



ANNUAL REPORT

Norwegian Afghanistan Committee

2011



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INTRODUCTION BY THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD

NAC in 2011 and beyond

Two-thousand and eleven was the ten-year anniversary of the war in Afghanistan. Plans regarding the withdrawal of NATO forces from Afghanistan were concretized in terms of scope and timing. By the end of 2014, the Afghan National Police and army will be made responsible for the security of the country. The Norwegian forces will transfer responsibility for the security in Faryab province already in 2013 and limit their military role to the mentoring and training of Afghan staff.

NAC welcomes this development, but we are also apprehensive about the direction Afghanistan will take after 2014. Unfortunately, ten years of massive aid grants and the presence of a large international community of development workers, military personnel and advisors has not helped Afghanistan to achieve the UN Millennium Development Goals or be in compliance with UN Security Council Resolution 1325 regarding women, peace and security.

We appreciate, however, signals from the Norwegian government that development aid to Afghanistan will continue even after 2013. On our side, NAC will live up to its commitment to stay when the soldiers leave and we will do our best to challenge the pessimism that many feel about the future of the country. Specifically, our Country Office will continue the Integrated Rural Development Program, where activities related to health, education, infrastructure, and livelihoods are combined and deployed in close collaboration with the approximately 25 communities participating in the program. In 2012, we also hope to extend the scope of the Disaster Risk Reduction Program started in 2011. This program aims at increasing the ability of remote communities to mitigate natural disasters before they occur and to help them survive and cope during and after disasters. Naturally, liaising with local and provincial authorities to enable the communities to coordinate disaster risk management in the long term is an important part of our approach.

Additionally, in Norway, NAC will also continue to fulfill its mission. We will work hard to keep Afghan issues on the public agenda and in the minds of the Norwegian people and policy makers. As in 2011, we will organize seminars and meetings to bring attention to important issues and provide an arena for perspectives and voices that otherwise may not be heard.

Both in Afghanistan and in Norway we rely on the dedicated efforts of our members and volunteers, the good cooperation with other organizations in Norway and, last but not the least, the hard work by all our staff in the Country Office in Kabul, out in the provinces, and right here at home in Oslo.

On the behalf of the Board, I would like to express my satisfaction and gratitude to you, and promise all our donors and supporters that NAC will stay the course in 2012.

Hege Jacobsen
Chairman of the Board



A WORD FROM THE COUNTRY DIRECTOR

Country Director's Report 2011

It gives me great pleasure to declare 2011 a year of major achievement for NAC and one in which NAC affirmed its status as a significant player in the development and welfare of the Afghan people. NAC continued to focus its work on the individuals and communities in most need, targeting rural areas and women and children in particular. We strive to continue this important work in 2012, and will work to improve the daily life situation for the Afghan people, despite increased insecurity and a lack of clarity regarding the consequences of the transition process.

The year began with the ongoing intensive restructuring of the organisation in order to create a solid platform for future growth and, more importantly, the effective delivery of projects. This necessitated the recruitment of a large number of staff. I would like to take this opportunity to formally welcome all newcomers to the NAC family. Throughout this recruitment process, we were mindful to pay close attention to the gender and cultural composition of our staff. Our cultural mix closely reflects that of the communities which we serve.

With the growth in expenditure, came the need for new administrative and financial management systems. This is an ongoing process that will continue on into 2012, but a substantial start was made during 2011, with the development of a new financial management system. This system will serve NAC for at least the next five years, and will continue to demonstrate to donors that NAC is a professional and highly accountable development organisation.

There were many notable project achievements throughout 2011, among them, the extensive implementation of the Integrated Rural Development program and the graduation of the class of midwives from our newly established school in Kunar. The successful implementation of our first Disaster Risk Reduction project and the launch of the joint Community Midwife Education project, involving NAC and the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA), both represented exciting new developments in the organisation's history. In terms of project quality, 2011 saw a marked shift in emphasis towards greater sustainability of activities, particularly in the area of self-sufficiency for women-headed households. In this regard, our vocational training was supplemented by a pilot project that encouraged women to form self-help groups, which aim to empower women by giving them increased economic independence.

Sadly, I must close this opening address with a note of caution. As most of you will be aware, the security situation in Afghanistan deteriorated during 2011, with an increase in the number of attacks witnessed across the country. The security situation in Ghazni prevented NAC's international staff members from visiting these project areas. The security situation in Ghazni is expected to deteriorate further in 2012, but NAC remains committed to continue implementing projects in the province, as long as doing so does not jeopardize the safety of our staff.

Finally, I would like to extend my gratitude for the considerable support NAC has received from donors, government agencies, fellow NGOs and communities throughout 2011. Our achievements would not have been possible without your close cooperation and guidance.

Simon Forster
Country Director

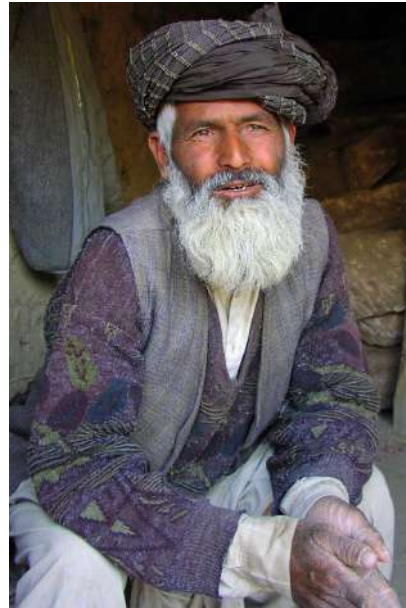


INTRODUCTION TO NAC

Our Background

NAC was established in Norway in 1980 in response to the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan. Local committees in Norway immediately rallied public opinion against the invasion, promoted solidarity with the Afghan people and conducted fundraising campaigns to assist the growing number of Afghans caught in the middle of the conflict. In 1983 NAC opened its first office in Peshawar, Pakistan, followed by a field office in Ghazni province in 1986 and in Keshem, Badakhshan province in 1991. In 1997 a liaison office was opened in Kabul which later, in 2002, became NAC's Country Office.

The history of NAC shows that the solidarity and commitment of NAC towards the Afghan people, lasting for over 30 years, is not dependent on specific political causes or limited to specific aid areas. We have evolved from a solidarity organization into a professional relief and development NGO where solidarity with the Afghan people still lies in the heart of all our work plans and strategies. We work closely with beneficiary communities in order to develop the best strategies and programs and to ensure effective implementation.



Our Mission and Purpose

NAC is a non-profit, non-political, non-religious and member-based organization. Our mission is to assist the Afghan people to rebuild and develop the country. The cornerstone of our organization is the fundamental belief in the principle of freedom, independence and a better life for the Afghan people.

The purpose of our organization is to support the long-term interests of Afghanistan and we aim to contribute to strengthening the basis for development and self-sufficiency through knowledge, strengthening of democracy and human rights, sustainable management of resources, and improved health for all citizens.

Our Strategy and Activities

NAC operates with a Head Office in Oslo, a Country Office located in Kabul and Regional Offices in Ghazni Province and Badakhshan Province. We have more than 200 employees, who are mainly Afghan and staff who are directly responsible for managing projects. Our staff share a wealth of experience, commitment, skills and knowledge and are encouraged to learn and grow professionally. We also benefit from the work of our dedicated and specialized volunteers who provide added value to the organization.

We develop our projects and activities based on a consultative process between our offices and communities. We therefore can make sure that our activities are based on community priorities and support those who are most in need by working in rural areas and with vulnerable groups. We prioritize work within the fields of education, environment and health in rural areas and work hard to reach the most vulnerable groups, especially women and children.



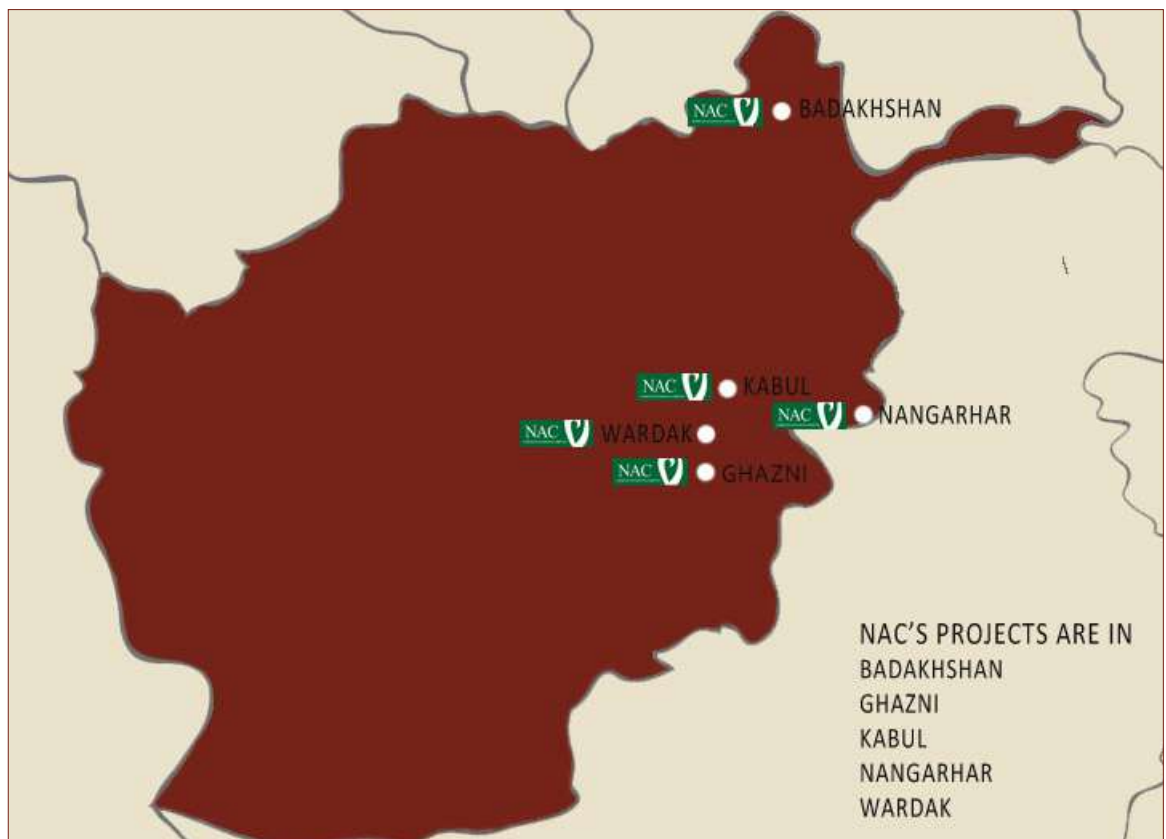
OVERVIEW OF OUR WORK

Our Work Sectors

NAC works with a multi-input rural development approach. Our project portfolio reflects a holistic and integrated perspective where health, environment, agriculture and education are all elements in improving living standards and achieving rural development goals. Our project activities support the eight UN Development Goals and are in line with the Afghan National Development Strategy. Capacity building is a central component in our work, including with our own staff, as we believe it to be a key to sustainable development in Afghanistan.

Our Geographical Areas of Focus

Our main activities are located in Ghazni and Badakhshan provinces. In addition, we implement midwifery education programs in Nangarhar and Wardak provinces:



Our Projects

NAC works within several different sectors. The core activities within them are:

- Disaster Risk Reduction and Management
- Community Midwifery Education
- Hospital Midwifery Education
- Support of Afghan Midwives Association
- Friendship Schools Project
- Advocacy and Information Work
- Community Health and Hygiene Training
- Water and Sanitation
- Natural Resource Management
- Agricultural Production, Food Security and Livelihood Support
- Infrastructure Provision and Maintenance
- Formal Education Support
- Vocational Skills Training
- Business Development and Entrepreneurial Support



INTRODUCTION TO RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Introduction

After nearly a quarter century of conflict and unrest, Afghanistan has been left devastated and facing tremendous development challenges. Generations of the population have missed opportunities for economic growth and development. The international community's large investments and efforts in humanitarian aid and development assistance has provided a base for post-war reconstruction and development. However, despite this support Afghanistan has great deficits within most sectors and has a long way to go to meet its development objectives. In 2011, Afghanistan ranked as low as 172 on the United Nations Development Program's Human Development Index, a composite measure of indicators, including life expectancy, literacy, education, and health among other indicators. It is a standard means of measuring well-being globally. The results clearly reflect the very poor general life situation for the Afghan people.

Rural Challenges

More than 75 percent of the Afghan population live in rural areas and face a particularly difficult daily life situation. A ruined economy, with limited badly livelihood opportunities, and a lack of basics, such as safe drinking water, access to health care and education is the reality for most. The increasingly rough climatic conditions, with harsh winters, soil degradation, flash floods in spring and cyclical droughts in summer, make it more and more difficult for local farmers to grow enough crops to sustain themselves and their families. According to the World Food Programme, 2.8 million people were affected by last year's drought in northern Afghanistan.

