghanistan
- ✓ Create national and international interest in issues relating to Afghanistan by actively disseminating information as well as promote fruitful debates in both countries

Security During 2003

The security situation has drastically deteriorated during the year, which has had an impact on all activities within the country. The lack of security is both due to various anti-governmental groups, which are trying to disturb the reconstruction process by the use of force, and to lawlessness and banditry, which is able to flourish due to lack of sufficient law enforcement. While the latter problem can be resolved by more investments and training of the Afghan police force the first issue is more difficult to solve.

At the end of 2003 the power of the central authorities was limited outside Kabul, and some parts of the country are still more or less in the hands of warlords or ethnic militias. In the south and east of the country Hekmatyar, Taliban and remaining groups of Al-Qaeda continue to attack the Afghan National Army and the U.S.-led Coalition Forces. In August 2003 the U.S. Army admitted for the first time that "...the anti-coalition forces seek to remove the existing national government of Afghanistan and re-establish a Taliban regime".¹ This is a rapid change of attitude, as late as May 2nd the U.S. Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld stated that "We're at the point where we have clearly moved from major combat activities to a period of stability and stabilization activities".² Since then the Coalition Forces have been forced to reassess the security situation.

The serious security situation has severely affected NGOs and IGOs, who for the first time during their presence in Afghanistan find themselves being prime targets within the political conflict. In an attack on September 8 four employees working for DACAAR were killed and one severely injured. A few days later two staff members from VARA were murdered. During 2003 the

Afghan National Security Organization (ANSO) reported almost daily several incidents aimed at international and national NGOs. Since many NGOs and IGOs are moving from emergency aid to implementing reconstruction and development programs officially run by the central authorities, anti-governmental forces identify NGOs as running the Afghan government's errands. This poses great challenges for NGOs, who suddenly are perceived as political actors carrying out political activities.



The deteriorating security situation reduces the geographical space where NGOs can carry out their work. Many NGOs have been forced to suspend activities in areas where both the recipient communities as well as the organizations have been threatened to continue with projects. Fortunately NAC has not been involved in any security incidents even though some of our projects are located in areas deemed very insecure. However, we have daily discussions with our national staff regarding their safety on the field and when deemed necessary we suspend travels to and from project locations. In unsafe areas the staff also hides their relation to the aid community by e.g. using taxis and public transportation.

Rashid, A "No Democracy" Far Eastern Economic Review, September 11, 2003
Rashid, A "Eyes Wide Shut" Far Eastern Economic Review, May 28, 2003

Insecurity is now the biggest threat against the current reconstruction and democratization process in Afghanistan. NGOs and other international organizations have repeatedly asked for an expansion of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) – currently only deployed in Kabul – to other parts of Afghanistan. In October 2003 NATO agreed to a limited expansion to

the provinces and it was decided that Germany would send 450 soldiers to the northern region of Kunduz. However, the international community has so far been unwilling to send the number of security troops that are needed and to deploy them in areas deemed most insecure.



Education

Donors: NORAD (253,079 USD), MFA (147,188 USD), WFP (89,014 USD) & Others (25,422 USD)

Key figures: NAC trained 743 teacher and distributed materials to 220 schools worth app. 150.000 USD. Among these were 31 laboratory sets and 76 library sets.

NAC has supported Afghan children's right to education by supporting Afghan schools as well as implementing a large teacher-training program in Afghanistan since 1986. During the years thousands of Afghan children and teachers have received support from NAC, even during the tough years of Taliban rule. 26 years of war and conflict has created a "culture of arms" instead of a "culture of education" with the result that the Afghan people have thus not been able to adequately develop its knowledge and skills. Consequently it has been one of NAC's objectives to try to brim over this gap by providing educational support and assistance. Since the fall of the Taliban regime and the installation of the Afghan Transitional Government – led by President Hamid Karzai – the Afghan education sector has received much attention from both donors and aid organizations. Nevertheless, even though much progress has been done to rebuild the completely ruined education system in the country, many issues still need to be resolved.



With its educational support NAC has been able to assist the Afghan population residing in the Afghan provinces of Ghazni and

Badakshan. Moreover, since Afghan refugee children, who still have not repatriated to Afghanistan, are in need of education in Pakistan NAC has decided to continue its support to two girl schools for Afghan refugees in Peshawar, Pakistan.

