



ANNUAL REPORT

2013



Norwegian Afghanistan Committee

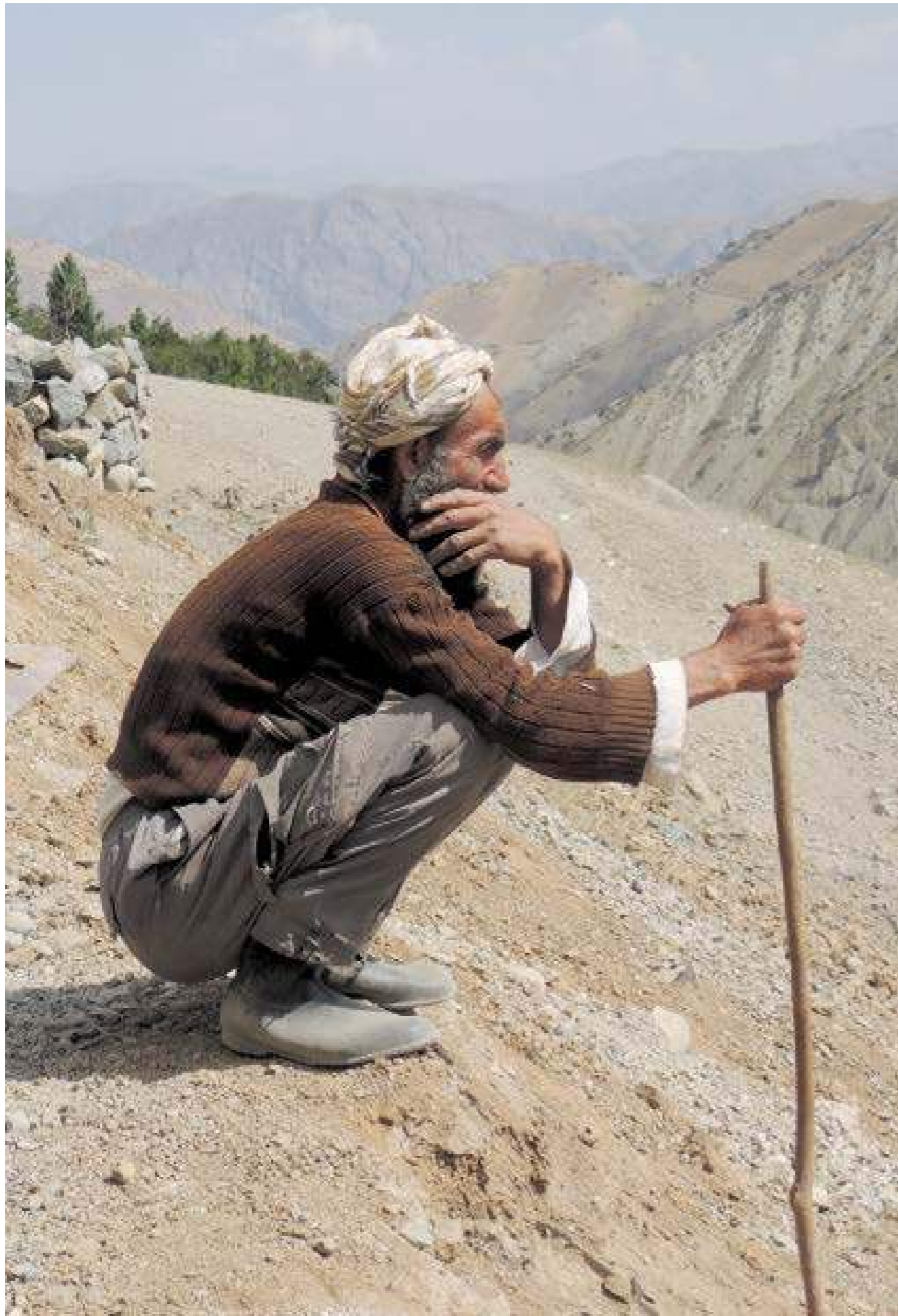


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Solidarity in action – the Norwegian Afghanistan Committee in 2013

A word from the secretary general and the country director

Afghanistan has seen significant improvements in quality of life. Access to education and healthcare has greatly increased the past few years. However, millions of Afghans in rural and remote areas remain without access to basic services. This is why NAC concentrates on rural development, with the aim of reducing poverty and improving livelihoods. We have started to shift our programmes from micro- to meso-level. This has not changed our focus. Whether we work directly with the communities or with local authorities to deliver support, our work will still benefit children, women and men in rural and remote communities.

In 2013, the Afghan Ministry of Public Health gave its highest marks in the assessment of the Community Midwifery School in Wardak and Community Health Nursing School in Laghman, in spite of the two schools being damaged when nearby government installations were attacked. NAC's education initiatives were lauded for their effective and sustainable approach in a recent publication by the Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre. It feels very encouraging to see that our development projects are useful and appreciated. However, our work is far from accomplished and we regard these compliments as a motivation to continue helping rural Afghans overcome the challenges they are confronted with in their everyday life.

Our successes depend on our employees and their partnership and cooperation with local populations, institutions and organisations. We would like to thank and honour our colleagues for their dedication, ability to learn, and willingness to take on new responsibilities as our programmes and organisation evolves. Transfer of knowledge and competence internally in our organisation is increasingly becoming our strength.

We also would like to thank our dedicated volunteers in Norway. Our model is unique, where an increasing number of highly competent volunteers contribute to development work, information and advocacy. We are proud to be still a member-based solidarity organisation, 34 years after our foundation.