The biggest challenges faced by rural areas are the fundamental problems of poverty and food insecurity. The struggle to secure a sustainable livelihood is linked to the lack of access to diverse agricultural methods, machines and improved seeds, as well as little knowledge on how to achieve higher efficiency and productivity. The lack of non-agricultural vocational skills also presents limited livelihood options.

The spread of opium cultivation and drug abuse, weak institutions, poor factor markets and an inadequate marketing infrastructure are other contributing factors to the poverty and vulnerability of these communities. Furthermore lack of clean water and poor sanitary conditions are threatening the communities' well-being. It is crucial to help communities to ensure the availability of clean drinking water, proper sanitation facilities and to raise hygienic standards.

National Solidarity Program

Since 2003, the Ministry of Rural Development (MRRD) has implemented the National Solidarity Program (NSP), a community-driven reconstruction and rural infrastructure development program. NSP has made some achievements in empowering communities, improving community relations, and increasing public faith in the system of government. It provides an opportunity for further establishing and strengthening sustainable democratic processes by enhancing public participation of citizens at all levels of governance in the country.

However, the implementation of the program differs in quality and quantity from province to province and the discrepancies are large. Through NAC's rural development projects, we aim to further strengthen and consolidate ongoing interventions through an integrated rural development approach. This means not only working with government and civil society institutions to develop efficient systems for service delivery, but also supporting communities to take a lead on implementing their own projects, demanding basic levels of support and taking ownership over the development of their communities.

NAC's Projects Supporting Rural Development

In 2010 NAC made a transition from projects-based approach of programming towards a multifaceted rural development approach, integrating livelihoods, rural education and rural health. During 2011 NAC continued to implement a number of rural development support programs. Many of the projects are interlinked and implemented in areas close to each other, with some overlapping activities. In 2011, NAC implemented the following projects and programs directly linked to rural development:

- The Integrated Rural Development Program - funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- Vocational Skills Training Project - funded by the World Food Programme
- Food for Assets Project - funded by the World Food Programme
- Civil Society Organisational Development - funded by Norad

THE INTEGRATED RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

The Integrated Rural Development Program

As a part of NAC’s transition from a projects-based approach of programming to a multi-input development approach, NAC launched the Integrated Rural Development program in May 2010 in Badakhshan and Ghazni provinces, with the financial support of the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The program is projected to continue throughout 2012, with a possible extension.

Most of the communities NAC targets require support in diverse areas. In this program, activities within different sectors are interlinked to achieve better integrated and sustainable development. For example, when our natural resource management team trains communities in vegetable production, it is also necessary to make sure that secure irrigation is available through investments in infrastructure. In addition to that, the communities are trained about the benefits of a balanced diet as well as nutrition by both education and health teams.

Program Objectives

Through the program, NAC aims to enhance the capacity of people living in rural areas to sustain and improve their quality of life. NAC follows the national priorities of reducing poverty in Afghanistan by enabling communities to make informed choices that will promote sustainable and equitable development of their communities.

The objectives of the program are to:

- Support the establishment of representative and sustainable community and district level institutions that have the legitimacy and capacity to represent their communities and implement needed projects

- Increase food security and incomes through improved farming techniques and inputs, market-oriented crop diversification, and by supporting the development of cash income opportunities for farming households as well as micro and small enterprises
- Improve access of remote communities to markets and energy
- Improve rural education by enhancing teachers’ capacities, thus contributing to a child-friendly school environment. Focusing on mothers, through literacy, life and vocational skills training
- Improve community health status through the provision of integrated Water and Sanitation Hygiene Cluster (WASH) interventions

Activities

The Integrated Rural Development program in Badakhshan and Ghazni will be implemented over three years. The activities within the Integrated Rural Development program are focused within four sectors: Natural Resource Management, Education, Health and Infrastructure. Within these sectors, the key activities are:

- Natural Resource Management
- Micro and Small Enterprise Development
- Rural Infrastructure and Renewable Energy
- Rural Education Support Program
- Integrated Community Health Program
- Participatory Governance
- Cross Cutting Themes

The IRD program activities and their results:

Health

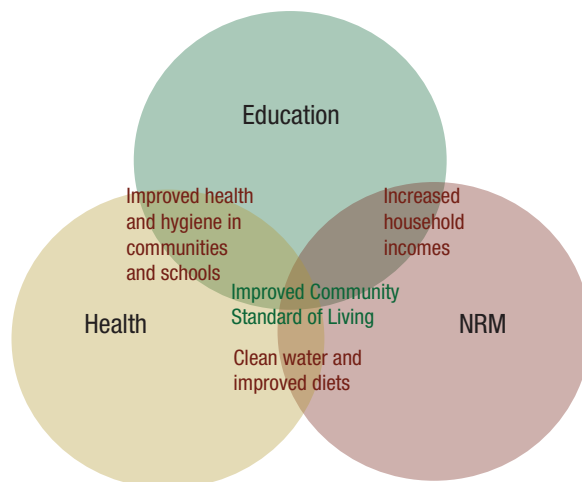
- Family Health Action Groups
- Hygiene Education
- Nutrition
- Water and Sanitation

Education

- Teacher training
- PTA training
- School maintenance
- School refurbishment
- Vocational training and business development

Natural Resource Management (NRM)

- Resource protection
- Agricultural protection
- Ecological restoration
- Sapling production
- Vegetable production
- Food preservation



EDUCATION

Formal Education in Afghanistan

During the Taliban period less than one million children attended school, and girls were by and large excluded. After decades of conflict, the Afghan school system was left dysfunctional. Now, ten years later, as a result of programs to bring children back to school, and to improve the quality of education, seven million children are enrolled. However, there is still a long way to go until all children in Afghanistan have the chance to go to school and receive high quality education.

Investing in the Future of Afghanistan

As part of the Integrated Rural Development program, NAC works together with communities and government institutions to provide children with high quality education and a friendly environment for learning. One of the main causes of the poor state of education is that teachers are not qualified in the subjects they teach, and the majority of them do not meet the minimum requirement of having graduated from grade 14. Through assessments, NAC's education team found that most teachers have limited subject knowledge, especially in the natural sciences. Therefore workshops were held for 246 teachers in biology, chemistry, mathematics, physics and practical science laboratory training, with a curriculum developed in coordination with the Ministry of Education. The teachers were also trained in interactive teaching methods.

In Ghazni, NAC trained teachers in didactics and general knowledge, including topics like personal hygiene, balanced nutrition, conflict resolution in families and communities, women's rights and the role of teachers and parents in children's education. Through these trainings, some 14,000 students in 21 partner schools will ultimately benefit from improved science lessons and better teaching methods. NAC also organised a competition for students from all 21 partner schools, with quizzes covering what they had learnt in natural sciences.

Education for All Children

During 2011, special methodology training on Inclusive Education and Child-Friendly Education was held in cooperation with UNESCO. Approximately 160 teachers and principals from 25 schools participated in the workshops. They learned how to work with, and better include nomad children, how to support mentally and physically handicapped students, and integrate them into classroom learning to achieve the optimal academic, social, emotional and physical development of all children. The teachers practiced teaching methods tailored to motivate primary school children to actively participate in the lessons. NAC also trained principals in school management including making work plans, staffing, problem solving, conflict management and leadership.

Engaging the Community

An important part of supporting schools is engaging communities in their children's education, and creating a sense of responsibility for the school. Making the communities feel ownership of their children's education is crucial for ensuring sustainability of the education system as government services are often insufficient and do not provide sufficient services for the schools to function properly.

During 2011, NAC supported the formation of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs), which had previously been either inactive or non-existent. In close coordination with the Community Development Councils of each village, 231 PTA members were trained in financial and administrative management, community mobilization, fundraising, and maintenance of school facilities. In most of the 21 schools, the PTAs managed to raise substantial amounts of funds which reflect the support and ownership that the communities developed towards their schools. By the end of 2011, all 21 PTAs were acting as functioning community institutions that managed and maintained the schools independently.

Ghazni Education Statistics

- The overall literacy rate is 35%
- On average 39% of children between 6 and 13 are enrolled in school
- The figure is higher for boys (47%) than for girls (30%)
- There are 405 primary and secondary schools in the province and 18% of them are girls' schools

Badakshan Education Statistics

- The overall literacy rate is 31%
- On average 46% of children between 6 and 13 are enrolled in school
- The figure is slightly higher for boys (49%) than for girls (43%)
- There are 430 primary and secondary schools in the province and 8% of them are girls' schools



Hygiene Education in Schools

In order to improve hygiene practices in schools, around 100 teachers were trained as hygiene promoters. The training covered personal hygiene practices, proper waste disposal, waterborne diseases and unsafe water, as well as methods for communicating the topics to children in a practical exemplified way. These hygiene promoters then trained the pupils on good hygiene practices, such as how to wash regularly and properly brush their teeth, dispose waste properly and, above all, how to make sure that water is safe to drink.

Deworming Program in Schools

According to UNICEF, up to 60 percent of school children in Afghanistan are believed to be infected by worms. The worms can cause malnutrition, stunted growth, anemia, and result in problems with learning. To tackle this problem, NAC organized deworming treatment for around 3500 primary school children in Ghazni and 9500 children in Badakhshan. As a preventive measure against new infections, this intervention was combined with hygiene training for the children.

Construction and Renovation Work in Schools

In most cases, communities in remote areas are left to maintain their schools by themselves. In many partner schools, major reconstruction and renovation work was urgently



Madena School Renovation

needed. In 2011, NAC therefore completely renovated five schools, built wells for safe drinking water and new latrines in seven schools, and established playgrounds and sports fields in seven schools. For all infrastructure projects, NAC employs and trains local workers, and uses as much local materials and methods as possible, so that the structures can be maintained and even replicated by the communities themselves. This is an important part of our sustainable long-term approach, and also a way of ensuring local ownership of the project.

During the school refurbishment work, more than 500 local labourers were employed and several hundred students were provided with facilities that are necessary to enable proper learning.

The School in Baloch - From Construction to Building Community Ownership

In Baloch, a village in Keshim district, Badakhshan, there was previously no school within walking distance. Only a few boys used to attend basic classes at the local mosque, and girls could not go to school at all. In 2009, NAC constructed a school building with a playground and plots for practicing vegetable plantation. Now, as many as 450 girls and boys from the community are going to school, and special attention is given to 10 pupils with disabilities.



In 2011, NAC established a Parent-Teacher Association, and its members were trained in financial and administrative management, community mobilization, fundraising, and organizing school maintenance. When attending the Parent-Teacher Association meetings of the Baloch School one can see how engaged and enthusiastic the members are when discussing how to better encourage students to attend school, and how they make ambitious plans together for the future of their school.

Non-formal Education in Afghanistan

The non-formal education sector in Afghanistan shows large deficits. Literacy rates are amongst the lowest in the world, with only around 42% of Afghan men being literate, and as little as 18% of all Afghan women being able to read and write. The non-formal education sector has been under stress from war, and requires significant investment in human and fixed capital.

Afghanistan's Ministry of Education has identified literacy and non-formal education as one of the priority areas in its National Education Strategic Plan. The aim is to develop a long-term literacy program that empowers communities and individuals to build a productive, secure and literate nation. NGOs play an essential role as

partners in this plan and in expanding literacy and providing people with vocational training. The Afghan labor market currently faces an acute demand for skilled and semi-skilled people in order to cope with the reconstruction, even though unemployment levels are high. Vocational skills and knowledge are often handed over from generation to generation but this chain has been disrupted due to three decades of war.

Vocational training is an essential basis for the recovery process and a cornerstone of poverty alleviation in Afghanistan. Especially non-agricultural practical skills are important, as they enable people to generate year-round incomes independently of seasons and natural disasters.

"My name is Husain..."

I am 22 years old, and I come from Loman in Jaghori district, Ghazni. I always wanted to become a carpenter like my father. He died when I was in sixth grade, and I therefore had to leave my studies in order to provide for my family, and so I became a shepherd. But with this low income, my family and I struggled every month to make ends meet. The NAC team came to us to find some committed and jobless young men, and as it was my wish to become a carpenter and have my own carpentry shop in the bazaar like my father used to have, I asked to be a part of the carpentry training in NAC's project. I was so happy that I was selected. I tried my best to learn and to become a good carpenter during the four months training. Finally, I graduated and was given a carpentry tool kit. Now I have my own small shop in my village, and I make a good income. Besides that I can earn money to feed my family I am also saving some money for my wedding party. Now my future is looking better"



Alternative Livelihoods- Learning Practical Skills

In 2011, NAC started a vocational training project offering skills training to provide sustainable alternative livelihoods to vulnerable community members. The project seeks to provide relevant and quality technical and vocational educational opportunities for male and female community members, in order to equip them with marketable skills that meet the needs of the Afghan market.

In order to identify the market needs, a thorough market analysis was conducted. Based on the identified needs, training in embroidery, tailoring, weaving,

carpentry, mobile phone repairing and car mechanics were held to 106 women and 50 men over a period of four months. For the training in carpentry, mobile phone repairing and car mechanics, the trainees were linked to a craftsman who gave them practical on-the-job-training in their workshops.