Learning Materials

Afghan schools are not only lacking proper buildings and other necessary infrastructure, but are also in great need for basic utensils such as notebooks, pencils, sharpeners and erasers. Most students are moreover sitting on the floor and teachers lack both tables or chairs – in some cases they don't even have a blackboard inside the classroom. Without access to such basic materials it is hard to improve the educational quality in the schools, and NAC has therefore distributed a large amount of stationary to students enrolled in schools in Ghazni and Badakshan during the year. Also the administration departments at 220 schools in the two provinces received additional stationary equipment such as for example attendance books, logbooks and record books.

Moreover, during 2003 NAC has focused on distributing extraordinary but very much needed learning materials such as laboratories and libraries to a number of schools in Ghazni, Badakshan and the two schools in Peshawar. For the first time students in 31 schools and one pedagogical institute got the opportunity to practically experiment what they previously only theoretically could learn within subjects such as chemistry, biology and physics. Moreover, having the opportunity to take home and read books that are not part of the general curriculum – covering topics such as science, history, social science as well as novels and poetry – increases both the students' general educational interest, enhances their reading and writing skills as well as give them the pleasure of just reading good novels and poetry, written by both Afghan and international authors/poets.

Teacher Training

Apart from lack of financial resources, the Afghan education sector is struggling with a shortage of qualified teachers. In fact, the lack of qualified teachers is one of the most urgent issues that need to be solved in order to provide qualitative education to young Afghans. Most teachers have not received proper training for decades – if they have received any training at all, and teacher training for existing teachers as well as educating new teachers are top priority for the Ministry of Education as well as for NGOs active within the education sector. In order to assist the Afghan Government NAC has therefore actively been running a teacher-training program in both Ghazni and Badakshan provinces for a number of years. NAC manages one teacher-training team in each province, which includes both female and male teacher trainers. Instead of operating with a fixed teacher-training center in each province – something that is common among other NGOs – NAC's teacher-training teams are traveling to the areas where the teachers are working and are thus organizing courses on the field – most often held in schools or other community buildings. NAC has chosen this strategy since (a) the organization has focused on training teachers working in very remote areas and it's easier to reach them in their home areas than to make them travel

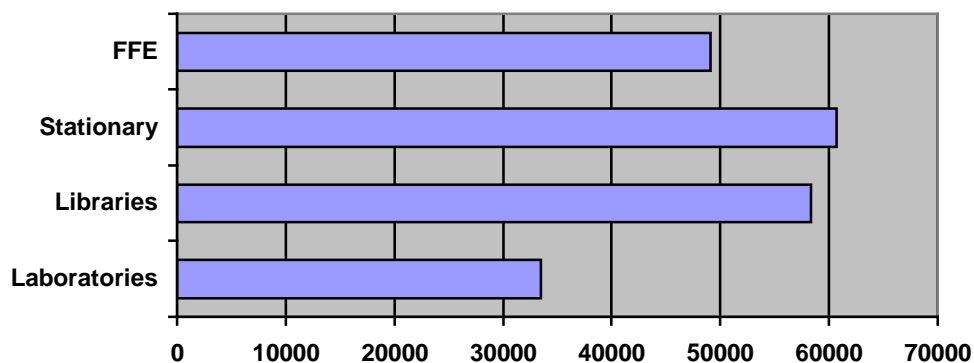
for days in order to reach a fixed center, and since (b) especially female teachers residing in remote areas would be constrained by cultural traditions, which do not allow them to travel without their families to a fixed center located far away from their homes.

During the year NAC has conducted 27 training courses and trained 743 teachers in the two provinces in subjects such as pedagogy, social science, general science and language. Besides receiving training, the teachers in Badakshan also received 50kg of wheat each – donated by WFP – after completion of the training course.

Food for Education (FFE)

In order to combat hunger as well as increase school enrolment – particularly for girls – NAC has been one of the main implementing agencies for the WFP Food for Education Program in Badakshan Province. During the year NAC has distributed wheat to 47,409 students and 1,671 teachers studying and teaching at 94 remotely located schools. The students receive 12.5kg of wheat each every month if they have been present in class for at least 22 days. In addition the girl students receive 3.5kg of oil each month in order to further promote female school enrolment. Moreover, the teachers receive 5kg of wheat as a salary incentive each month.

No. of Beneficiaries



Visit to Astrid Morken School in Peshawar...