Looking ahead, we are pleased to work with committed and responsible donors. Many fear for reduced development aid to Afghanistan. Long-term commitment and complex interventions are required in order to achieve sustainable results in Afghanistan. We hope to see fewer short-term programmes and a reduced focus on quick fixes to complex challenges. We would like to see Afghans in charge of the development of their own country. Without the interference of foreign actors with their own agendas, we believe that Afghans will find ways for peace and reconciliation. The Norwegian Afghanistan Committee has a long-term commitment to the Afghan people and will continue its efforts to reduce poverty and improve human rights.



Liv Kjølseth
Secretary General



Terje Watterdal
Country Director

Key achievements in 2013

During 2013 the Norwegian Afghanistan Committee (NAC) increasingly shifted its interventions from micro- to meso-level within its main focus areas of education, health, natural resource management and civil society. The new approach aims to enable local government structures and Afghan civil society actors in rural and remote areas to take a more leading and active role in the development processes of their communities. This will make development more democratic, inclusive, transparent and sustainable.

The second phase of the integrated rural development (IRD II) programme was launched in May after the successful completion of phase one. In 2014, it will be expanded to Faryab. NAC conducted a preparative study in Faryab with a team comprising 50% women. This is a first for Afghanistan and a major breakthrough for gender equity and equality within NAC. The success and sustainability of NAC's integrated approach to development is evident in Pist-e-Kalan village, three years after it was moved with NAC's assistance due to the imminent risk of landslides. The village is now thriving in a safer location on the other side of the valley.

The minister of public health recently stated that Afghanistan needs to double the number of midwives from current levels to further reduce maternal and infant mortality rates. NAC has trained 10% of all midwives in Afghanistan and in 2013, 58 new midwives graduated with NAC's support. The education of female health professionals remains a key priority for NAC. To our great delight, in 2013 renowned Norwegian journalist Kristin Solberg published *The school of life*, a critically acclaimed book that relates the stories of the brave students and staff of the NAC-run community midwifery school in Wardak.

NAC's girls' education programme has been a great success, leading to a 60% reduction in girl dropout and absenteeism. It was expanded to Balkh province in 2013. Thousands of girls in Badakhshan, Balkh and Ghazni have enrolled or been motivated to stay in school as a result of joint efforts by NAC, Norad, GIZ, local education departments, community development councils and schools.

The success of NAC's natural resource management programmes was praised by a senior Afghan government official, who stated that tree planting had helped reduce the damage in recent natural disasters in northern Afghanistan. In Ghazni, NAC's efforts are strengthening biodiversity, leading a rare species of turtles to return to their old habitat in the hills outside Ghazni city.

Civil society

NAC works with other development actors to strengthen institutional capacities of communities and districts to manage their own development activities on micro, meso and macro levels. 120 local and district administration structures in Badakhshan and Ghazni have been identified as partners. Capacity building started in 2013 and will be continued in 2014. NAC supports women in rural and remote communities to form self-help groups where they pool resources, save, borrow and share profits. 33 new groups were established in Badakhshan and Ghazni in 2013. Many of these groups now run successful businesses.

Education

NAC trained 60 teachers on creating inclusive and learning-friendly environments in their schools, working with families and communities, and ensuring that all children are in school and learning. These initiatives enjoy strong support and have led to increased enrolment of children and greater awareness about rights-based approaches to education. NAC supported girls' education in 71 schools in 9 districts in Badakhshan, Balkh and Ghazni. Awareness campaigns targeted local and district authorities, elders, mullahs, parents, teachers and students. Food was distributed to children in 223 schools to encourage parents to send children to school and to improve the children's nutritional status.

400 science teachers were given a refresher and update training, improving the quality of secondary education for 24,500 students, including 9,300 girls. School competitions were introduced to motivate youth to continue their studies, with 2,087 participants from Ghazni and 160 from Badakhshan. 50% of the participants were girls. 246 students benefited from preparation courses for university entrance exams. NAC was asked by UNESCO to conduct a study in Afghanistan as a part of their global citizenship education initiative. The research was presented at the World Forum in December. 81

principals and administrators and 1,283 members of parent-teacher associations received management training resulting in significant improvements in school enrolments and attendance. Four school buildings, housing 3,828 students, were renovated in 2013. NAC literacy programmes covered 300 widows, while 1,115 disadvantaged women and men received vocational training with the support of the World Food Programme (WFP).

Health

58 midwives completed their training in Jalalabad and Wardak. In a joint venture with SCA, NAC continued to support 24 community nurses studying in Laghman. NAC has witnessed an increase in interest among young women for midwifery and nursing education, especially in conservative communities, which proves the growing acceptance of these programmes.

In 2013, NAC supported the provision of safe drinking water for 5 schools and 43 communities in Badakhshan and Ghazni, benefiting 3,960 students and 3,840 households. More than 40 existing wells were fitted with new handpumps, improving the access to safe drinking water and reducing the occurrence of waterborne diseases.

NAC constructed latrines in five schools and renovated two more, improving the sanitary situation for 7,202 students. This is particularly important for keeping girls in school, as families are encouraged to know that their health, security and privacy is taken care of. NAC trained 130 hygiene promoters and provided 18,317 children in Ghazni and Badakhshan with treatment against intestinal worms. To prevent the children getting reinfected, NAC also provides repeated treatments. 220 women from ten villages were trained as community health promoters, each responsible for providing health education to 10-15 households. Over 2,000 households benefited from these initiatives.