The weaving, embroidery and tailoring classes were organized in centers, where the trainees learnt from experienced craftswomen. Right after the training, some of the graduates had already set up their own workshops in their village. The mobile repairers were reported to be making a monthly profit ranging from 200 to 300 USD each.

“My name is Saira...”

I am 48 years old and I live in Qalandary village of Jaghori district in Ghazni. My husband died five years ago when he was digging a well and it collapsed on him. I have five children, two sons and three daughters.

During these five years, besides feeding my family I also had to send my children to school, which was not easy at all. I faced many problems while my children were young and I had no other relative to assist or support me. This year, I was selected for NAC's poultry project by the elders of our village. NAC trained us in raising chicken and they distributed to us 10 chickens and equipment. Now we are very happy, because we can eat eggs and some eggs we can sell to earn some money.”



Empowering Marginalized Women-Literacy, Life Skills and Practical Skills Training

Widows and women-headed households with elderly husbands who cannot provide for their families, are often the poorest and most marginalized households in the community. They often lack vocational skills and are additionally hampered by cultural restrictions, preventing them taking up paid work. NAC supports these women and their families by helping them to achieve food security and create opportunities to generate income and thus become self-reliant.

During 2011, around 200 women from Argo and Darayem districts in Badakhshan, and Jaghori and Malistan districts in Ghazni, participated in the so-called Foster Mum project. In this project, the women are given around 250 fruit and non-fruit saplings to foster, which are later sold back to NAC once they reach a certain growth stage. They also receive training in vegetable and sapling production. The agricultural trainers supervise the home-based nurseries and provide on-the-job training on planting, watering and irrigation, using fertilizers and high quality seeds, and on how to sell saplings. By planting out tree saplings, the women contribute to reforestation of their villages.

The Foster Mum beneficiaries also receive literacy and life skills training. In 2011, 189 of 200 women passed the literacy test, and are now able to write and read words and simple sentences, as well as to do basic math. This makes them more independent of male family members and more confident participating in public life.

The life skills training cover many topics. The women learn about Afghanistan, women's rights and the importance of education. They also learn about environmental degradation, pollution and domestic waste disposal. They get practical tips for dealing with diseases, applying better hygiene practices and improved nutrition for their

families, including practical tips for food preparation, as well as trainings in resolving conflicts within their families and communities.

The women were also trained in preserving a range of vegetables. Some vegetables, like radish, coriander and turnip, were unknown by most women before the training. Through the production of the vegetables, the women and their dependents are able to diversify their diets and improve their nutrition. During 2011, the women quickly became self-sufficient in vegetables, whereas each household previously used to spend around 12 USD per month on buying vegetables. The bulk of the vegetables produced were for own consumption, thereby contributing to the food security of the women's families. Some women exchanged their vegetables for other groceries, while a smaller number of women sold vegetables to generate profits of around 40 USD per harvest per woman. All women continued growing and preserving vegetables after the project had ended.

Building Sustainable Livelihoods - Poultry Production for Women

Similar to the Foster Mums, widows and women who are the main bread-winners of their families were given an opportunity to build sustainable livelihoods through poultry production. During 2011, around 100 women were provided with material for chicken coops, ten chickens and feed for the chickens. They were also given training on poultry maintenance, including hygienic practices when dealing with chicken and building coops. Now, each woman gets an average of seven eggs per day, and they are mainly used for their own consumption. Some of the women exchange eggs for other food with their neighbours, thereby diversifying their family's diet. A smaller number of the beneficiaries sell the surplus eggs and earn between 15 and 20 USD per month. After the termination of the project in December 2011, all participating women have continued maintaining the chickens themselves without further support from NAC.



NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

NAC's History of Environmental Programming

In a country like Afghanistan, where over 90% of the population is dependent on agriculture for subsistence, conserving and managing natural resources like land, forest and water, is of critical importance to the welfare of the people. In Badakhshan, these resources have always been vulnerable to earthquakes, landslides, erosion, and deforestation. It is therefore crucial to maximise the use of arable land through soil conservation, erosion protection and terracing. It is also important to maximise the productivity of arable land through the introduction of new farming methods and strains and species of cereals, fruit, vegetables and nuts. The use of irrigation is important in expanding the areas available for cultivation.

NAC has been implementing a variety of environmental programs since 1993. Our interventions have included social forestry such as demonstration farms, watershed establishment and management, as well as the establishment and management of nurseries. We have also engaged in irrigation projects, erosion control, environmental awareness training, environmental protection and conservation as well as training, forest extension and protection. However, since 2010, this important work has shifted focus from an emphasis on the environment and forestry to integrated natural resource management. This shift is in line with the focus of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock and is one component under our Integrated Rural Development program.

Training Farmers to Increase the Yield

Food security is an important problem in the rural areas of Afghanistan. One of the reasons why farmers are not able to increase the yield of their crops is because they lack knowledge about, and access to, better techniques and improved varieties of fruit trees, crops or potatoes.



Farmer Preparing the Plot in Badakhshan

In 2011, NAC established several commercial orchards and farmer demonstration orchards, where farmers get the opportunity to practice and improve techniques in horticulture. A total of 600 farmers were trained in using fertilizer, leveling land, designing plantations, and pruning, grafting, and irrigating their saplings. They were introduced to improved varieties of apple and apricot trees, and got the opportunity to assess other varieties. On the sites, three improved varieties of fruit trees were grown next to the local variety.

Similarly, different varieties of potatoes were tested on demonstration plots. Four potato demonstration plots, each covering ten villages, were established in order to provide a facility where farmers can exchange experiences and get practical training in potato growing. During year-round training sessions (so-called Field Farmer Days) some 150 farmers planted and practiced tending potatoes.



Potato Harvest in Argo

It was shown that the improved variety of potato had more than double the productivity of the local variety. For the testing of improved wheat production, two experimental plots in Argo and Darayem districts of Badakhshan were established. Here 150 farmers participated in seasonal training sessions, practicing fertilizer application, crop maintenance and testing improved wheat varieties. The majority of participating farmers expressed their wish to buy improved varieties of fruit tree saplings, potatoes and wheat seeds. However, improved varieties are still not available in the local market, but only in the provincial capitals. In 2012, NAC plans to link farmers with seed traders to facilitate a system of sale of improved wheat seeds, potatoes and fruit tree saplings.

Reforestation in Badakhshan

Since 1992, NAC has been active in environmental work and has also been running ten nurseries in Badakhshan Province and one nursery in Ghazni Province as a part of its Natural Resource Management Program.



Saplings in Keshem Nursery

In order to contribute to reforestation, saplings and vegetable plants are produced in the nurseries, and later distributed to beneficiaries in the communities where the Integrated Rural Development program is implemented. In Badakhshan, people have cut down trees and bushes extensively, and used them as fire wood. As a result, the ecological system is extremely unbalanced, and erosion, landslides and flash floods threaten agricultural productivity. By planting several thousand trees in 2011, NAC contributed to reforestation of the target districts in Badakhshan. Moreover, in some of the nurseries, NAC established demonstration plots for farmers to test improved varieties of cereals and potatoes.

Currently, most of NAC's farms are in the process of being handed back to the relevant land-owning Government department. In October 2011, the Women's Garden was handed over to the Department of Women's Affairs and the Telecommunication Park was handed over to the Badakhshan Municipality. NAC will continue working closely with the government institutions to build their

technical and management capacity that will enable them to adequately run the nurseries in the long term. The remaining nurseries will be emptied of all transferrable saplings during 2012. A portion of these saplings will be handed over to the provincial departments of agriculture while the remainder will be planted in and around beneficiary communities, or sold to partner NGOs. NAC will retain management and control of two nurseries, namely the Kalafgan Poplar Nursery in Takhar and Chasme Garmak which is planned to serve as an experimental site for the development of steep slope stabilization techniques.

Building Capacity in Natural Resource Management

Land degradation processes have a negative impact on the welfare and well-being of the local population in Afghanistan. In order to tackle the problem and understand the different important factors within the process, there is a need for more knowledge on a local level.

For that reason, NAC organized a course in Faizabad held by Mr Arnold Arnoldussen, Head of the Section Soil Resources from the Norwegian Forest and



Mr Arnold Arnoldussen and Course Participants in Badakhshan

Landscape Institute, with the participation of NAC, other INGOs and Government officials.

The objective of the 5-day course was to make the participants familiar with the factors causing land degradation in dry areas and to recognize them in the field. In addition, the participants were trained on how to evaluate the degradation status of a given site, and to elaborate measures to mitigate land degradation.

Mr Arnoldussen also held a lecture in Kabul on Sustainable Management of Natural Resources, where other NGOs working within the field of Natural Resource Management were invited to participate.

NAC's Nurseries and Watersheds

- Dasht-e-Qurough Nursery
- Women's Garden
- Chasme-Garmak Watershed
- Keshem Nursery Demonstration Farm
- Keshem Watershed
- Jeri Shababa Watershed
- Farmanqully Nursery
- Kalafgan Poplar Nursery
- Shuhada Nursery
- Telecommunication Park
- Ghazni (Rowza reforestation)

INFRASTRUCTURE

Providing Services for all Departments

The infrastructure department was established by NAC in order to meet the needs within the Integrated Rural Development program for community productive infrastructure. During 2011, this department functioned as a service provider for all the other sector departments. This core infrastructure unit has, according to the planned activities within each sector, implemented a range of infrastructure interventions.

The interventions have included: education; school maintenance, building playgrounds and boundary walls, especially in girls' schools to give more privacy. In the health sector: building safe water wells and latrines for schools and communities, as well as water and

Two hundred fifty local workers were thereby given the opportunity to generate extra income. NAC's engineers trained the workers in construction and maintenance, in order to enable community members to maintain their facilities themselves in the future.

In Pengani village in Argo, Badakhshan the wood and plastic canal that had been constructed by the community was about to collapse. NAC, in close collaboration with the community, constructed an aqueduct, a canal reach and a river protection wall. As a result, water supply was secured for planting around 300 hectares of highly productive land, thus helping to secure the livelihoods of 3,000 people in the area for many years to come.



Pengani Irrigation Canal

sanitation work. Within natural resource management section: work on irrigation canals, intakes for water as well as cleaning karezes – an Afghan traditional irrigation system in areas where there are no surface water resources. The infrastructure department has also been involved in Disaster Risk Reduction activities (see page 24 in this report).

Construction of Irrigation Water Supply Systems

Sufficient water supplies are a must for securing sustainable livelihoods. In several partner communities, the water systems that had been constructed by the communities were not functional. Canals and karezes were at the point of collapse, posing a severe risk to the communities' livelihoods. In order to secure sufficient irrigation, NAC constructed wells in four villages and rehabilitated karezes and water storages in another three.



Cold Store Construction in Shahr-i-Wahdat

Construction of Cold Storage

Currently, when crops and vegetables are harvested, farmers have to sell their products right after the harvest as they have no means of safely storing the produce. Due to the high availability of agricultural products during the harvest season, prices decrease substantially, and farmers get low revenues for their products.

To offer storage on a community level, NAC, in collaboration with the surrounding communities, constructed a pilot cold storage in Shahr-e-Wahdat in Argo District. Now farmers from five villages can store agricultural products until market prices improve. This means that the farmers get higher prices for their products, and communities have year-round supplies of grain and vegetables, enabling a more balanced diet.



The General Health Situation in Afghanistan

According to the World Health Organization only half of the Afghan population has access to basic health services. Years of instability, conflict, severe drought and collapsed economy, has turned the Afghan health system into one of the very poorest in the world. Primary health care is provided through the Basic Package of Health Services, implemented by NGOs on a contractual basis with the government at the provincial level. As a result of this, the implementation of the package varies substantially from province to province, and there are large discrepancies in terms of quality and access to facilities.

There is also a critical shortage of health care workers at every level. This is especially true of reproductive and female health providers, which is one of the reasons why Afghanistan has the second highest maternal mortality rate in the world. In addition, one in 10 Afghan children dies before they reach the age of five. The existing healthcare facilities are in urgent need of restoration, and have inadequate supplies of medicines, vaccines, equipment and fuel. Acute respiratory illnesses, diarrhea, preventable diseases, and malnutrition are killing and weakening the population. Life expectancy rates are among the lowest in the world. Diseases that have largely been controlled in most countries in the world continue to cause death and disability in

continue to cause death and disability in Afghanistan. More than 60% of all childhood deaths and disabilities in Afghanistan are due to respiratory infections, diarrhea, and vaccine-preventable deaths, especially measles. It is estimated that six million people still do not have access, or have insufficient access to health care, especially the rural population. In the rural communities where NAC works, most families do not have appropriate sanitation and access to safe drinking water. There is a lack of awareness of health, nutrition and hygiene practices. People also lack the required knowledge to prevent and treat common diseases, and do not understand the crucial importance of safe drinking water. Therefore, NAC's work in the health has focused on these key issues.

Family Health Action Groups

NAC's community health program aims to improve health and hygiene in the communities by constructing water and sanitation facilities, and by running health and hygiene awareness raising programs through Family Health Action Groups (FHAG) and Hygiene Promoters. The idea of the FHAGs is to train local women in health practices, so that they can raise health awareness in their villages. In 2011, NAC's trained around 200 women as FHAG members in Ghazni and in Badakhshan.