When entering Astrid Morken School, located in the bustling old city of Peshawar, the first thing you see are children sitting everywhere, in the classrooms and in the open patio in the middle of the school. They all look very serious with their faces turned towards the female teachers standing by the blackboards, eagerly trying to overhear what is said through the noise coming from upstairs. On the rooftop a team of carpenters are busy finalizing the second floor of the building, which will soon provide more classrooms for the children. But all concentration seems to vanish when they suddenly see me. A giggle fills the whole courtyard and chairs are scraping as they are turned towards me. After a while the children calm down and look at me with great anticipation while I'm walking around to the classes and teachers, telling them who I am and where I'm from.

Suddenly some of the children spontaneously stand up and give small speeches. "My name is Sadaf and I'm 14 years old. I want to thank the people of Norway for taking care of my school and give us fans to sit under when it's hot summertime. And I also wonder if I could be a friend to some children in Norway? I have written a letter to them". And she walks up to me with a letter covered with painted roses and a big "Hi Norway!" in her hands. Suddenly I hold over ten letters, which I promise to forward to Norway.

In grade one the young female teacher is busy trying to get one little boy to come out from behind the blackboard. He is too shy to come out and say hello, but he giggles from where he's hiding. The teacher smiles and caresses another little boy. "We used to have only girls in this class, in fact there were only girls in the whole school. But since some families decided to return to Afghanistan we now accept boys in the school as well. It's good that these small boys get education too. Even though they sometime can be a handful". Sayem is sitting next to me and he can't stop laughing. He's six years old and wants to be an engineer in Afghanistan when he's older. But until then he will be busy learning how to read and write in Dari as well as play cricket and football with his friends. His favorite football team is Brazil, even though he has thus far not been taught where he can find that country on the map. Geography doesn't start until grade 7.

All in all these children are just like children everywhere else; eager to learn and keen to have fun. With the exception that these children are longing for a country most of them have never seen. "I love my country" says Madina, 8 years old, "and my family and I want to move back as soon as we can. My family has told me beautiful stories about my village and when I'm older I want to be a doctor so I can help my people to get better." Nazaneen, who sits on my other side, is happy that the school now has a laboratory so she can practice her favorite subject; chemistry. But when I ask her if she wants to be a doctor like most of the other kids she shrugs her head, "No, no. You see, the doctors also need good medicines and since I love to mix different subjects and see how they evolve I want to create new medicines that my friends can use". You can't be anything less than impressed when meeting refugee children so eager to create better opportunities for their people in a country they have never visited.

Construction

Donors: NORAD (845,966 USD) & MFA (55,544 USD)

Key figures: NAC ran 14 construction projects helping 120,000 beneficiaries.

Due to the severe state of the Afghan infrastructure NAC has been engaged in the construction sector for a number of years. With its highly skilled and experienced Engineering Department NAC has constructed a number of schools, clinics, roads, irrigation channels and other infrastructure components over the years in various areas of Afghanistan. All construction projects are always planned and agreed upon together with the concerned local communities as well as with the local authorities in the provinces. Moreover, whenever possible, NAC also requests for community contribution, which in most cases implies that the communities contribute with construction materials such as sand and gravel as well as labor-hours. When completed the projects are always handed-over to the communities so as to confirm that they are the actual owners of the accomplished projects. At the same time the NAC engineers always train chosen members of the community on how to mend, maintain and operate the constructions. These two components will facilitate for a future community maintenance and management of the projects.



NAC Badakshan construction team

Focus 2003

During the year NAC has mainly focused on projects relating to safe access to and

control of water as well as access to proper health facilities. The projects have primarily been implemented in remote areas of Badakshan, Ghazni, Kunar and Nuristan Provinces where little infrastructure exist, both due to previous years of war and the remote location of the provinces/districts.

In Badakshan Province few villages have access to clean water; instead they collect drinking water from small rivers, which are also used for other purposes. Moreover, considering that most communities obtain their main income/livelihood from agricultural products and bearing in mind the mountainous landscape, Badakshan is in great need of more irrigated land. During the year NAC has thus constructed water supplies, irrigation channels and irrigation water reservoirs in order to ensure communities' access to both drinking water as well as means to irrigate more land. Moreover, Badakshan's turbulent rivers do not only provide water for irrigation, they also frequently threaten the surrounding communities and their properties with flooding. In order to prevent this from happening NAC – together with the communities – thus constructed three retaining walls in the province. The organization furthermore constructed one path bridge in order to create safe access over the Keshem River, thus creating access to schools, markets and other facilities for communities residing in 6 villages on either side of the river.