Natural resource management

24 demonstration orchards were established and were used to train 280 farmers and 1,120 students in horticulture. NAC established two mother stock nurseries in 2013 with different species of fruit seedlings. 17 demonstration kitchen gardens were established, where 250 women have received training and vegetable seeds. Demonstration vegetable plots were established to introduce 256 farmers and 40 agriculture students to new species of vegetables. 60 local farmers were employed through this initiative. Potatoes are a vital crop for Afghan farmers. 54 farmers in Ghazni and 180 in Badakhshan learned how to better propagate and retain improved

potato seeds. NAC distributed 1,194 kg of improved potato seed to farmers. A saffron research plot was established, where 39 students and 2 teachers from Jaghori agriculture high school participated in the harvest as a part of their education. 250 widows were assisted in setting up home-based nurseries to raise tree saplings that will be planted in strategic locations to reduce the risk of natural disasters. NAC set up 10 demonstration nursery plots where they received practical training on how to mix soil, sand and manure to make fertile soil and how to irrigate to provide the right amount of water.

NAC assisted 11 schools in Ghazni to run environmental awareness campaigns, engaging over 2,400 students. They learned about the impacts of pollution, how to reduce pollution levels, and the importance of using natural resources in a sustainable manner. Similar initiatives will be implemented in other schools supported by NAC in 2014.

Preparing for natural disasters

NAC trained 1,777 men and 1,545 women in disaster response and management, increasing environmental and disaster awareness among local communities. Despite harsh rains and floods, the communities participated enthusiastically in the trainings.

NAC established community-based disaster risk management teams responsible for first-aid, logistics, search and rescue, and communication. The training was followed by realistic disaster simulations on community, district and provincial level to better prepare key stakeholders to successfully manage and respond to disasters. All these initiatives are implemented in close collaboration with key government and non-government stakeholders. During 2013, NAC built disaster response centres in Yawan and Kohistan districts of Badakhshan. In addition, NAC trained two masons from each community on earthquake-resistant building techniques.



Boys in Argo district in Badakhshan

Integrated rural development

Integrated rural development is a programme concept that covers the majority of NAC's activities. It means that we assist rural communities in achieving a sustainable improvement in living conditions in all aspects of daily life. The example of Pist-e-Kalan village demonstrates how the synergies between different aid sectors combine to address the basic needs of the population.

Why rural and remote areas?

Afghanistan has experienced great improvements in education and health, but the progress has bypassed a large number of those living outside the big cities. As many as 36 percent of all Afghans live in poverty, but the problem is most severe and widespread in rural areas. The poorest people include small-scale farmers, landless people and female heads of households. They lack access to clean water, sanitation, educational opportunities, health services and support from the government.

What does integrated mean?

An integrated work programme means that we focus on many sectors at the same time, because success in one sector can strengthen successes in other fields as well. Complex problems need complex solutions. An impoverished village needs help with many aspects of life and all of these are inter-related. Providing clean drinking water to a village does not only improve people's health. It also increases children's performance and attendance at school. Education for mothers improves the health of their children. And an irrigation system can do more than just provide water for agriculture; it can also reduce the risk of landslides and floods.

The beneficiaries

The IRD II programme targets more than 200 communities in seven districts in Badakhshan (Arghanchkhwah, Argo, Darayem, Kohistan, Raghistan, Yaftal-e-Payan and Yawan), two districts in Ghazni (Jaghori and Malistan), and starting in 2014, two districts in Faryab (Khawja Sabz Posh and Shirin Tagab). It aims to reach more than 200,000 direct beneficiaries in these three provinces by strengthening agriculture, providing alternative livelihoods, safeguarding the environment, strengthening community participation, improving basic education, literacy and health, empowering women and creating enhanced opportunities for rural communities.

Cross-cutting themes

Some themes are so important that they cannot be addressed in isolation from one another. NAC incorporates these themes into much of its work and tackles these challenges through diverse means and methods.

Strengthening livelihoods, food security and reducing poverty. NAC works on livelihood diversification, increasing agricultural productivity, incorporating new techniques such as improved varieties and new crops, and raising awareness.

Women's rights and situation in society and gender equality. NAC mainstreams gender and equal rights through our programmes by designing our interventions to ensure that women are included, and that they improve their chances to make a living and influence their communities' development.

Natural resource management, disaster risk reduction and preparedness. Climate change brings extreme weather and causes more natural catastrophes than before. NAC helps rural populations prepare to meet these, both by improving the management of the natural resources they rely on for agriculture, and by preventing and preparing for disasters that will invariably hit.



A farmer in Pist-e-Kalan, the village that was moved to safety.

Pist-e-Kalan: Moving from the edge of disaster

Pist-e-Kalan is a remote village in Yaftal-e-Payan district in Badakhshan, with around 840 inhabitants. A 2011 assessment of the risk of natural disasters in the area found a village that was nested on a steep hill of very unstable layers of gravel and mud. The whole village was at risk of being taken by a landslide and there was no way of mitigating the risk. After discussing the options and the risks, the local authorities, Pist-e-Kalan inhabitants and NAC agreed to move the whole village to a safe location nearby.

Building from scratch – a test of the integrated approach

The rebuilding of the village was the perfect example of the integrated approach. NAC's Badakhshan staff had to mobilise all their expertise in various fields in order to make this a success. All sectors would have to work together to give the Pist-e-Kalan community a better start in the new place than in the one they had left behind.

The needs were great and all-encompassing. To begin with, the ground had to be prepared, quite literally. The new location did not have a steady water supply at the same time as it suffered from seasonal flash floods that washed away most of the top soils. This made it extremely difficult for farmers to undertake any meaningful agriculture activities. Pist-e-Kalan was so remote that the population had poor access to education, health services, clean water and sanitation. The majority of the households lacked knowledge on improved farming techniques and there were no possibilities for women to earn an income. As the community was largely made up of income-poor families, they were unable to set up basic services without external support, including such essential elements as safe drinking water,

infrastructure for irrigation, school, healthcare and sanitary facilities.