"My name is Ashur Be Be..."

I live in Deh Bazar, one of the most remote villages in Darayem district in Badakhshan. I have been working as a community health worker for seven years, and I am currently the leader of one of the Family Health Action Groups in the area. My son accompanies me to work. Through this work, I have managed to establish a strong network system in the village, where we achieve results, partly by referring complicated delivering cases to the nearest health facility.

I am now able to help with both complicated and normal cases by drafting birth preparedness plans, using the referral system and raising awareness about available services. Many women don't recognize danger signs during a pregnancy, or understand the need for antenatal care. One woman in my family lost her baby because of this, but recently she delivered a son at a health facility because I helped her and referred her directly to the health facility without any delay"

Ashur Be Be is one of NAC's most dedicated community health workers. She is also the leader of one of four Family Health Action Groups in our community-based health program in this area. The FHAGs try to reduce the number of maternal mortality for example by ensuring that pregnant women have at least four antenatal care visits during the pregnancy.



Each FHAG member works with 15 households and regularly visits the household members. In a cultural sensitive manner, they teach the women about reproductive and maternal health care, antenatal care and post-natal care, the benefits of breastfeeding, family planning, immunization, nutrition and hygiene practices, and refers women to the respective health facility when necessary.

Last year, the FHAG members conducted awareness raising sessions in almost 3000 households. The concept of engaging women in rural areas to train fellow women in their communities has proven to be effective and sustainable, as the trainers are accepted and trusted. As part of the community, they are also well aware of the women-specific health issues. A group discussion with 25 female beneficiaries in Khairabad, Darayem district in Badakhshan, showed that new hygiene practices are being practiced and that knowledge about reproductive health issues and family planning had improved.

Around two-thirds of the women trained now make use of the nearest health facility, and understand the benefits of proper medical care. Before, most women did not go to the health facility at all because they did not know it existed, or thought medical care was useless. Methods of family planning provided by the nearest health facility are now used by 60% of the women contacted, and 80% of the women now breast-feed their babies or are planning to do so.

Most women value the practical tips they received from the FHAG members on dealing with diseases, e.g. treating their children suffering from diarrhea with a mixture of safe drinking water, salt and sugar and taking sick children to the health facility.

School and Community Hygiene Education

Around 100 men and women in Darayem and Argo districts, and 60 in Jaghori and Malistan districts, were trained as community hygiene promoters in 2011. The training covered personal hygiene practices, waterborne diseases and causes, safe drinking water, waste disposal in households, as well as how to communicate about these issues with others so their neighbors can also benefit. At least once a month, the hygiene promoters met with their communities for training and discussion. In total, 15 communities, with around 4,500 households in Badakhshan and 10 communities in Ghazni, with around 3,000 households were trained.

In some of these communities, NAC's infrastructure team also constructed wells for providing safe drinking water and latrines, while the hygiene promoters explained the importance of making use of safe drinking water to the community and demonstrated the use and maintenance of latrines.

During visits to partner villages in Badakhshan, it could be observed that hygiene practices had started to improve. In a group discussion in the village of Khairabad, the majority of community members said that they now use soap for washing their hands, and brushed their teeth regularly. Most importantly, the community members had an understanding of the correlation of hygiene practices, safe drinking water and diseases. However, it is a long-term process to change hygiene practices sustainably and achieve improved health of communities. Therefore, hygiene promoters trained in 2011 will undergo refresher training in 2012, and will be supported by NAC's health team to continue training in their communities. NAC plans to mobilize and train another 200 community hygiene promoters during 2012.

Construction of Water and Sanitation Facilities

During 2011, NAC also constructed water and sanitation facilities in close cooperation with the communities. Two types of water supplies were constructed to provide safe drinking water; protected wells and gravity piped water-supply systems. Under the protected water well system, the communities were provided with new wells or the existing wells were renovated. For all new and existing wells, concrete casings, concrete aprons and hand pumps were provided.



Pist-e-Kalan Water Supply

Community members were trained on maintaining and repairing hand pumps and provided with equipment. For the pipe systems, water was channeled from a safe source to a protected storage facility, and from there distributed through pipes and taps to the households. Community members were also provided with appropriate tools and trained on maintaining the pipe system, so they could thereby maintain and repair it themselves in the future.

NAC also built wells for safe drinking water in seven schools, and constructed latrines in six schools. This was done in close collaboration with the school hygiene promoters who also trained school children in the proper usage and maintenance of the facilities.

FOOD FOR ASSET AND FOOD FOR WORK

Foster Mums through the World Food Programme - Helping Women Help Themselves

So far, NAC has trained more than 1200 marginalized women through the so-called Foster Mum project. In 2011, the project was implemented both under the Integrated Rural Development program, funded by the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for 200 women (see page 7), and through the World Food Programme (WFP) for 500 women.

NAC has been working with WFP since 2002. In 2011, the cooperation consisted of a Food for Asset project. This project aims to increase food security for women-headed households and their families. This goal is to be achieved through both short-term interventions, such as food for work, and long-term interventions, such as skills training in sapling and vegetable production, and natural resource management and environmental conservation training. NAC provided 500 vulnerable women from Argo, Yaftal and Keshem districts of Badakhshan with training in kitchen gardening and sapling production, basic literacy and numeracy, and life skills during 2011.



Foster Mums during literacy class in Badakhshan

Food Distribution

The beneficiaries also received food commodities, consisting of wheat, vegetable oil, pulses and salt. To distribute food in itself is often not seen as a long-term sustainable solution. This is why NAC finds it so important to combine food distribution with long-term solutions for achieving food security, such as kitchen gardening.

However, providing food in exchange for work makes it possible for the poor and hungry to devote time and energy to taking the first steps out of the hunger trap and to start building a hunger-free future for these communities.



Food Distribution with WFP in Badakhshan

Green Houses - Making Winter Production Possible

As winters are harsh and long in the mountainous areas, the communities only have a few months to grow crops. To prolong the growing period of saplings and vegetables, NAC piloted the set-up of five simple green houses, constructed as a type of a plastic tunnel.



Green Houses in Batash

This enabled 120 Foster Mums to grow saplings and vegetables in Batash and Layaba villages in Badakhshan. The women can keep the saplings in the green house “tunnels” during winter until they are ready to be sold or planted out, rather than selling them as small saplings with lower revenues in autumn. The tunnels also allow the women to produce vegetables during the winter, and thereby maximize their production.

Each green house can keep almost 15,000 saplings and plants. They are an affordable and replicable solution for the harsh conditions in northern Afghanistan.



SUPPORTING WOMEN'S SOCIAL AND ECONOMICAL DEVELOPMENT

Women in Focus

NAC's projects target those who need it the most in the highest need area. We therefore put an extra focus on women in rural areas. They are the most severely affected by conflict, resulting in high levels of poverty, lawlessness, human rights abuses and violence. Due to cultural practices, opportunities for Afghan women to take active part in public life are limited, making women victims of social and economic exclusion. The Afghan women also suffer from some of the highest maternal mortality rates in the world, malnutrition, lack of access to health services and education, continue to have weak property rights and limited access to the justice sector. All NAC's projects support women's development through:

- Promoting gender equality
- Expanding women's opportunities
- Focusing on education, employment and participation

Helping Women Help Themselves

In 2011 NAC launched a new project with an even more direct focus on social and economic empowerment of women. The Civil Society – Self-Help Group Project was piloted in 2011 through funding from the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad). The project helps women helping themselves. As a part of NAC's rural development approach, the project strives to promote community empowerment and make sure that citizens can play a greater role in determining the future of Afghanistan. The aim of the Self-Help Group project is to socially and economically empower marginalized women, and enable them to make informed decisions for themselves, their families and their communities. In 2012 the project is to be further expanded with the continuous support from Norad.

Being Stronger Together - Self-Help Groups

Self-help groups is a method of organizing poor and marginalized people to come together in order to solve their individual problems. This recognised method is used by governments, NGOs and others worldwide.

The idea behind using the self-help group method is to encourage women in rural communities to support and help each other through a financial intermediary, where for the purpose of starting businesses. The money is

pooled by all the members, and is used to start a business in which the profits will be reinvested in the business and/or shared by all the members.

After sensitive consultations with the shuras in the villages, around 190 women were chosen for the project. Previously, these women had been trained through NAC's Foster Mum project and learned vocational skills that could be used to support or diversify their livelihoods. Seven self-help groups were set up in Faizabad and Keshim districts of Badakhshan. Each self-help group were trained in enterprise and organizational development, including book-keeping, legal and gender issues, business development and practical training on fruit and vegetable preservation. Each group was given support and advice from a community educator, who



Vocational Training in Ali Mango

also ensured that relevant documents and systems were in place and that the members were participating actively. Each of the groups developed a clear structure decided by the members and then appointed a representative and cashier. They then chose names for the groups, such as Morning Star or River.

Guiding principles for Self-Help Groups

- A strong belief by the individual to bring about change and improvement of standard of living through collective efforts
- Effort is built on mutual trust and support
- Every individual is equal
- Every individual is committed to and responsible for the mission of the group
- Decision is based on the principles of consensus
- Savings is the foundation on which to build the group's collective action

Saving Money Together

To increase savings, the groups were encouraged to collect small contributions from each member on a monthly or weekly basis. This proved to be beneficial, as the women managed to double the start-up fund through the business profits and money collection. For instance, the group from the village of Samati made around \$ 200 from membership fees and around \$220 as pure profit from selling clothes. Most members of the groups stated that they felt more empowered and liberated in terms of their financial situation, their roles in the family and their relationships with their husbands.

Supporting Business Development

The seven self-help groups were given a 300 USD start-up grant and training in managing it. They were then linked to other relevant businesses in the province. They went on field visits to the Faizabad market to get in touch with suppliers and customers, and to learn about which products and services are in demand. The groups then identified the type of business they wanted to engage in, such as buying clothes and accessories and re-selling or making Afghan pastries and sell to local shopkeepers. One group started a business making pickles and jam.



Women Group in Badakhshan

The Self-Help Group in Samati Village

The main goal for NAC in establishing a SHG in Samati village was to help and develop the poor and marginalized community by training them in business development and income generation. In the first month of the training, the 25 members of the group were advised to collect money and come up with an idea on what to invest the money in. The Samati group then went to the bazaar and bought some clothes and brought back to the village, where they were sold with high profits.



The response was very positive and the group made a quick profit of around \$220. They are now planning to expand the business to other neighbouring villages, and also open a weekly women's market. In the future, they are also planning to buy a wheat thresher machine to reinvest in their village and help their fellow community members.

They continued their training for three months, and developed their business idea further. On a field visit to Faizabad market, the group realized that clothes were relatively cheap in the market, while in Samati, which is some 20 kilometers away from Faizabad, there was no shop selling clothes. So they recognized the high demand in their locality and decided to buy clothes, scarfs, veils and socks and trade with them in their village. The groups sold the goods by going from house to house in groups of two.

DISASTER RISK REDUCTION

Natural Hazards in Afghanistan

Afghanistan is prone to natural hazards such as earthquakes, flash floods, droughts, landslides, sandstorms and avalanches. According to the International Federation of the Red Cross 7.5 million people have been displaced and around 20,000 people killed since the early 1980s as a result of natural hazards. The mountainous province of Badakhshan is a particularly susceptible area.

During the flooding season of 2010, the province was hit by numerous floods. A considerable number of houses and land were destroyed and damaged, water supply systems ruined and livestock killed. The province is also very vulnerable to earthquakes. In 1998, two fatal earthquakes hit the province, resulting in 6,000 deaths and damage and destruction of houses and land. Localised landslips, avalanches and the subsequent burial of entire communities occur frequently. The drought in 2011 seriously affected the food security and livestock of poor families.

Natural disasters cause deaths and suffering when they occur, but they also constrain development in the long run. Moreover, the effects of these disasters are exacerbated by the lack of infrastructure and the isolation of the villages strung out along high mountain valleys.

Training on Disaster Response for Vulnerable Communities

In 2011, NAC started a Community Based Disaster Risk Reduction project in cooperation with the Gesellschaft fuer Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ). The project targets 700 community members in disaster prone communities in Yaftal and Argo districts in Badakhshan, and provides them with training in disaster risk reduction.



Male DRR Training in Alimango

The first part of the training covers different types of natural hazards and their causes. In the second part, the community members, including women and children, are trained in first aid, survival techniques, basic search and rescue skills, and general emergency response measures. They also develop emergency management plans with clear roles for each community member in case of a disaster. During 2011, NAC managed to convince the shuras of the importance of training women. It was a big success that women were equally engaged in the project. Female and male Disaster Response Groups were formed, and each community selected sub-groups in charge of logistics, first aid and search and rescue. The participants then practiced how to rescue fellow community members and provide first aid in simulations.