Also Ghazni Province is in need of additional access to water since many water sources completely dried up during the preceding years of severe drought in the country. During 2003 NAC thus repaired, extended and increased the capacity of two water reservoirs in the province.

During a number of years NAC has supported and managed health facilities in Ghazni, Kunar and Nuristan Provinces. Due to an increased number of patients as well as lack of proper buildings to support arriving patients, NAC has constructed one new clinic as well as rehabilitated the

operation ward at the NAC-run Mirai Hospital in Andar District, Ghazni Province. Moreover, two NAC-supported clinics, located in remote districts of Kunar and Nuristan, were in desperate need of new buildings, and NAC has consequently constructed new facilities for the clinics.

Obstacles Encountered

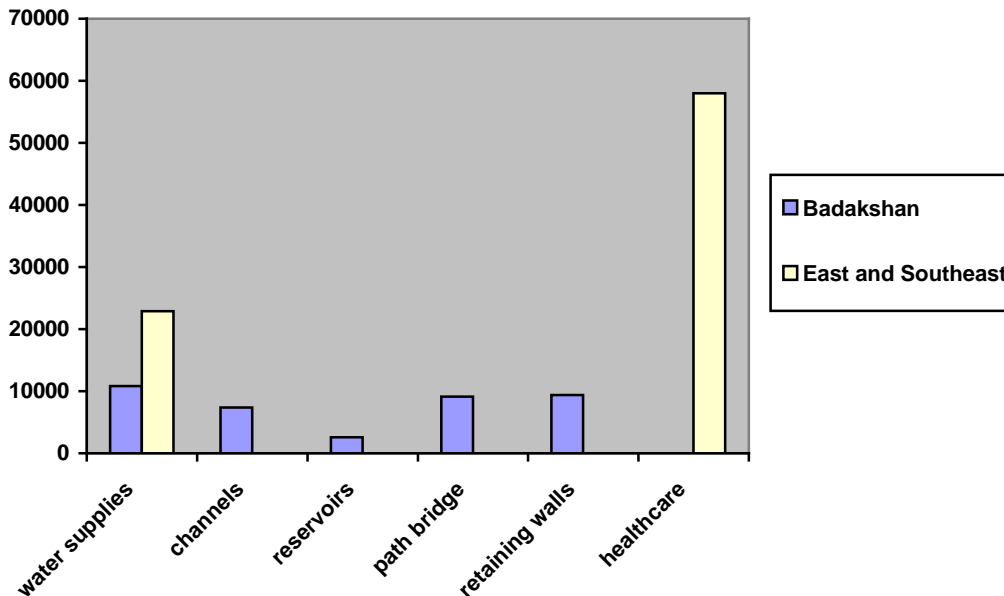
The unfavorable security situation in the country has negatively affected project implementation in especially Kunar, Nuristan and Ghazni. For example, during 2003 the war on terrorism has gradually moved more and more to the two eastern provinces of Kunar and Nuristan and the Coalition Forces now carry out large-scale operations in the area. The ongoing war on terrorism in the provinces has resulted in a complete absence of expatriate aid workers in the area as all embassies and international organizations have judged the region as a non-go area for internationals. Moreover, also national staff has periodically been in hibernation when the situation has been especially tense. While constructing the Aranz clinic in Nuristan some NAC staff had to hide behind the uncompleted building in order to protect themselves from misplaced bullets. Moreover, anti-government elements present in Ghazni Province have threatened

NGOs implementing projects in the area as well as communities working together with NGOs. Due to such threats community workers have been reluctant to work at the

project sites and NAC engineers have had problems reaching the sites as a result of travel restrictions. For this reasons the implementation of some of the construction projects located in these provinces did not manage to follow the initial timetable.

Moreover, Afghanistan manufactures 76% of the world's heroin production and the illegitimate income helps fuelling Taliban resurgence as well as funds private warlord armies. The poppy cultivation threatens the stability of the country, but no one has taken a firm initiative to address this problem thus far. The poppy/heroin production has also had a huge impact on the possibilities to implement labor intense reconstruction projects in areas affected by the illicit industry. Many NGOs are forced to helplessly stand by and watch while their short-term workers leave the project sites for much better paid jobs on the poppy fields or in the heroin factories. Badakshan Province is one of the provinces where the poppy production has increased extremely, and this has slowed down the implementation of some projects in the area.