Synergies give increased effect

By working in an integrated way, across sectoral divides, the combination of interventions created a greater and more sustainable impact than the sum of the individual components could alone. In addition, all activities were done in close consultation with the local population, who participated actively in the work. By employing under-employed men from the village to build houses and infrastructure, NAC built the capacity of the local community, as well as providing the families with an income.

All-encompassing needs

Improving the health and hygiene situation in the village relied on two very different outputs: infrastructure and awareness. One of the first and most critical steps was to provide a water supply. Together with the community members, NAC engineers constructed a water supply system with distribution points for safe drinking water. 50 latrines were also constructed. NAC's health team then trained female health awareness promoters

Mohammad Mirza, Pist-e-Kalan

"After we shifted from the old to the new settlement, we had nothing. No water for drinking or for irrigation, no schools or livelihoods. We started our new life in a new place with two empty hands, but NAC helped us a lot. We went from having nothing to being people with some dignity. I and the other villagers of Pist-e-Kalan cannot explain our immense gratitude to NAC. They helped us construct a water supply system for drinking water and irrigation. They organised a school for our children and improved the situation of the village women through literacy courses and self-help groups. NAC also implemented a number of different agriculture initiatives, helping our community stand on its own feet."





The old settlement, clinging to the side of the mountain.



The new settlement, in a much safer location.

who would teach their neighbours about hygiene and health. This was followed up with a series of hygiene promotion campaigns. This increased the population's knowledge of the importance of safe drinking water, food safety, and personal and environmental hygiene. All children under 14 have also been treated for intestinal worms twice a year since the move.

Protecting people and livelihoods

The new settlement was still vulnerable to flash floods, but this was averted by building a storm water diversion canal and an energy dissipater. Not only was this necessary to shield the village, but it also protects the fields and prevents the farmers' livelihoods from getting washed away. The infrastructure for disaster risk reduction thus protects the enormous effort put into helping Pist-e-Kalan farmers build the basis for subsistence agriculture. As a result, the community has greatly improved its food and nutritional security, which again helps them remain in good health.

Caring for nature, building agriculture

NAC has focused on transferring knowledge and practices on modern, but simple farming techniques. In NAC's demonstration vegetable plots, 50 women have learnt how to grow vegetables in their back yard and 63 farmers have received advice and seeds to grow fodder for their animals. Here, the villagers learn of new and improved vegetable varieties and the nutritional value of each of them.

In 2012 and 2013 NAC established watersheds and tree nurseries essential to social forestry. 2 orchards were filled with various fruit tree saplings and poplar nurseries with 5,000 cuttings. 16,000 saplings have been planted into nature to date, a forest that will help stabilise the ground and prevent further natural disasters.

Preparing for the worst case

Despite all preventive measures, the community also needed to strengthen its capacity to prepare for, mitigate and respond in the case of a natural disaster. Not only can extreme weather wreak havoc, but the area is also vulnerable to strong earthquakes. In 2011 and 2012, NAC established and trained community-based disaster response and management teams, one for men and another for women. The members were divided into sub-groups, to focus on search and rescue, first aid, and logistics.

In 2013 an awareness programme was conducted and the villagers' knowledge was tested in a disaster simulation exercise. Here, the population was faced with realistic disaster scenarios, evacuating "victims" including young children and pregnant women, caring for those wounded, while keeping control of all the available resources.

The village has its own stockpile of emergency equipment, including tents and blankets, first-aid kits, shovels and tools to rescue victims, and helmets for the rescue team. These are all kept in a newly constructed stockpile warehouse, especially fortified to withstand earthquakes. The construction of the house demonstrated a low-cost model of seismic-resistant buildings that could be replicated elsewhere in the village. On a daily basis, the stockpile warehouse does more than just house emergency supplies. It also serves as the school building for the youngest children.

Empowering women, educating children

75 children go to school in the village, the girls and boys who are unable to walk to the nearest school due to their young age or disabilities. NAC trained the teachers and provided teaching material, while the community provides classrooms. The majority of the students are now able to read and write simple



Pist-e-Kalan now has safe drinking water.



It is still necessary to be prepared for disasters.

sentences and do basic mathematics. 75 women have also learnt to read, write and do simple mathematics through NAC's literacy courses. Here, another synergy surfaces. Educating mothers has a positive effect on their children's health, research shows. It also strengthens the women's status in society.

As many women in rural Afghanistan, the women in Pist-e-Kalan suffer social and economic exclusion. NAC has therefore doubled up its literacy courses with activities for social and economic empowerment of women. They got the opportunity to organise in self-help groups, learning vocational skills such as tailoring and carpet-weaving, and pooling savings and investing group-funds to create business opportunities. By establishing kitchen gardens, they were able to help provide food for their families and preserve vegetables for the winter, some of which could be sold in the local market.

Sustainable success

Throughout the process NAC was aware that establishing and building was not enough. This remote community needed to have the knowledge

needed to maintain the success itself. In all infrastructure and construction, NAC employed local men and used materials available in the community. This built the knowledge and capacity of the local population to maintain its infrastructure and build new houses. The same principle applies to the health and hygiene promoters. By training local women to do the job, the knowledge is preserved in the village.

Water management committees were established to maintain the water points with minimal external support. The committees were able to mobilise community resources to stock up on spare parts. The ability of the committees to maintain the water supply system independently over the past three years has led to an uninterrupted supply of safe drinking water and a reduction in waterborne diseases. The newly established forestry management committee oversees the community-based plantations and nurseries and has proven its capacity to do so. With NAC's help, the community has organised collective committees to attend to its own needs on other areas in the same way. Pist-e-Kalan is now a thriving village community filled with hope and optimism for the future.