Daray Rast Female Disaster Simulation

Disaster Risk Reduction Training in Schools

In order to reach all community members, NAC provided training in disaster preparedness and response to around 300 teachers and 130 school children. The training consisted of explaining different natural hazards, discussing evacuation plans, learning about safer construction and First Aid and Search and Rescue training.

Disaster Risk Reduction - Training Communities in Disaster Preparedness and Mitigation

During 2011, the communities were trained in how to prepare for natural disasters and to mitigate the risks as much as possible. Potential risks for each village and surroundings were identified through a Hazard Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment. The assessment sensitizes the communities to their specific hazards and vulnerabilities, which makes it possible for them to prepare for potential hazards and disasters in the future.



Village Disaster Management Plans and GIS

A Village Disaster Management Plan was developed for each community, giving an overview of the specific hazards and the measures that each community would take to prepare for disasters. These measures included setting up response teams and stockpiles with response items, early warning systems such as mosque loud speakers, mitigation through river protection structures, diversified livelihoods, improved construction methods; soil and land preservation techniques and preventive measures such as relocation of villages. With a Geographic Information System (GIS), large scale hazard maps were produced for each village. The maps highlighted the structures that were at risk in relation to landslides, erosion and flooding. It also included information on demographics, agriculture, such as the type of crops, as well as geographical coordinate information.

The GIS information collected were gathered in a geo-database on natural hazard vulnerability. This data-base will be of great value, not only for disaster preparedness and response, but also for other kinds of planning. In the future NAC is planning to integrate other data such as health and agricultural information. This way the database will be used as NAC's principal development planning geo-database.

Community Stockpiles and Seismic-Construction Methods

With technical support from NAC, communities constructed stockpile houses, where search and rescue equipment, relief items and first aid materials are stored. The Community Disaster Response Teams were trained on making inventories, as well as maintaining and managing the stockpiles. One of the most important measures to

mitigate the risks of earthquakes, is to build houses that can withstand them. Therefore, the stockpile houses were constructed with seismic-resistant methods. NAC's engineers trained local masons and other labourers on building the stockpiles with seismic-resistant methods, using local materials. That way, masons and other construction workers will be able to build safer houses in the future.

Disaster Risk Management - Coordination with Government Institutions

Through the Disaster Risk Reduction program, NAC seeks to strengthen the coordination and cooperation of international and national NGOs and relevant government institutions that are engaged in Disaster Risk Reduction in Badakhshan. During 2011, NAC contributed to the formation of the provincial Working Group on Disaster Risk Reduction, engaging United Nations agencies, government offices and NGOs engaged in DRR activities. NAC participated in a number of workshops organized by GIZ on Disaster Risk Reduction-related topics. Throughout the project, NAC was involved in the group, and shared information such as stockpile inventories, with the Provincial Disaster Management Council, the Badakhshan branch of the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority, and District Governors.

In two district seminars, community representatives and NAC presented to district officials what they had learnt in the community trainings with particular focus on each village's Hazard Vulnerability Capacity Assessment. As a result, the district authorities got an understanding of their roles and responsibilities in district level Disaster Risk Management and on how to coordinate with the community representatives in disaster situations.

Saving lives - A story from Samati village

In Samati, a village just next to the curvy main road between Faizabad and Takhar Province, landslides and floods occur regularly. Therefore, NAC selected Samati as one of its partner communities. Seventy men and women were trained in First Aid, Search and Rescue and Survival Techniques.

Several weeks after the training in disaster response, Gada Be Be Marajuddine, one of the female participants, witnessed a severe accident on the nearby road. When she realized that all men of the village were out in the fields and she was the only one available to offer assistance, she did not hesitate. She rushed to the car to assist the people. Three men, one woman and three children were stuck in the car and injured. She provided first aid to stop the bleedings with cloths, as she had learnt in the training. One of the victims had a fracture in his hand, and Gada Be Be stabilized it and arranged it to rest in a mitella around his neck. One of the men was unconscious after a head injury, and the brave rescuer took care of his small injuries and arranged quickly that the injured man would be taken to hospital in Faizabad by a car that was passing by.



PIST-E-KALAN - A VILLAGE IN DESPERATE NEED

The Initial Phase

NAC started working in Pist-e-Kalan, a remote village in Yaftal district in Badakhshan, in the spring of 2011. Initially, the community was to be trained in disaster preparedness, but as the project went along, the NAC Disaster Risk Reduction team realized that the community was much more vulnerable and poor than initially thought. The community not only needed support in preparing, mitigating, and responding to natural disasters, but it also needed support in every aspect of communal life. They had recently been forced to move to a new location, as the old village was about to break away and slide down the hillside, due to the land movement.



Pist-e -Kalan: Old location

The community had no resources to set up basic services in the new settlement and stood without water for irrigation, drinking and latrines. In addition to that, the land is very dry, and with flash floods during an earlier spring that washed away most of the important top layer soil, it was almost impossible to grow crops and vegetables. Additionally, the community did not have a school, and the children had no proper access to education.



Pist-e -Kalan: New location

A Desperate Situation

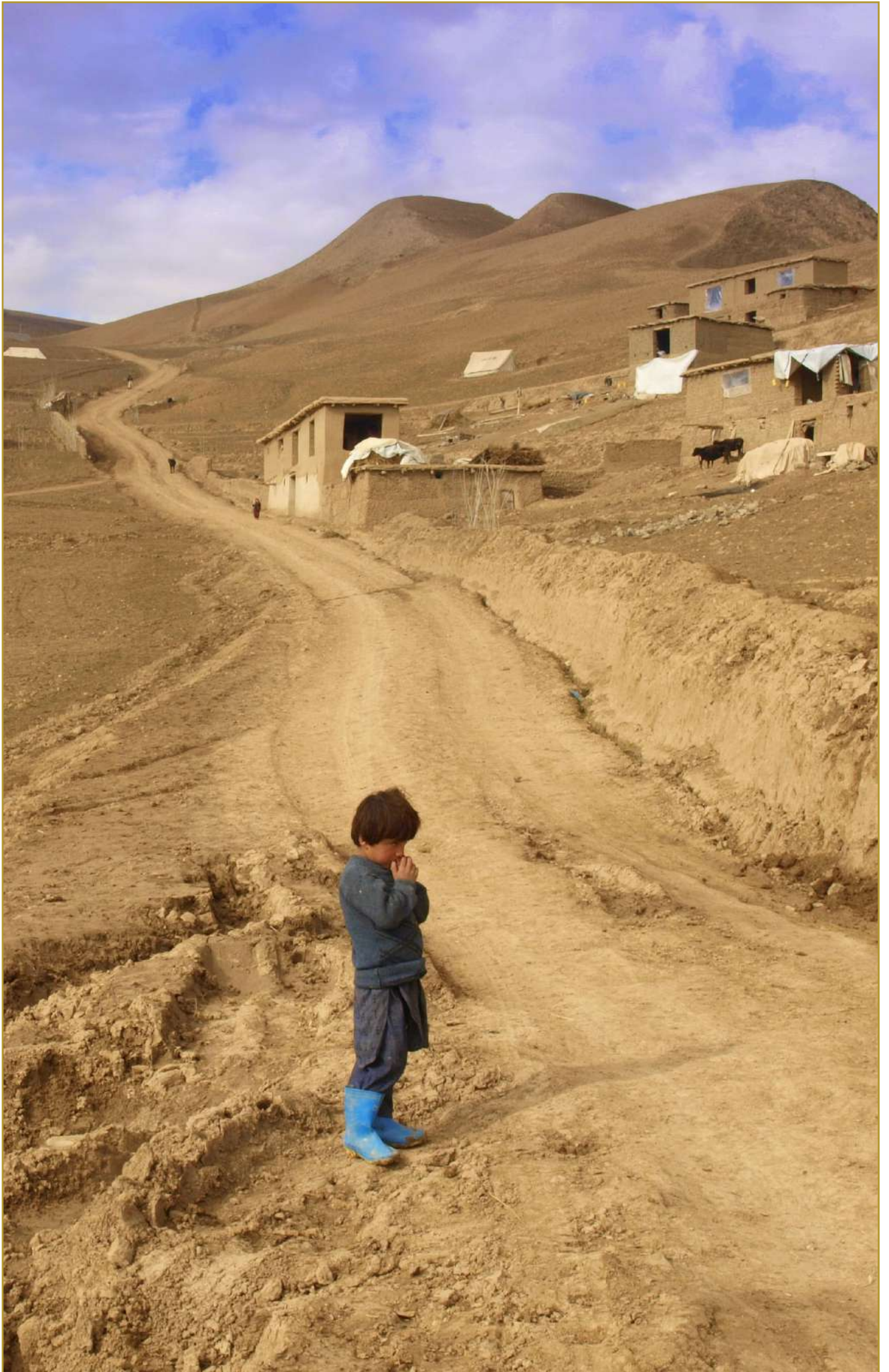
Urgent support was needed in all sectors. The most critical need was a safe and reliable water supply. Therefore, NAC's infrastructure team, together with local workers, constructed a water supply system that provided safe drinking water to all community members. Any surplus water from the drinking water storage now gets diverted to irrigating kitchen gardens, and a water supply system for irrigating fields is under construction. In order to protect the community's fields from flash floods, NAC built a storm water diversion canal and energy dissipater. Thirty-one latrines were constructed, using local laborers, who were also trained in both construction and



Pist-e -Kalan: Water Supply

maintenance. Now, the 840 community members have access to safe drinking water and latrines. The fields are protected from storm water and people have secure irrigation water for kitchen gardens to grow their crops.

However, access to safe drinking water and latrines is not enough if people lack an understanding of the importance of hygiene, use of safe water and latrine maintenance. Therefore, in 2012, NAC will continue its work and provide training in hygiene and health. Similarly, a functioning irrigation system requires skills and knowledge about more efficient agriculture. Hence, it is planned to train local farmers in horticulture, growing cereals and testing improved varieties to increase yield. As there is no reachable school in the area, NAC plans to build a community-based school. The community will contribute to the construction and a parent-teacher association will be established for ensuring independent functioning of the school. Through accelerated learning sessions, older children will get the opportunity to catch up on knowledge they have missed out on. Literacy, life skills and practical training will be given to women to make them more independent and self-sufficient.



HEALTH SECTOR DEVELOPMENT

Facing the Maternal and Child Health Crisis

In Afghanistan, every eleventh woman dies during pregnancy or labor. At the same time, one out of five children dies before they reach the age of five, due to malnutrition or preventable diseases. These high numbers are unfortunately not surprising. These deaths are often preventable, and related to lack of awareness about, and access to, basic care, bad diets and women performing hard in the fields right up to delivery. This is coupled with unskilled care, dangerous cultural and traditional practices, as well as the lack of female health professionals.

Even though several thousands of women have been trained as skilled midwives to respond to the shortage, there is still a need for at least another 4,000 in order for 95 percent of the births to have a skilled midwife present.

Only half of the Afghan population has access to basic health services, and women in rural areas are particularly affected, due to lack of health facilities and female health professionals. Since 2001, progress has been made to improve the health situation in Afghanistan, through the provincial program, Basic Package of Health Services, which includes maternal and newborn health care and family planning services. However, the deliverance of these services differs largely from province to province, depending on the service provider, and reproductive health services are often the most neglected.

In order to save and improve the lives of mothers and their children, the key is to train and employ skilled midwives and increase access to basic health services.

Not Only a Midwife - Also a Woman

Supporting and training midwives is not only a contribution to the general health situation. It is also an important contribution to women's general situation, as it provides women with an opportunity for education, which has a positive effect on the entire community. It allows women to enter the social arena, work and support their families. Within our Midwife Education program, we aim to train women who can provide antenatal, natal and postnatal care, and educate women about nutrition, health, childhood, communicable and easily preventable diseases and family planning. In addition, we also offer extra training to midwives with a focus on women's rights and conflict resolution.

Community Midwifery Education

During 2011, NAC ran two Community Midwifery Schools. In these schools, young women from rural areas where midwives are desperately needed, are trained for a 2 year full-time program. After their studies, they return to their local community to practice their profession. The program includes both theoretical and practical training. The students practice in skill labs in the school as well as in the local hospital.

The midwifery school in Kunar, a province in which less than five per cent of births are being attended by a trained midwife, was funded by the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunisation and the World Health Organization. In April 2011, 24 students graduated from the school and were supported in finding jobs as midwives in rural health facilities.

"My name is Rogul..."

I am 20 years old and a student at CME Wardak. One day I was travelling to my village and there were fightings going on. The road was closed for several hours, cars had to stop, the sky became smoky and I could hear gunfire and rockets. Suddenly, I heard a woman crying. I asked why she was crying and I was told that she was pregnant for the first time and on the way to the hospital, but due to the fightings they could not reach there. She was devastated, but I said that I had been a midwifery student for a year, and that I could assist her to the best of my knowledge. I examined her, and she was already in second phase of labour. I used a clean cloth that was in my box, and after only a few minutes she delivered a baby! The mother and the baby were both in good health. She was very happy and crying and said: "God save you and thank you so much!" Then her father -in-law came and saw his grandson. He was overjoyed seeing the healthy baby and he told me that his son, the baby's father, had died in a bomb explosion two days earlier. He said: "This baby is my and its mother's only hope."