No. of Beneficiaries



Poppy Cultivation in Badakshan...

"The United Nations Office for Drug Control's (UNODC) 2003 poppy survey for Afghanistan noted an increase of the area under opium production in Badakshan by 55% in comparison to 2002 (and a sevenfold increase since 1994, when UNODC surveys started). The national increase of production is estimated at 8% with a total national harvest of 3,600 mt. Production in Badakshan increased by 93% to 508mt, ranking the province third in the narcotics hierarchy of the country/.../While opium production is helping people to a certain extent to recover mortgaged land or prevents the loss of vital assets, the real winners of the opium economy seem to be the very poor and the relatively wealthy. Landless laborers have managed to pay off debts incurred during the drought years, helped by hugely increased labor wages during opium planting, weeding and harvesting times. Daily wages have gone up from an original 100 - 150 Afs per day to about 300 Afs, plus transport, meals and accommodation, adding up to a total value of US\$10-15 per day for unskilled labor at peak times. There has been a surge in demand for services and skilled labor such as masons, carpenters, etc., who can demand 700 Afs plus per day/.../The developments in the opium sector over the last 2 years have had a substantial impact on how [NGOs] can carry out rehabilitation and development work/.../Labor shortages have resulted in dramatically increased prices for unskilled and skilled labor in the province, and often unavailability of sufficient numbers of workers, which has considerably slowed down any construction projects/.../Communities have been so occupied during most of the construction season, that many did not come forward with agreed upon community contributions in the form of labor. Community-based project implementation has therefore suffered."

Quoted from the Aga Khan Foundation report *Badakhshan Province: Suggestions for an Area Development based Counter-narcotics strategy*, April 2004



Environment

Donors: NORAD (188,980 USD) & Others (13,200USD)

Key figures: NAC ran 3 demonstration farms, protected forests of 3 districts and trained 500 widows.

More than two decades of war has not only killed over two million Afghans and caused tremendous suffering and pain, it has also severely destroyed the country's environment and natural resources. Since beginning of 2002 Afghanistan has entered a new phase of reconstruction, which hopefully will lead to a more financially and socially prosperous future. However, economic development is dependent on good environmental management and environmental issues are thus not something that can be put aside in the reconstruction process until other sectors are rebuilt. On the contrary environmental protection and development must go hand-in-hand with the restoration of both the economy and infrastructure. This is especially true for a country such as Afghanistan, where a majority of the population is relying on agriculture and husbandry for its livelihood.

Unfortunately there is little information available regarding the current state of the Afghan environment. However, what is known is quite discouraging. A large part of the country used to be covered by a rich forest. Already the emperor Zahirudin Mohammed Babur, a known statesman who established the Moghul dynasty in Dehli, mentions the beauty of the Afghan nature in his memoirs written over four centuries ago. In one chapter he describes the large forests on the outskirts of Kabul. At present there are no trees to be found in the surroundings of Kabul and most of the forests that covered a large part of the country are gone. It's estimated that only 2% of the land is covered by trees today.

In order to actively improve the Afghan environment NAC has implemented various environmental projects since 1997. With its center in Keshem City in Badakshan Province, the NAC Environmental Program manages two large demonstration farms as well as encourages and assists the communities in establishing community

nurseries.



The NAC-run nurseries provide saplings and seeds of various types suitable for the Afghan climate, which are distributed free of charge to communities willing to establish their own nurseries. In order to make sure that the plants are well taken care of NAC charges a small fee for individual families interested in using the plants on their own land. NAC also runs a small social program where some plants are taken care of by widows residing in the area. The widows, called "Foster Mums", do not have any means of income and therefore receive wheat – provided by WFP – for their work growing pine seedlings. The seedlings are later transferred to the NAC nurseries for further cultivation and are thereafter being planted in the area.



To come to terms with the problem of deforestation NAC has appointed three Forest Protection Officers. The officers visit every village in the Keshem district on horses on a regular basis in order to supervise the forests as well as to raise awareness among the communities regarding the importance of forest protection. In addition NAC believes that substantial community participation is crucial

for the success of the project, and the organization has therefore trained and appointed 90 Community Protection Officers. These officers inspect the utilization of the local forests and report any misuse to the NAC office in Keshem, which later reports to the local authorities. The officers moreover encourage the communities to establish community nurseries, roadside plantations and plantations at schools and clinics. In order to

improve the environment in the area NAC furthermore implements watershed management projects where trees are planted on the mountainsides in order to prevent landslides and soil erosion. Moreover NAC runs an extensive Environmental Awareness Program where courses regarding environment conservation and use of natural resources are provided for schoolchildren and communities.