Local men were employed in the reconstruction.



These poplars will be planted into nature to prevent disasters.



Our work: Education

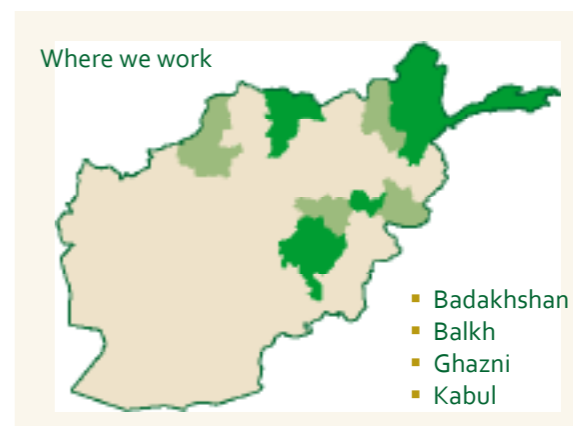
All NAC education activities aim to make rural communities able to provide children with the best education available and give adults opportunities to improve the lives of their families. Sustainability is what makes a project successful. This means building competence and knowledge in the rural communities. Therefore, we train local teachers so that the knowledge lives on in the village. And when renovating a school, we make sure to leave the local population with the knowledge of what it takes to maintain their school building for many years to come.

Parent-teacher associations

Central to sustainable education results, NAC works to strengthen the capacity of local communities to run and maintain their schools. In 2013, the NAC education teams revived and trained the parent-teacher associations (PTAs) in 40 schools in Ghazni and Badakhshan. The training covered the role of PTAs, community ownership of schools, and general capacity building. 301 men and 82 women were trained. Afterwards, the communities had a more positive attitude toward their local school, which led to a more proactive and constructive cooperation between school staff and parents in solving the school's problems. Finance committees in schools help run and maintain the schools and parents and the school staff meet on a regular basis.

School management training

NAC also holds management training workshops for the principals and administrators of local schools. In 2013, staff from 40 schools in Ghazni and Badakhshan, 74 men and 7 women, benefited from the training. According to NAC assessments, the training program brought positive changes in school management. The school principals now apply their new skills and knowledge in their daily work and try to solve all problems in a participatory manner. This helps them to create safe, inclusive and learning-friendly environments for the children and



strengthen the dialogue between parents, teachers, the local community and the school administration.

Subject knowledge courses

To improve the quality of secondary education, NAC conducts subject knowledge training for science teachers in Ghazni and Badakhshan. In 2013, 400 teachers, including 60 female teachers, were nominated by the local education departments to sit NAC's tailor-made training course. The course is intended to enhance and update the teachers' knowledge of mathematics, physics, chemistry, biology, geometry and trigonometry. This will ultimately benefit 24,500 students, including 9,300 girls, who sit the classes of these teachers.



School girl at a community-based school in Jaghori, Ghazni.



Men and women at a literacy course in Badakhshan.

Finally allowed to study despite disability

"I am Laila. I am 18 years old and hard of hearing. My family lives in Kata Sang village in Jaghori, Ghazni. We don't have much money. I have always really wanted to go to school, like all the other girls of our village, ever since I was a small child. But since I don't hear well, my family wouldn't allow me. You are deaf, they said, you cannot study. So I helped around the house and did some weaving. Three years ago, after insisting a lot, my family enrolled me in Faizia Girls High School. I started to go to school but I had difficulties hearing the teachers' voice and communicating with my classmates. My teachers and classmates didn't support me because they thought I should attend a special school for the deaf instead. Therefore I preferred to stop going to school. Luckily, this year the teachers who thought I should go to a special school, came back to ask me if I wanted to attend the school in my village. I am so happy that I can go to school now and gain knowledge."



Inclusive and child-friendly education

Inclusive and child friendly education is a way of ensuring that all children have equal access to quality education in their home communities regardless of their gender, health, disabilities or economic background. It is a methodology promoted by the Afghan Ministry of Education. NAC is helping schools in Ghazni and Badakhshan introduce inclusive education, by training teachers and school staff. In 2013, 60 educators learnt how to establish an inclusive and learning-friendly environment, work with families and communities, and get all children into school and learning. This coming school year the inclusive education teams will run programs to bring children back to school; the children who had left school because their needs weren't met or because they were excluded for other reasons.

Accelerated education

In the mountainous Badakhshan province, many children live so remotely that the distance to the nearest school prevents them from getting any education. To help these children bridge the gap, NAC set up classes for 50 children in some of the most remote areas of the province. Although they have been excluded from formal education for much too long, these children could make up for lost time through accelerated learning.

The NAC education team trained the teachers on accelerated education, provided teaching materials and technical support. After the classes, most of the students were able to read, write and count. After the successful completion of grade 4, the students will start grade 5 in 2014 and later join an age-appropriate class in the nearest government school.

School feeding

A daily school meal provides a strong incentive to send children to school and allows children to focus on their studies, rather than their stomachs. In partnership with the World Food Program (WFP), NAC distributed food to 223 schools in Badakhshan and Ghazni. High-energy biscuits are provided daily for all students. In addition, girls regularly receive cooking oil to bring home for their family. This is a special incentive for families to send girls to school. A close cooperation with community elders, parent-teacher associations, and local education authorities led to increased transparency, accountability and a reduction in conflicts around the food distribution. As a result of the school feeding program NAC witnessed increased enrolment, higher attendance and improved learning outcomes.