Midwife Education Program in Nangarhar Province

The Nangarhar Institute of Health Sciences (IHS) was established in 1971 as part of the structure of the Ministry of Public Health. NAC started supporting IHS efforts in midwifery education in 2002, at a time when it was difficult to recruit students, particularly from remote areas. Families from the conservative eastern provinces of Afghanistan are normally reluctant to send their girls to midwifery training, where they stay in a compound away from their family.

In 2011 however, IHS had more than doubled the number of applications received when compared to 2002. Many families were now eager to send their female members to the school, proving the acceptance of the midwife profession. In 2011, 26 midwives graduated from the program, and 17 were deployed to their rural communities.



IHS Student in Jalalabad

Improving the Quality of Education

The IHS students receive high-quality hospital midwifery training, both theoretical and practical, in the Jalalabad provincial hospital. The students also have basic computer and English classes in accordance to the standard curriculum. After graduation, the new midwives are deployed to remote health facilities in their villages, where there have typically not been female health providers before. It is important to note that women are not permitted to be examined by male health staff. Through these midwives, women and children are given access to reproductive health services, including health education and family planning. During 2011, NAC also supported capacity building of IHS staff, including skills on effective teaching, basic emergency obstetric care, newborn care and gender mainstreaming. NAC helped to ensure that the IHS is not only meeting the standards of the Afghan Midwifery Education Accreditation Board, but is also providing students with quality education.

Supporting the Afghan Midwives' Association

Being a midwife has become a more widely accepted profession in Afghanistan during the last years even though Afghanistan's culture doesn't normally allow young and married women to work outside the home. But as the communities see how they benefit from the work of a trained midwife, the women are often accepted and granted respect and acknowledgement once they return home to work. However, there is still a great need for centralized support and coordination and this is where the Afghan Midwives' Association can play a crucial role.



The Afghan Midwives' Association (AMA) is the first labour movement for women in Afghanistan and a potential strong civil society player. The organization was established in 2005 but did not become functional until 2010 when it started operating with an office in Kabul and a strategic plan. AMA aims to promote and strengthen the midwifery profession as well as the role of the midwife and ensure the well-being of women and families in Afghanistan. Today, AMA has more than 2,000 professional midwives and student members from 33 provincial chapters.

NAC works to strengthen AMA's organizational and programmatic capacity, including strong leadership, high technical capacity and a well-managed central office in Kabul. Our support enables the AMA to:

- Advocate for the rights of its members and midwifery as a profession
- Empower AMA's officers to participate actively in development and planning of reproductive health services at the national level
- Train and build the capacity of its members
- Improve service delivery by midwives



Practical Skills Training in CME Wardak

PUBLIC INFORMATION WORK

Sharing Information from Afghanistan

NAC views it as part of the organisation's mission to share information on Afghanistan with both the general public, policy makers and others with a special interest in the country. Our most important channels for sharing information are our web pages, social media, lectures given by NAC employees or volunteers, and written materials, such as fact-sheets and brochures produced by the office. Seminars organized by NAC are also an important way of sharing information and raising awareness about current issues in Afghanistan. Speakers from Afghanistan are often invited to participate and contribute to our seminars, and we work to gain as much visibility as possible for visiting Afghan speakers, through public announcements and media coverage of events.

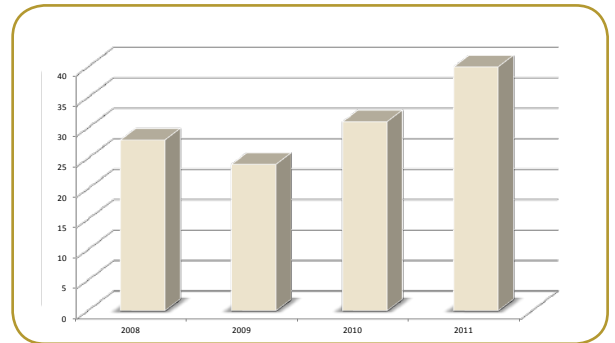
Media Placements

NAC views the media as an important conduit for public information, community education and advocacy, and works strategically to shine the spotlight on Afghanistan. Throughout 2011, the organisation's activity level was high. The media attention garnered in 2011 was in large part due to the organisation's efforts, activities and focus areas of special interest. The visit of two Afghan midwives in February directed attention towards maternal health and the current situation for midwifery education in Afghanistan (see the section below). The visit received significant media attention. The maternal health situation in Afghanistan received coverage in two newspapers, in a radio program on NRK P2, and in three different magazines. On International Women's Day, NAC contributed a commentary on maternal health to one of Norway's largest newspapers, Dagbladet.

The Friendship School Program also received widespread coverage, mainly in the local Oslo press, especially in relation to the Friendship Days at Vinderen School. NRK Super (a children's channel) broadcast a three-minute segment from Vinderen School.

NAC also followed and participated in the general debate on Afghanistan throughout the year. The topics have included the connection between foreign aid and military activity, the challenges related to the transition, the 10-year anniversary of the foreign intervention, women's participation, and the Bonn-II meeting in December.

NAC has experienced an increase in media placements in 2011 as seen in the graph.



Number of Media placements 2008-2011

Public and Member Information

The announcement of the forthcoming withdrawal of foreign troops from the country means that Afghanistan is now in a period of transition. This new political reality has created a need to provide correct and updated information to journalists, politicians, opinion makers and the general public. This has resulted in NAC producing a new section of the website, entitled "Ten more years in Afghanistan," under the headline "topics". This section is filled with articles and fact sheets on essential topics regarding the transition, the Bonn-II meeting in December 2011, reconciliation with the Taliban, and the role of NATO.

Faktaark fra Afghanistankomiteen i Norge Nr 2 - 2011, 30. november

Bonn II - Veien videre for Afghanistan

Den 5. desember samles over 1000 delegater fra 90 nasjoner, internasjonale organisasjoner og FN til et møte i den tyske byen Bonn.

Målet med Bonn II er å formidle et praktisk veikart fra mot 2014. Konferansen skal ledes av den afghanske regjeringen med Taliban som verdslig. Hensikten er å skape regionale og internasjonale støtte til Afghanistan. På agendaen for møtet står:

- overføringen av sikkerhet til den afghanske regjeringen inn 2014
- internasjonale samfunnets forpliktelser overfor Afghanistan etter overtagelsen
- den politiske prosessen med et nasjonalt forsamling og integrering av tidligere Taliban-soldater

Sikkerhet: Afghanistan i overgang

Bonn II summerfaller med et vesikkle for Afghanistan. President Hamid Karzai har satt utgangen av 2014 som fristen for når afghansk politi (ANP, Afghan National Police) har (ANS, Afghan National Army) og sikkerhetsstyrker (ANSF, Afghan National Security Forces) skal overta ansvaret for sikkerheten i hele Afghanistan. De fleste internasjonale soldatene skal da etter planen forlate landet, mens noen vil bli igjen for å flytte en mentor rolle.

Det er høyst uklart om dette er et realistisk mål. Utenrigge analytikere mener tilbakegangen ikke er basert på en analyse av de faktiske forholdene på bakken, men heller er et resultat av frimarketing og manglende politisk vilje til fortsatt krig i Afghanistan.

Det internasjonale samfunnets forpliktelser

Det forventes to store avtaler som resultat av Bonn II. En mellom USA og Afghanistan, og en mellom EU og Afghanistan. Både EU og USA vil fokusere på økonomisk utvikling, deriblant tilrettelagte for direkte investeringer i en afghansk grønt økonomi. Blant annet regner man med at Afghanistan har store mengder litium, og et Petrolgas-metall er Afghanistan omtrent som oljefeltet Saudi-Arabia.

EU har også vurdert at de vil fortsette utgangen på investeringsbidrag i Afghanistan. De ønsker å styrke parlamentet, domstolene og sikkerhetsvesenets vilje. Som del i sitt arbeid for godt styresett vil EU også bidra til å utvikle det afghanske lovverket med hensyn til beskyttelse av private investeringer. Et viktig spørsmål blir hvilke interesser og hvem som bidrar til utformingen av lovverket for privat sektor. Et markedsøkonomi den beste modellen for Afghanistan? Vil den afghanske staten kunne sikre seg investere, og vil disse kunne bide bidraget til gode?

Forsoning med Taliban

Det er høyst uklart om det vil bli finnes noen milliter løsning på konflikten i Afghanistan, og i september 2010 opprettet president Hamid Karzai et forslag for å innlede dialog med Taliban, men regner med at forsoning har vært gjort. Den 21. september 2011 ble Føderalrådet i Kabul, den afghanske regjering, drept i en selvmoordakt. Ingen har så langt tatt på seg ansvaret. Etter drapet på Rabban straffe Karzai og FN kan ikke forsette å snakke med selvmoordbombere. Derfor har vi sluttet å snakke om å snakke med Taliban om vil ha en advarsel. Fram til da vil vi snakke med våre boder i Pakistan for å finne en løsning på problemene vi har. Etter det har prosessen stått stille.

Venst til en forsoning er lang, og det er uklart hva som vil være Talibanns krav. Internt i Afghanistan blir Karzai fordømt for å ha forlatt Afghanistan og for å ha forlatt sine krigsvenner, sårbare og krigsdrøye. Situasjonen er ytterligere komplisert etter at Pakistan besluttet å holde Bonn II-møtet etter at 24 pakistanske soldater ble drept i et NATO-angrep i grenseområdet mellom Pakistan og Afghanistan den 26. november. NATO har bedrevet angrepet.

Ulike utfall

Skulle forsoningsprosessen bli vellykket og framover, kan man se for seg tre utfall:

1. Taliban oppretter innad i demokratisk system. Denne løsningen er ikke sannsynlig fordi Taliban vet at de vil bli lar opplysning i et korrumpert valg.
2. Taliban skaffer seg delvis nøytral gjennom bakgrunnen og uten støtte fra vestlige. Dette kan være en koeksistensløsning der Taliban får noen posisjoner i regjeringen. Hvor mye made de får, vil avhenge av hvilke posisjoner

ACTIVITIES

Afghan Midwives Visit Norway and International Women's Day

In Norway, 2011 started with a visit by two Afghan midwives. Feroza Mushtari, the then leader of the Afghan Midwife Association, and Noorzia Shinwari, midwifery teacher at the Nangarhar Institute of Health Sciences (IHS). They visited Oslo, as well as the International Student Festival in Trondheim. The two delivered a speech for Norad staff members, and attended meetings at the Norwegian Parliament, as well as with various NGOs.



Midwife Feroza Mushtari visiting Norway

ERIK M. SUNDT

In 2011 NAC's Women's Committee participated in the International Women's Day parade on March 8. In the parade, they held with a banner encouraging Prime Minister Stoltenberg to engage in maternal health in Afghanistan. The Head Office assisted in developing a flyer on women's situation in Afghanistan and NAC's work.

Matiullah – Longest Serving NAC Employee

Matiullah, NAC Senior Administrative Officer has worked with NAC since the start of the organization in Peshawar, Pakistan. He has served in various positions, starting out as a guard, and later working as a driver. He has served under all Secretary Generals, through changing regimes and political eras. He attended the 2011 Annual Meeting as a guest of honour, and met with former colleagues and attended seminars. Matiullah was also interviewed by Norwegian aid newspaper *Bistandsaktuelt*, which featured a 2-page spread on his background and the evolving security situation in Afghanistan.



TOR AKSEL BOLLE

Commemoration: 10 years in Afghanistan

October 7th marked the 10th anniversary of the military intervention in Afghanistan. On December 5th, over 1000 delegates from 85 countries, as well as international organisations and the United Nations, gathered for the Bonn-II summit to formulate a roadmap towards the 2014 transition. One of the most important demands of the NGO community ahead of the meeting was that aid to Afghanistan should not be reduced following the military drawdown. This has been the most important advocacy issue for NAC during 2011. This idea is captured through our 10-year commemoration slogan *We will stay when the soldiers leave*.

In 2014, most international forces will have departed Afghanistan, and Afghans will themselves be responsible for the security situation in the country. To mark the 10-year anniversary, NAC held a gathering outside the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and gave a speech at a protest march arranged by the Peace Initiative. NAC also organized an exhibition of Afghan video art at Gallery ANX.

Seminar – Afghanistan: Ways Forward

On November 18th, NAC gathered around 90 participants for a seminar addressing the potential for reconciliation with the Taliban, the country's challenges beyond 2014, and the potential for successful development. Among the speakers were representatives from the Afghan Women's Network, former Special Representative of the Secretary General, Kai Eide, researcher Arne Strand from the Christian Michelsen Institute, as well as representatives from Norwegian Church Aid, Save the Children and the Norwegian Refugee Council.

Booths, Lectures and Panels

Throughout the year, NAC has organized booths at several events. In October, NAC had a booth during the Blue October event at the Technical Museum. NAC also had booths at the 2011 fall semester course start at both Oslo University and Oslo University College. NAC has also been asked to give lectures and speeches on topics related to Afghanistan for various audiences, as public institutions, schools and Norwegian NGOs. NAC contributed to the 2011 film festival "Film from the South" and the Oslo Documentary Cinema, where several films from and about Afghanistan were shown. The Secretary General and the Country Director participated in several panel debates and seminars.