Focus 2003

During the year the NAC environment department has

- ✿ Distributed 8,760 poplar cuttings to 11 communities
- ✿ Distributed and sown 126kg of tree seeds at the NAC farms and community nurseries
- ✿ Distributed and transplanted 5,252 cuttings of roses, poplars, weeping willows etc.
- ✿ Transplanted 16,181 seedlings such as mulberry, pine, almonds, pistachios etc., from seedbeds to seedling beds.
- ✿ Distributed 6,140 vegetable seedlings such as eggplant, tomato, cabbage, and long pepper to 66 community farmers.
- ✿ Grafted 8,681 fruit trees.
- ✿ Permanently planted 1,010 trees at community nurseries, schools and clinics.
- ✿ Planted 750 mulberry saplings along roads in Keshem District
- ✿ Technically facilitated for 6 nursery owners to establish fruit orchards.
- ✿ Technically facilitated for a community nursery in Saraya village as well as a community nursery and watershed and energy plantation in Pashdara village.
- ✿ Conducted 7 environment awareness courses in schools in Keshem and Faizabad with total of 337 participants – both female and male students and teachers.
- ✿ Distributed saplings to students at three schools, who have taken care of the saplings as well as created school nurseries to where the saplings were later on transplanted.
- ✿ 100 widows have taken care of 500 pine seedlings each and received wheat – donated by WFP – as payment for their workload.
- ✿ Together with the communities NAC has moreover carried out weeding operations, soil preparations, pruning, watershed management and irrigated nursery land.

Forest Protection in Takhchuk Valley...

No matter how much he tried Gul Mohammad could not grow wheat on his plot of land outside Dashte Shahidha village, close to the Takhchuk valley in Keshem District. The rain fed land had for long been affected by drought and it seemed impossible to cultivate the crop. However, in 2003 500 pistachio tree seedlings were naturally regenerated on Gul Mohammad's land, something that he informed the NAC Forest Protection Officers. It also turned out that 5,000 seedlings of heaven tree had started to grow in a ravine outside the village. Since the NAC Forest Protection Officers had previously informed the community about the value of trees and forests, the community members gathered for a meeting where they unanimously decided that the naturally regenerated forest area must be protected. The community selected one of the community members - Mohammad Rafi - as forest guard with the main responsibility to make sure that no one will misuse the land by grazing or cutting down the trees. In return the community will give Mohammad Rafi wheat for his workload. While waiting for the pistachio trees to bear fruit on his land, Gul Mohammad will in the mean time try to cultivate wheat on another plot of land.



Health

Donors: NORAD (695,432 USD), FOKUS (240,259 USD), UNICEF (9,696 USD) & Others (13,556 USD)

Key figures: NAC did 254,000 consultations through 2 hospitals and 17 clinics. We also trained 500 TBA's.

As one of the poorest countries in the world Afghanistan has for a long time faced serious health problems. Polio, scurvy, a high maternal mortality rate, malnutrition, anemia, tuberculosis, whooping cough - to name just a few - are health issues many Afghans encounter during their lifetime. Moreover, Afghanistan currently ranks as the fourth worst country in the world in terms of mortality of children aged five and under, and in some parts of the country one mother will die for every 15 Afghan babies born. To worsen the situation the country is also suffering from an acute shortage of qualified medical staff, current estimates state that Afghanistan only has one doctor for approximately every 15,000 persons.

In order to assist the Afghan health sector NAC has been supporting clinics and two hospitals in the eastern provinces of Nangarhar, Laghman, Kunar and Nuristan and the southeastern provinces of Ghazni and Paktia. With the exception of two clinics in Nuristan, all clinics in the eastern region are run by Afghan NGOs while financially and technically supported by NAC. NAC has chosen this strategy in order to both enhance local Afghan capacity and support an emerging strong civil society. However, during 2003 the clinics in the southeastern region have been solely supported by NAC. During 2003 the total support included 2 hospitals (one of them were previously a NAC-supported comprehensive clinic, but was upgraded to a hospital in August 2003) 11 comprehensive clinics, 2 sub-clinics and 4 Mother-and-Child Health clinics (MCH). Apart from providing basic health services such as nursing, out and in patient duty, control of endemic diseases, minor surgeries at the clinics and major surgeries at the hospitals, a majority of the NAC supported clinics and hospitals also provides dentist services, a nutrition program, an Expanded Program for Immunization (EPI) as well as Emergency Obstetric Care (EOC) as a part of the UNFPA/UNICEF/WHO "Safe Motherhood Initiative". In order to provide a

high-quality support program NAC collaborates closely with UN-agencies such as UNICEF and WFP as well as with other NGOs providing specific health services such as control and prevention of tuberculosis, malaria and leishmaniasis.