Academic competitions in secondary schools

In order to motivate students and bring the lessons to life, NAC launched school competitions on academic subjects in 2013. Students competed in natural sciences and language, both within their own schools and between schools in the same province. In Ghazni 2087 students from 10 different schools joined the competition, while 160 students competed in Badakhshan from both boys' and girls' upper secondary schools. The girls were just as eager as the boys to take part. Both in Badakhshan and Ghazni 50% of the contestants were girls.

The students were very enthusiastic and had a great time. A results assessment showed that the initiative was not only fun, but also very useful. A majority of the students improved their knowledge within natural sciences and languages.



Preparing for university entrance exams in Jaghori, Ghazni.



Playground at a secondary school in Ghazni

Physical school improvement

Many schools in areas where NAC operates have very modest buildings that do not provide an optimal learning environment for children. In 2013, NAC assisted 4 rural communities in Badakhshan and Ghazni in rebuilding or renovating their school buildings. In these four schools, NAC provided financial and technical support for the repair of walls, floors and roof, as well as the installation of new doors, windows and blackboards. The local PTAs participated actively in the renovation. After the completion, the responsibility for regular maintenance rests with the school authorities and staff, and the parents of school children. A total of 3,828 students will benefit from these school improvements. The schools were selected after an assessment of 10 school buildings, in close collaboration with the education authorities, the school staff and the PTAs.

The school day becomes much more fun when there is a playground where the children can play during recess. NAC built 4 playgrounds in 2013, all in Ghazni. In addition to all the children who enjoy playing there, underemployed men in the targeted communities were employed during the construction period.

Preparing for university entrance exams

Students who graduate from high school and want to continue their education must take a standardised competitive exam, the kankur exam, to secure a place at a university or college. However, students from rural and remote areas suffer an unfair disadvantage, as they have poorer access to quality science courses than students in urban areas. Helping these students improve their chances to enroll in higher education, NAC provides specialised courses, covering topics such as mathematics, physics, biology and chemistry. The students show extraordinary dedication, attending the courses after

a full school day, on top of other responsibilities that they may have in their homes. In 2013, the five-month-long course was offered to 246 students in grade 12, the final year of upper secondary school. The students practised by taking demonstration exams, which improve their chances to succeed and help reduce the stress on the big day.

Educational research

On behalf of UNESCO, NAC conducted a study called "learning to live together in Afghanistan". The research will feed into discussions among world leaders on an international agenda on education that will replace UNESCO's Education for all framework and the UN millennium development goals after 2015. The research themes included the socio-political context for education, vision, policy frameworks and institutional arrangements, curriculum, teachers, and an assessment of students. The research was presented at the World Forum on Global Citizenship Education in Bangkok. NAC participated in the forum, along with senior level education planners and activists from across the world.



Science teachers in Badakhshan at a refresher course in sciences.



Women at a literacy course in Jaghori, Ghazni.

Adult literacy courses

Being able to read and write can dramatically improve the opportunities and enhance the status of women in rural and remote areas. This is particularly significant where conservative cultural perceptions and views on women's role in society are deeply ingrained. To ensure increased sustainability and local ownership, NAC trains women who are hired locally in Badakhshan and Ghazni, who then provide literacy courses to other women in their areas. Not only does this entail that the knowledge and capacity lives on in the local communities, but the trainers also get an opportunity to make a living.

The literacy instructors learn teaching methods and are also trained to pass on important information to the women, covering topics such as nutrition and sanitation, domestic violence, gender and women's rights in Islam, the benefits of breastfeeding and the dangers of drug abuse. In 2013, NAC expanded its adult literacy programme to cover 300 widows from low-income backgrounds, who will also contribute to reforestation through NAC's foster mom project. After attending the nine-month-long course, 90 % of the women were able to read, write and do basic mathematics.



Women learning to sew and embroider clothes.



Sara Khan's carpentry skills now provide for the whole family.

Vocational skills training

With restricted access to jobs, income, land, and other resources, feeding a family becomes an everyday challenge in rural Afghanistan. With support from the World Food Program (WFP), NAC distributes food to those who participate in vocational training. The food rations mean that men and women can afford to spend the time learning a new skill, which will eventually bring a higher income, rather than relying on short-term jobs as unskilled labour.

After the groups for a vocational course have been chosen, they are typically included in the decision on which skill they would like to learn. This is very useful, because more often than not, those attending the course have already identified a market that they could break into, if only they had the right skill set. In 2013, NAC trained 1.115 income-poor women and men in Badakhshan and Ghazni. Typically, they learnt to make wares they could sell in the market, sewing clothes, weaving carpets or making furniture. Others learnt skills that would help them produce food for their own family or become more valuable agriculture labourers, such as designing and maintaining orchards or growing vegetables.



Carpentry skills are in high demand.

Getting the girls back to school

Many people in Afghanistan still hold traditional and conservative views on women's rights and girls' right to education. However NAC experience shows that effective awareness campaigns can change the perception of parents and communities. When they understand the importance of education in general, and education for girls in particular, families become much more willing to allow their girls to attend school. In the schools targeted by this campaign, 60% of the girls who were missing out on school have returned to the school bench.

In 2013, NAC worked with schools and communities in Badakhshan, Balkh and Ghazni to raise awareness of the importance of girls' education. The awareness campaigns provided relevant information and knowledge. Speakers included members of the community development councils and parent-teacher associations of local schools, community elders, district authorities, mullahs, schoolteachers and students. This broad group of speakers made it possible to approach the subject from different angles. While the

community elders and mullahs spoke of how the Quran encourages Muslims to get education and seek knowledge, education authorities emphasized that education is a human right for all children and that schools and communities have a legal responsibility to provide equal access to quality education for all. Students played a critical role in the campaigns, reciting poetry, conducting role-plays and performing songs illustrating the message.