ADVOCACY

NAC's Focus within Advocacy

NAC's advocacy work in 2011 was mainly related to the topics maternal health and the on-going military exit from Afghanistan, the so-called 'transition'. Important venues for conducting our advocacy efforts are meetings with politicians, media coverage, and other NGOs.

Maternal Health

Maternal health is an important part of NAC's project portfolio in Afghanistan, which has a particular focus on support to midwives and midwifery education. NAC also lobbies for the Norwegian government to engage more actively in promoting maternal health in Afghanistan. The visit of two Afghan midwives provided an opportunity for NAC to generate awareness regarding the state of maternal health in Afghanistan. The midwives met with Norwegian politicians Inga Marte Thorkildsen, Dagfinn Høybråten (current head of GAVI), Care, Fokus and the Norwegian Midwives' Association.



Second Batch of CME Wardak Students

On International Women's Day, an op-ed was published in *Dagbladet*, calling for an increased Norwegian commitment to improving maternal health in Afghanistan. The piece was entitled "Make a difference, Jens!"

The Transition

The main focus of NAC's advocacy work on this topic has been to ensure that the Norwegian government's military exit from Afghanistan is not accompanied by a decrease in development or humanitarian aid to the country. The efforts resulted in an op-ed being published in *Bistandsaktuelt* on the need to maintain the current level of aid funding, based on Norway's commitment to achieving the Millennium Development Goals. This op-ed was based on a statement published after NAC's Annual Meeting. The same theme was reiterated on October 7 when NAC, as part of the 10-year



NAC's Slogan for the 10-year Commemoration

commemoration described above, chose its slogan to be "we will stay when the soldiers leave". NAC also participated in coordinated demonstration which also took place in Stockholm, Berlin, London, and Paris, organized by the British NGO Crisis Action.

Bonn-II Conference

Preceding the Bonn-II meeting in December 2011, NAC initiated an ad-hoc network of Norwegian organisations working in Afghanistan. The network drafted an open letter to the Parliamentary Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense. The letter was presented in a meeting with the Committee, where representatives of NAC, Care, the Norwegian Refugee Council, Norwegian Church Aid, the Norwegian Red Cross and Save the Children were provided with an opportunity to present their concerns related to the transition and the priorities of the Bonn-II meeting.

Main points from the letter were presented in an op-ed in *Dagbladet* on the same day, focusing on the essential role of women in the Afghan transition process. The same letter was presented to representatives from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs following the Bonn meeting. NAC was also able to reiterate the importance of a sustained commitment in various radio shows and an op-ed in *Klassekampen*. Related to Bonn II, NAC also participated in a Twitter campaign coordinated by Crisis Action. The main target of the campaign was the German Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

NAC's involvement in the European Network of NGOs in Afghanistan (ENNA) during 2011 included active participation in coordination meetings in both Afghanistan and Brussels as well as hosting ENNA meetings. NAC also participated at the Venro network meeting for European NGOs working in Afghanistan, held in Berlin as well as the Afghanistan conference in Rome.



LOCAL ACTIVISM

Project Committee

The Project Committee was involved in a range of activities throughout the year. In January, Mike Fergus arranged a meeting between NAC's Country Director and the Technical Advisory group. The meeting was initiated to build relations between NAC and Norwegian consultants, as NAC is in need of external expertise for training local staff in Afghanistan and technical advice. In May, Project Committee member Brittina Berg went on a volunteer field trip to Afghanistan. Together with the Education Manager, Brittina worked on the topic of inclusive education, which has now been incorporated into NAC's education teacher training.

Members of the Project Committee have conducted extensive outreach to research institutes, with a special focus on natural resource management, in order to recruit potential consultants and experts to assist in NAC's programming. In September, Dr. Andreas Koestler presented experiences and results from his consultancy assignment in relation to the Disaster Risk Reduction project in Badakhshan to the Project Committee.

Members of the Project Committee have put a lot of work into developing strategies, templates and position papers for NAC. A new template for the quarterly report was developed in addition to a position paper on NAC's identity as a development actor in Afghanistan, and a donor strategy. Committee member Elisabet Eikås has been a key contributor to work on the donor strategy, and efforts to finalize this strategy will continue into 2012.

Women's Committee

The Women's Committee is the oldest sub-committee of NAC, being founded by Afghan and Norwegian women over 20 years ago. It is still a platform where women from the Afghan Diaspora and women living in Norway meet on a monthly basis to be engaged in advocating for women in Afghanistan through project and information work.

The Women's Committee is responsible for monitoring the two FOKUS-funded projects in support of the Afghan Midwives' Association (AMA) and the Hospital Midwife Education of the Institute of Health Sciences in Nangarhar. This year marked the second year of cooperation between the Norwegian Midwife Association and the Women's Committee in support of AMA.

The Women's Committee were actively involved in organizing activities for International Women's Day and NAC's participation in the 8th of March parade, as well as a seminar on reproductive health and rights in cooperation with the Latin America Groups. The Women's Committee also facilitated the visit of two Afghan midwives in February. In September, they organized an open meeting to present the FOKUS-funded projects. The keynote speaker was Deeva Biabani, a NAC board member and midwifery student, who had recently visited the Community Midwife Education project in Wardak province.

In December, members of the Women's Committee participated in a partner meeting in Dubai between representatives of FOKUS, AMA, IGS and NAC's Health Team. The two-day workshop was held to discuss the status of the projects, and to identify challenges and possibilities of the projects in working with women's rights and development in Afghanistan. The workshop was considered a success by all parties, and contributed to a greater understanding of the challenges and opportunities faced by the project partners.

Bergen Committee

NAC has an active local committee in Bergen that is involved in coordinating NAC's local activities, with a particular focus on the Friendship School cooperation in Afghanistan. The Bergen Committee is highly active, and involved in many facets of NAC's work. In 2011, the Bergen Committee held several meetings with representatives from Krohnengen Friendship School, as well as the parents' committee, where they planned the annual Christmas market and shared information on the planned activities of the Friendship School.

The Bergen Committee also received a visit from Matiullah during his time in Norway, and held regular board meetings every quarter. The Bergen Committee also participated in the International Women's Day parade held in Bergen on March 8th. The Christmas market at Krohnengen School was the highlight of the committee's activities in 2011. Together with Grade 6 students at Krohnengen School, board member Solveig Sandalsnes produced traditional Kofta meatballs and sold them at the Christmas market. The Committee also sold jewelry, scarves produced in Afghanistan and cards to benefit NAC's work. NAC Staff member Ahmad Ghulami participated in the Christmas market, and gave a speech.

FUNDRAISING

Raising “Own” Contributions

NAC relies on the support of individuals and organisations in order to be able to support the organization’s activities in Afghanistan. The contributions of more than 200 members in Norway, and the even larger network of supporters, allows NAC to raise funds to cover the own contribution for several projects. NAC runs an efficient operation in Oslo, with a small office, and support contributions from numerous volunteers. This means that a high proportion of the funds we raise go directly to our projects in Afghanistan.

NAC is responsible for raising 10% of the total funding for the two FOKUS-supported projects ”Hospital Midwife Education”, which supports the Institute of Health Sciences in Nangarhar Province, and ”Networking with the Afghan Midwife Association”, which supports the development of a professional organisation for midwives in Afghanistan. In addition, our Norad-supported ”Civil Society Capacity Building” project, which assists women in Badakhshan to form self-help groups, requires a 10% matching contribution. For 2011, NAC met the full matching contribution requirement for all these projects.

Fundraising Letters and Events

In 2011, NAC produced two fundraising letters, which were distributed to 2600 private donors across the country. The first campaign, supporting Hospital Midwife Education, raised approximately 180,000 NOK, while the second campaign, focusing on the Civil Society project, had raised more than 100,000 NOK (by February 2012).

Through their Friendship Day in June 2011, where students sold various items, including self-made comic books, food and smoothies, and operated a beauty salon, fortune telling salon and a ghost walk, Vinderen Skole raised an impressive NOK 87,223, which supported renovation work at their Friendship School Gul Dara in Afghanistan.



Beauty Parlor Operated by Vinderen School students

Similarly, Krohnengen Skole held their annual Christmas market to benefit their Friendship School, the Girls No. 2 School in Faizabad. It raised more than NOK 50,000 through the market, which will be used for the construction of shelters and the purchase of IT equipment.



Vinderen School collected 87,223 NOK for Gul Dara School



Dragonfly Pegs Sold by Students at Vinderen School

In addition, NAC’s cooperation with two primary schools, Vinderen Skole in Oslo and Krohnengen Skole in Bergen, represents an important fundraising source for NAC’s education work.

In 2012, NAC is hoping to further expand the Friendship School Program and develop teaching programs that will include primary as well as high schools.

FRIENDSHIP SCHOOLS

Friendship School Program

In 2004, NAC began to establish Friendship School links between Afghanistan and Norway. In 2010, this link was further developed into the Friendship School Program (FSP). The program aims to promote solidarity and friendship between children in two different parts of the world, through the exchange of knowledge and direct communication between the students.

Fundraising by the Norwegian schools contribute to improving the quality of the schools in Afghanistan, while an ongoing information exchange between the students allow friendships to be built across borders. Currently, NAC has two pairs of friendship schools: Kronhengen School in Bergen is connected to Girls No 2 School i Faizabad, while Vinderen School in Oslo has developed close links with Gul Dara Girls School, north of Kabul. In 2011, a lot of effort was put into the Friendship Schools in order to facilitate an expansion of the program. The goal is to have five pairs of schools by late 2012.

Fundraising

The Friendship School Program is a part of NAC's long-term objective to support the improvement of the formal education sector in Afghanistan. The Norwegian Friendship Schools' fundraising make a substantial contribution to improving the schools in Afghanistan. The funds benefit the children directly, and enhance the quality of their school surroundings, through improvements in infrastructure, teaching materials, stationary, teacher training, as well as cultural and sports activities.

Cultural Exchange and Learning

Currently, the project is aimed at children from first to seventh grade in primary school. For each grade, various types of activities and themes are carried out and the exchange between the schools range from letters, poems, stories, drawings, photographs to handicrafts.

In 2011, a new kind of exchange was tested: the potato project. Second grade students in both countries were grew potatoes, and shared their experiences through the exchange of pictures and descriptions of their activities. The children learned about potatoes, the climatic and natural environment of the other country and about each other. While the children in Norway and Afghanistan have no problem recognizing the differences between them, the aim of the Friendship Schools is to emphasize similarities between them. It gives them the opportunity to see that the children have fundamental



Drawings from Gul Dara school

similarities, with regard to their needs, hopes and aspirations for the future, creating friendship and solidarity.

Teaching Programs for Norwegian Schools

The program also includes learning about each other's countries. In 2011, NAC developed internet-based teaching programs, tailored to the demands of the Norwegian national curriculum. These nine programs are available for all schools, and suitable for elementary school, grade 1-7. They provide information about the history, culture and humanitarian situation in Afghanistan, in a straightforward way that is easy for children to understand.

Gul Dara School

The Gul Dara School is located in Gul Dara district, 31 kilometers outside of Kabul. The school was built in 2004, funded by a private Norwegian donor, and has since then been supported by NAC. The school has a day care centre for the teachers' children, a science laboratory, a large playground and a library. The school has over 500 female students, with 14 female teachers, including principals.

During 2011, students at Vinderen school in Oslo raised around 87 000 NOK in support of their Friendship School, Gul Dara. The money was used to establish a vegetable garden for the students, to repair the school roof and walls, paint, conduct training on child-friendly teaching methods and inclusive education for teachers and school staff. It was also invested in conducting practical laboratory training for teachers, and in the establishment of a financial committee. During the year, a student committee was established, with representatives from each class. On November 20th, the school was handed over to the community, the Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) and the school management committee. Future NAC work will support teachers resources and capacity building for teachers and the PTA will be responsible for maintenance.

Astrid Morken School

The Astrid Morken School is located in the Faqirabad area of Peshawar, Pakistan, and provides education to Afghan refugee children, mostly girls, from first to twelfth grade, allowing them access to education until they can return to their homeland. The school has 255 students and 22 female teachers, including one principal and one deputy principal. Being refugees, many of the students are poor and 35 of the poorest students are fully financed by the school, as their families do not have the possibility of covering the cost of their education. The school is named in memory of Astrid Morken, Country Representative of NAC, who was killed by a landmine in 1988.

The Astrid Morken School has received funds through NAC from 1984 till 2007 and from 2009 onwards. Currently, the Norwegian Institute of Nature Research (NINA) is supporting the school, and through their funding, the school fees for the poorest students, as well as part of the school's administrative costs are covered.

collecting monthly fees from students. In 2011, Krohnengen School raised 50,422 NOK for their Friendship School through their annual Christmas market.