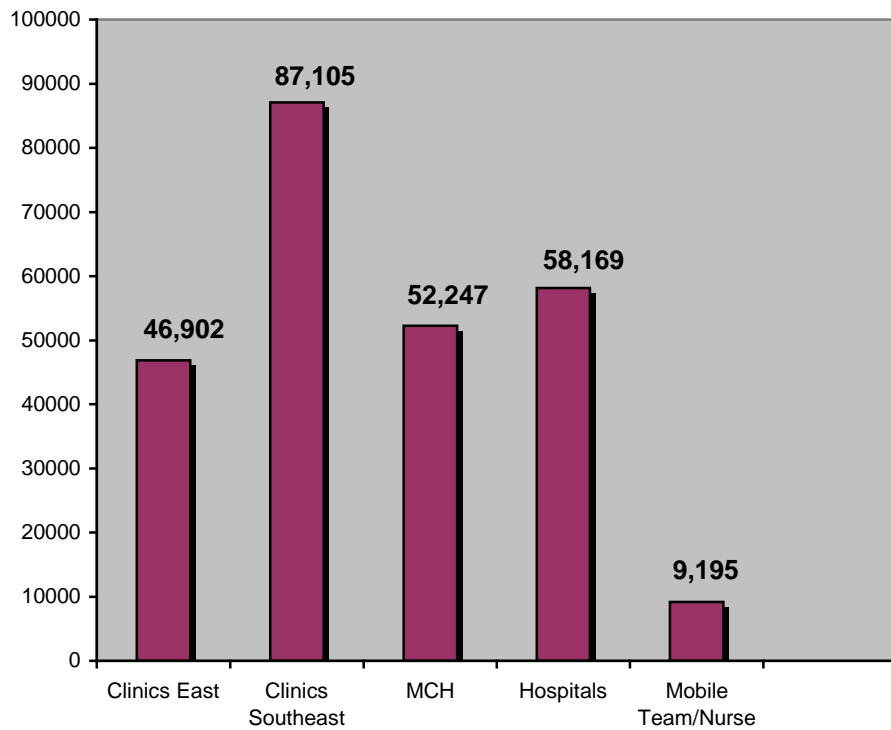
As a part of its general strategy NAC has emphasized the need to assist Afghans residing in remote and inaccessible areas. NAC has thus managed a mobile medical team in Kunar and a mobile nurse in Nuristan that reach beneficiaries residing in villages that because of difficult topography are too isolated to reach the closest health facilities. The team/nurse have thus traveled to different valleys and treated patients affected by malaria, diarrhea and other common diseases in the area. Moreover, as part of its "rural reach" policy, NAC has also, with the support of FOKUS, provided refresher training to 500 so-called Traditional Birth Attendants (TBA), or daias as they are traditionally called, residing in Nangarhar, Laghman, Kunar, Nuristan and Ghazni. Due to limited access to health facilities most deliveries still take place at home, most often attended by daias, traditional midwives. These women have no formal medical training, but are delivering babies according to traditional customs. By providing basic medical training NAC wishes to enhance the medical knowledge of the daias and in that way reduce the maternal and infant mortality in Afghanistan. During the year NAC has furthermore worked actively towards linking the daias to the health facilities closest to their homes. In that way the daias can refer complicated pregnancies to proper health facilities as well as having a constant interaction with trained medical staff.

Apart from running a TBA-program NAC also supports 105 female students enrolled in the midwife-section at the Intermediate Medical Institute of Nangarhar in Jalalabad City. Due to the fact that female education was banned between 1996 to 2001 during the rule of the Taliban and the current lack of proficient education institutes in the country there is unfortunately a great lack of professional midwives. NAC thus believes that professional training of midwives will

help to improve the general female health status in Afghanistan. When enrolling students to the education program special attention has been given to female students coming from remote areas in the provinces of Nangarhar, Kunar, Nuristan and

Laghman. In these remote areas there is an even greater lack of professional midwives that can assist the population and the intention is thus that the midwives will assist these communities when graduated from the institute.