Before the awareness campaign, girl dropout was significant.



Maryam decided to send her daughter back to school.

To make the change last, NAC has met extensively with those who can influence people's views and opinions. This is a diverse group, including officials, mullahs, elders and the mothers of girls in school age. After NAC's gender training, 109 mullahs in Balkh and Badakhshan promised to talk about the importance of education in the mosques, stressing that girls and boys have equal right to education. Local radio and TV stations contributed by recording and broadcasting discussions between decision-makers, male and female, on the equal right to education regardless of gender.

Maryam is one of the mothers who decided to send her girl back to school after NAC's campaign: "The school is far away from our village and our local custom says that when a girl gets older, she shouldn't walk outside alone. But then I learnt how important education is and that both boys and girls have an equal right to education. They encouraged us to send our daughters and sons to school, so I started with my own family. I went to the city myself and bought stationeries for my daughter. Hopefully one day she will become a teacher or a doctor."



Elders in Khulm, Balkh, discuss the benefits of education.



Meetings with authorities were broadcast on local media.

Our work: Human institutional development and civil society support

NAC has always focused its work on meeting the needs of rural Afghans. But there are different ways of assessing and responding to these needs. NAC is now moving from a micro to a meso-level approach to assessing needs and delivering support. Both are firmly grounded in the traditional and democratic structures of rural Afghan communities. At the same time, NAC builds the capacity of civil society organisations, which make sure that the voices of the population are heard and thus play an important role in making Afghanistan more democratic.

Strengthening local and district authorities

In 2013 NAC selected 120 community development councils (CDCs), cluster development committees (CLDCs) and district development assemblies (DDAs) in Badakhshan and Ghazni for a capacity building program. After assessing what type of support these groups need, NAC will help them develop the skills they need to fulfil the roles they have been endorsed with. In 2013, NAC worked with the community development councils, to assist communities with everything from health, education, food security, natural resource management to disaster risk reduction. In cooperation with the community development councils NAC provided training to community based structures, such as training the parent-teacher associations on how best to run and maintain their local school.

The disaster risk reduction and management sector is a good example to explain the difference. In Badakhshan, NAC has helped build a system for disaster risk management and response that ranges from the communities to the district-level and, in this case, even up to the provincial authorities. The building blocks of this system range from risk management teams at the community level, via district disaster management committees, up to the provincial disaster management committee. In total, this meant training 2698 people at the various levels.

Each building block in this system has a different role, but all are just as necessary when disaster hits. Whereas the risk management teams in the villages will be the first response with rescue and first aid, the authorities higher up will coordinate and make sure help gets where it needs to go.

Acronyms untangled: CDCs, CLDCs and DDAs

The CDCs are a group of local people, who play a key role in defining the community's needs and priorities for development aid. Although varying in size, a rule of thumb is that a CDC represents some tens of families. The cluster community development councils (CLDCs) are a gathering of up to 10 CDCs, coordinating aid and administration over a larger area and a larger group of people. Above these sit the district development authorities (DDAs), coordinating work at the district level.

The micro-level, in other words, means working directly with the people who benefit from the assistance. The meso-level approach is a slightly different methodology. Gradually adopting that approach, NAC will start to work with higher levels of the local administration, building their capacity to run an effective administration that answers to the people and provides to the local needs. In either case, NAC's assistance will continue to benefit children, women and men in rural and remote Afghanistan and will always take into account what the people really need.



NAC discusses needs with one of the community development councils.



The self-help groups learn to organise themselves to make a living.



Tailoring and embroidery are a part of the skills they can learn.

Civil society

By providing an effective counterweight to government authorities, civil society strengthens the democratic dialogue and secures the participation of different interest groups within a community. Civil society thus plays a vital role in improving the quality of life and living standards of the Afghan population. NAC believes that a strong and vibrant civil society arena is a crucial factor to make sure that the needs and wishes of the entire population, including women, shape development initiatives.

Building capacity of civil society organisations

The Badakhshan Development Forum (BDF) and the Badakhshan Civil Society Forum (BCSF) are two of the most important coordinating mechanisms for civil society and development work in Badakhshan. The BCSF is a network of NGOs that fosters dialogue between the main development actors, including the government and private sector. NAC coordinates its work and training plans with these organisations. NAC also supported the development of the forum's civil society centre, which houses valuable training material for Afghan NGOs.

At the national level NAC helped the Afghanistan Midwives' Association (AMA) improve its organisational and technical capacity. AMA is both the labour union of Afghan midwives and a central actor in building the capacity of midwives and spreading awareness on maternal health and safe births.

Self-help groups for women

Widows in rural Afghanistan often face difficulties in securing an income, as there are limited opportunities for women to work outside their

homes in rural Afghanistan. Capital is very hard to come by, making it difficult to buy a sewing machine or a weaving loom to produce sellable products within the home's four walls. To overcome these obstacles NAC helps women to form self-help groups to coordinate their common interest, pool resources together, save, borrow and share profits among themselves. This approach is guided by a strong belief that change can be brought through collective efforts.

In 2013 NAC established 33 self-help groups in Badakhshan and Ghazni. 20% of the groups are now running businesses in their communities. Each group consists typically of 10-12 income-poor women. NAC provides them with an opportunity to acquire vocational skills, letting them have a say in which skills will be most useful. This may be baking, weaving carpets, sewing clothes, knitting, preserving vegetables, collecting and selling nuts or buying and reselling goods. The women know the needs and demands of their communities and have a good eye for potential business opportunities in their area.

In order to further strengthen and enhance the self-help groups' capacity NAC conducted a one-day refresher training for well established groups. The training focused on business management skills and the overall management of self-help groups processes, including record keeping, leadership, group management and meeting procedures.