In 2012, NAC plans to conduct computer and methods trainings for teachers and to construct new latrines for the school. The scarcity of proper classrooms affects the learning of the pupils severely. There is an urgent need to expand the school as soon as possible to create an acceptable learning environment for the 1,350 girls. NAC is therefore looking for funding to build a new school on land already allocated by the Department of Education.

Parent-Teacher Associations

With funding from the Integrated Rural Development Program, NAC has initiated the establishment, support and training of Parent-Teacher Associations (PTAs) and their members. A PTA consists

"My name is Abdullah..."

I am a student in third grade in Astrid Morken School. My mother is dead and my father has remarried and started a new family, so now I live with my uncle and one sister. My uncle owns a vegetable shop, where I work hard to earn 10 Pakistani Rupees per week. I do not have sufficient money for school fees, and the Astrid Morken School therefore provides me with free education, while some teachers also donate food and clothes to me. I am very happy to be able to go to school, and I dream about becoming a doctor some day."



Girls No. 2 School

The Girls No. 2 School is located in Faizabad New City in Badakhshan. The school was built in 1984 by the Government of Afghanistan, and has been supported by NAC since 1998. Currently, the school has 1,350 female students, from first to twelfth grade. Given the high number of students, they have to study in three shifts, beginning early in the morning and ending in the evening. There are currently 23 female teachers, including one principal and one deputy principal, working at the school.

During 2010, the students at Krohnengen School in Bergen raised 55,724 NOK for their Friendship School through their annual Christmas market. The aim was to construct new classrooms, but as the funding was not sufficient, the Friendship School funds were instead used for inclusive education and laboratory teacher training, as well as a three month winter course for 180 students in computers, English, physics, and mathematics, partially funded by NAC, and partly through

of parents, teacher and other school staff, working together to ensure that the parents are more involved in their children's education. During 2011, this work was done in all 21 partner schools, including the Friendship Schools. One of the goals of supporting the PTAs was also to involve the parents more in the maintenance of school. You can read more about the PTA under the section for Integrated Rural Development.



Parent-Teacher Association in Argo



NAC'S SUPPORT SERVICES

Introduction

As a result of the increase in project work, it was necessary to upgrade and improve the effectiveness of those support services that enable projects to be implemented efficiently and within budget. To this end, there was an urgent need to re-establish NAC's Human Resources Department in order to cope with the ambitious recruitment process which continued unabated throughout 2011. It was also necessary to overhaul the procurement system to ensure the timely delivery of goods and services at the best prices.

Lastly, NAC required a new financial management system to accommodate both the sharp increase in expenditure and the demands of donor accountability and transparency. The measures taken to achieve these objectives are briefly described below.

Human Resources

In 2011 a Human Resources Department was created and staffed with a HR Officer, and Assistant HR Officer and a Payroll Clerk. Relevant staff training was provided and will continue during 2012. New standardised contracts for all staff were introduced early in 2011 in order to reflect the new structure of NAC and its conditions of employment. In conjunction with this, the staff leave policy, including compensation leave and leave recording systems, was revamped.

Responsibility for preparing the monthly payroll was successfully transferred to the HR Department from the Finance Department and salary advice slips introduced for the first time in NAC's history. In addition, improvements and changes were introduced to the NAC Staff Provident Fund including a Staff Loan Scheme which permitted employees to withdraw up to 80% of their Provident Fund savings on condition that it is repaid in full before the end of the financial year.

The NAC Staff Medical Aid Scheme was piloted and introduced throughout the organisation during 2011 and is proving very popular with the staff. The peak of Medical Aid services with consultations for staff and dependents taking place in the Kabul office was from January till end of April. NAC's services are effective and efficient services compare to the expenses outside NAC's medical facility and prevents staff to go for unnecessary investigation and using low quality and highly priced medicine.

The working conditions of staff, including per diem rates and overtime payment was reviewed and made more consistent. A system of salary notch increases for all Afghan grades was finalised and linked with a new staff appraisal system to be phased in during 2012.

With the recruitments made during 2011, we are pleased to say that NAC now has a 2:1 ratio of men to women, with female employees being represented in all skills areas and from the management level downwards. Our cultural mix closely reflects the communities in which we are active with 23% Pashtun, 54% Tajik and 23% Hazara employees.

Administration

A new procurement system, which included value-related purchasing authorisations and competitive bidding systems, in addition to longer-term fixed price supply contracts, was introduced. This was coupled with a new electronic stock control system for Kabul and its satellite offices which permitted the differentiation between project stock and organisational stock, the latter now being subject to inclusion and depreciation in NAC's accounts.

Training was provided to all relevant NAC staff on the new procurement and stock control systems. Full implementation and refinement of these systems will continue into 2012.

Finance

The NAC's Financial Management System underwent a major redesign and upgrade during 2011. The job was performed by Ernst & Young and included the move to a more advanced accounting software, the development of a chart of accounts, comprehensive organisational budgeting, improved cash management and recording, payroll management, procurement systems and asset handling, the segregation of duties for improved over-sight, and key staff succession planning. Particular attention was paid to correcting and upgrading financial reporting systems for donors and auditors, and ensuring adequate compliance monitoring. It is expected that the new Financial Management System will meet NAC's needs for the next ten years at least.

NAC'S TEAM

Oslo - Head Office

The Oslo office currently has four employees. During 2011 the Oslo office consisted of NAC's Secretary General, an Information Advisor and an organizational consultant. In the beginning of 2012 a Donor Liaison and Fundraising Officer was recruited. The Head Office holds the overall responsibility for the organization, coordinates and implement activities in Norway, engages in information and advocacy work as well as donor relations and fundraising.



Kabul - Country Office

The Kabul office has 49 employees. The Country Director, the Program Director and all program managers are based there but frequently visit the regional offices. Kabul also hosts the Strategic Planning Department, with four employees, the Internal Auditor, and the finance department, which is responsible for the overall financial management of operations in Afghanistan. The Administration and Human Resources team manages operations in the main office and supervise the regional offices.

Badakshan - Regional Offices

Our regional office in Faizabad has 54 employees and another six in the sub-regional office in Keshim. The office are administered the Regional Coordinator and the Regional Manager. We have 18 programme officers and four community educators working in the program teams which includes NRM, education, health, infrastructure and DRR. The administration, human resources and finance departments as well as 27 support staff work hard to enable smooth program implementation.



Ghazni - Regional Offices

The Regional Office Manager manages the office in Jaghori with 27 staff and the office in Ghazni City with seven staff. Out of these 12 program officers and four community educators implement projects in natural resource management, education, infrastructure and health in Jaghori and Malistan districts. One finance officer and 14 support staff (e.g., cook, cleaners and drivers) aid the programmatic team in daily operations.

NAC'S BOARD



Hege Jacobsen, Chair of the Board. Hege works as a project manager for Norsk Hydro. She has previously worked in several UN agencies and has broad experience in information technology, quality systems, project management and organizational work. She has served as a member of the Board since May 2007.

Farid Ghiami, Deputy Chair. Farid is originally from Afghanistan and is an educated journalist from the University of Mazar-e Sharif. He is currently studying Social Studies with HR Management at the University of Stavanger. He has previously worked with receiving asylum seekers. He has been a NAC member since 2006.



Marianne Heibo, Women's Committee Representative. Marianne works for the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (UDI) and has extensive experience in interviewing asylum-seekers, particularly minors. She is active in NAC's Women's Committee and travelled to Afghanistan in May 2010 to visit projects.

Marte Haugerud Moe, Project Committee Representative. Marte works for the department of Foreign Education at NOKUT - the Norwegian Agency for Quality Assurance in Education. She holds a Master's degree in development studies. Marte is the leader of NAC's Project Committee.



Solveig Sandalsnes, Bergen Committee Representative. Solveig has been employed by the Bergen municipality for more than 35 years and is currently working for NAV. She has been a NAC member for approximately 20 years and been on the Board during several periods. Solveig visited projects in Afghanistan in 2004.

Beate S. Lupton, Member of the Board. Beate is a medical doctor, specializing in community medicine. She has held a variety of positions as a physician. She has been a NAC member since July 2009 and was elected to the Board in May 2010. During 2011, Beate travelled to Afghanistan and visited several of the projects.



Anne S. Hertzberg, Member of the Board. Anne is a trained psychologist and has worked with aid and project development within health and social work since 1995. She has been a regular visitor to Afghanistan since 2002, working mainly for the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan and in recent years for the Afghan Ministry of Health.

Ahmad Ghulami, Member of the Board. Ahmad came to Norway in 1999. He has a B.Sc in political science and a Master's degree in Middle Eastern and North Africa studies. He has worked as an Organizational Consultant with NAC. Currently, he works as a project associate in Oslo Municipality with resettlement of unaccompanied minors.

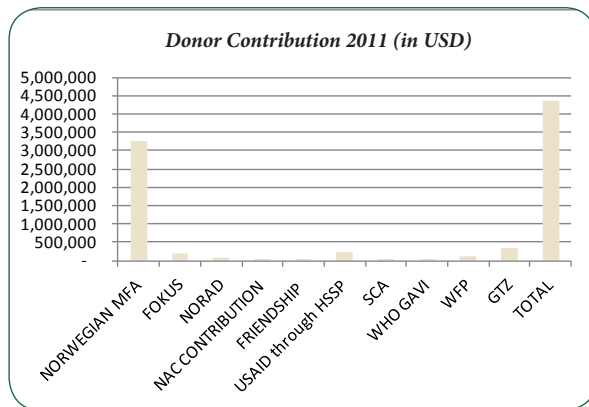


BUDGET AND EXPENDITURES

NAC's Finances in 2011

In 2011, NAC received funds from eight donors and implemented 10 projects in the provinces of Wardak, Nangarhar, Badakhshan and Ghazni. The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs remained the largest donor of NAC, supporting the Integrated Rural Development Program, which will continue till the end of 2012.

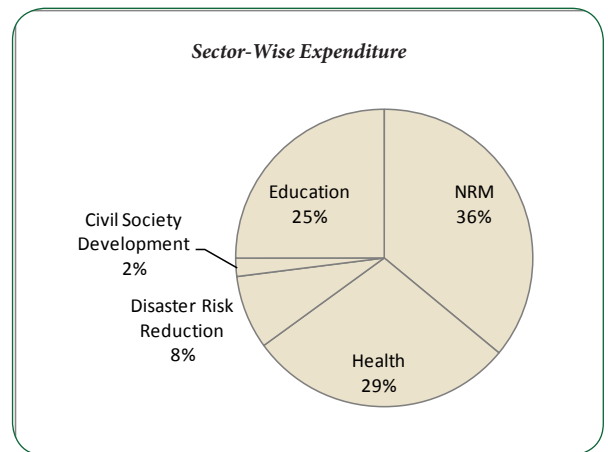
While the cooperation with WHO/ GAVI was completed with the successful graduation of 25 midwives in Kunar, NAC initiated a new cooperation with the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) to educate a second batch of community midwives in Wardak province. The first class of midwifery students in Wardak continued to be funded by HSSP/ USAID. Another new cooperation was started with Norad through the pilot project "Women's social and economic empowerment".



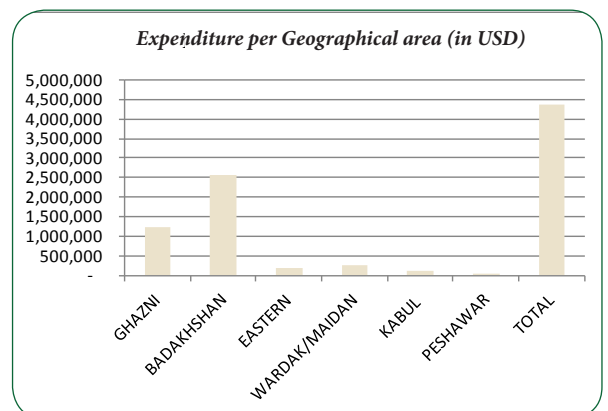
NAC launched a new project in Disaster Risk Reduction in cooperation with the German International Cooperation (GIZ). Since Norad, GIZ and SCA are new funding partners, NAC was successful in diversifying its donor portfolio in 2011 as compared to the previous year. The World Food Programme, a donor to NAC since 2002, continued to support two projects in Badakhshan. FOKUS also continued its support throughout the year.

The Friendship School project was supported by the school children of the partner schools in Norway who raised more than 30,000 USD. Through fundraising letter campaigns the Head Office in Oslo raised money from individual donors in Norway that were used for the Norad and the FOKUS projects where NAC was required to provide a 10% match.

Of the overall annual budget, activities within the Natural Resource Management sector accounted for 36% of expenditures, while the Health sector accounted for 29% and Education for 25%. The new programmatic areas of Disaster Risk Reduction and the Civil Society Development accounted for 8% and 2% respectively.



During 2011 NAC implemented projects in six geographical areas. The highest expenditures were in Badakhshan with 2,571,006 USD and Ghazni with 1,233,233 USD, areas where the Integrated Rural Development Program is being implemented. The third highest expenditure was in Wardak Province, with 268,019 USD, where NAC implements a Community Midwife Education project.



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You can also join our Facebook group:

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