No. of Consultations at NAC Supported Health Facilities





Activities

Faizabad Orphanage

Even though officially administered by the local authorities NAC has financed and supervised an orphanage in Badakshan since 1996. The orphanage currently hosts 30 children between the ages of 3-17. Apart from covering the running cost for the orphanage NAC has also financially supported vocational training for the children, which they receive in the afternoons when school is finished. In that way the boys get education in for example tinsmith and carpentry while the girls learn various forms of handicrafts. Most of the boys work as apprentices in different workshops during their free time. NAC has also provided the orphans with additional educational opportunities and the orphanage has both a library and the children receive education assistance after school. Moreover, when leaving the orphanage the youths get a financial stipend to cover further education. Around 12 of the children go "home" each weekend in order to visit their extended families. NAC also brings the children living in remote villages to their homes during school holidays, and their relatives are encouraged to visit the children in the orphanage and to take part in their upbringing.



Other activities

Support to Kabul Theater



During the year a group of theaters in Norway carried out a number of charity performances in order to collect money to the ruined Kabul Theater and the actors engaged in the Kabul Theater Company. The money has been spent on rehabilitating a wing of the theater where the Company can have its office, English lessons and a tour vehicle for the actors. In June 2003 a group of actors as well as stage technicians from the National Scene in Bergen (DNS), Norway visited Kabul for 10 days. Along with them they brought highly professional stage equipment, which was given to the Kabul Theater. Moreover, during their stay they performed plays for both Afghan adults at the main stage at the Kabul Theater as well as for children at one schools and one hospital. NAC has both facilitated the communication between the two counterparts in Afghanistan and Norway as well as facilitated for visits and financial transactions. The director, an actor and a technician from Kabul Theater also visited supportive theaters and relevant institutions in Norway over the summer.

Support to Omaid School and the PEN club

Members in Norway also raised funds to support the construction of Omaid School, a mixed primary school in Kabul.

The Afghan PEN Club received financial support from the Norwegian Author Organization. NAC helped out by handling financial transfers, purchasing and all payments.

Financial Overview

Contribution Donor Wise in USD

| DONOR | 2003 | 2002 |
|---------------|------------------|------------------|
| MFA | 396,680 | 1,017,770 |
| FOKUS | 240,260 | 153,880 |
| NORAD | 2,019,270 | 990,210 |
| ODW-96 | 14,610 | 42,540 |
| UNICEF | 24,960 | 40,110 |
| WFP | 97,150 | 77,820 |
| FRIENDSHIP | 13,950 | 2,490 |
| NAC | 36,740 | 114,650 |
| S. CAMPAIGN | 6,490 | - |
| PLUMBER UNION | - | 5,120 |
| TOTAL | 2,850,110 | 2,444,590 |

Expenditures Sector Wise in USD

| SECTOR | 2003 | 2002 |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|
| HEALTH | 958,940 | 658,040 |
| ENVIRONMENT | 202,180 | 112,540 |
| CONSTRUCTION | 901,510 | 71,820 |
| EDUCATION | 514,700 | 572,260 |
| EMERGENCY | 150,910 | 607,350 |
| ADMIN | 81,460 | 323,140 |
| OTHERS | 40,410 | 99,440 |
| TOTAL | 2,850,110 | 2,444,590 |

Expenditures Area Wise in USD

| AREA | 2003 | 2002 |
|--------------|------------------|------------------|
| PESHAWAR | 70,910 | 342,240 |
| KABUL | 437,680 | 127,020 |
| EASTERN | 597,640 | 459,690 |
| GHAZNI | 708,680 | 806,720 |
| BADAKHSHAN | 1,035,200 | 708,920 |
| TOTAL | 2,850,110 | 2,444,590 |

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In 2003, the NAC Board consisted of the following members:

Carl Hofslie, Chairman
Thomas Frantsovold, Vice Chairman
Kari Øyen
Cecilie Hellestveit
Elisabeth Eide
Solveig Sandalsnes
Britt Kejo
Haroon Mohmand
Manizha Popal
Elisabeth Eiebakk
Gisela Kruse
Bijan Abdullah

This report is compiled by Sara Petersson, NAC Program Advisor