The self-help group project can be a hard one to sell. Some communities have been hesitant to participate in the programme. Getting key community leaders to rally behind the programme often requires an extensive effort, as well as making women aware of the benefits that they can expect from participating. However, in areas where the self-help groups have fared well, NAC receives requests to expand the program into neighbouring communities.

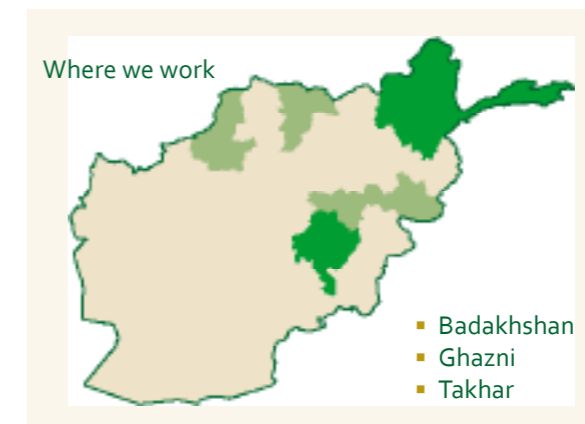


Our work: Health

NAC's work in the health sector rests on two pillars: the education of female health workers, both midwives and nurses, and the promotion of public health in rural and remote areas. These are two paths that lead to the same results: better health for rural Afghans. Women play a central role in both pillars, providing care and spreading knowledge. They are also some of the biggest beneficiaries, as maternal mortality has been reduced immensely in recent years.

The number of midwives in Afghanistan has increased sevenfold since 2001. NAC trains midwives in Nangarhar and Wardak, and nurses in Laghman. Most of these are women who come from rural areas themselves, have seen the dire need for skilled healthcare professionals, and are dedicated to bring their knowledge and expertise back to their home areas. Having a skilled healthcare worker within reach is vital for both men, women and children, but it is particularly important to promote maternal and infant health in rural communities. The knowledge to save lives and help women in labour gives midwives a unique standing and respect in a conservative society, which is opening doors for other women.

Public health promotion in rural and remote communities is also a key component of the integrated rural development (IRD) programme. In Ghazni and Badakhshan NAC works to spread knowledge on nutrition, hygiene, vaccination and other health issues in rural and remote communities. To ensure the sustainability of these efforts NAC



trains both school teachers and other women in the local community to promote good sanitary practices and an effective response to common diseases. Improvement of infrastructure such as water wells and sanitation facilities is another important focus area. Easy access to clean drinking water and improved hygiene practices significantly reduce the prevalence of waterborne diseases.

Nazia's story: Saving the life of a woman in labour

"When I was one year old, my mother died from eclampsia during childbirth. At the time, there were very few clinics in Wardak. My mother had to be carried to a hospital in Logar, the neighbouring province, but when they got there, both my mother and my baby sister had died. My father remarried and my stepmother happened to be a midwife. When I saw her help pregnant women, I wished that one day I could also do the same.

One night during my studies, a pregnant woman was brought to the hospital. She had high blood pressure, her body was swollen and she was having convulsions, – the same symptoms my mother had had 20 years ago. I was so worried about her; I thought she would die. With help from my supervisor, a midwife and a doctor, I gave her oxygen, intravenous fluid and the injections she needed. I stayed with her the whole night and monitored her condition. Her blood pressure stabilised, she gave birth to a beautiful baby boy and recovered quickly.



Now that we are graduating, I will soon be helping mothers in the rural and remote areas of Wardak province give birth to a new generation of Afghan girls and boys. Dr. Khadija told me that I am now a white-coated angel. That makes me proud and humble, all at the same time."

Health: Educating midwives and nurses

Access to skilled female healthcare professionals is vital to the reduction of maternal and infant mortality. NAC provides midwifery education both for hospital and community midwives. In 2013, 34 hospital midwives and 24 community midwives completed their two year course in Jalalabad, Nangarhar province, and Maidan Shahr, Wardak province. Both rank among the best healthcare schools in Afghanistan according to the Ministry of Public Health. NAC runs the schools in collaboration with FOKUS, the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA) and the Norwegian Association of Midwives. 31 students from 5 different provinces joined the midwifery school in Jalalabad late 2013, while the next class in Maidan Shahr will start their studies mid 2014.

The midwives who have previously graduated from these programmes now work in government health facilities in their home provinces, either district and provincial hospitals or smaller community-based health facilities. In addition to assisting women give birth, they also raise awareness on safe motherhood and reproductive health.

During their two-year education, the midwifery students learn how to care for women during pregnancy as well as during and after birth. Not only do they study the physiology of pregnancy and birth, nutrition, hygiene and how to prevent common diseases, but they also learn to approach culturally sensitive issues such as family planning, which can help reduce maternal mortality. The NAC-designed extra-curricular programme includes women and children's rights, conflict resolution, as well as

dialogue and non-violent communication. In 2012, NAC launched a new education programme for 24 community nurses in Mehtar-Lam, the provincial capital of Laghman in a joint venture with the SCA. The students are all young women from remote districts in Laghman. They will attend a 24-month-long course before returning to their home communities and districts to provide basic healthcare services.

Changing attitudes

Families from some of the more traditional and conservative communities in Afghanistan are often reluctant to send their girls to continue their education outside the home village, where they will have to stay away from the protection of their families. When NAC started supporting the hospital midwifery education in Jalalabad in 2002, it was difficult to recruit students, particularly from remote areas. Eleven years later, many families are eager to send their daughters to midwifery school. Traditionally, few young and unmarried women are permitted by their families to work outside the home. However, as rural communities see the benefits of having skilled female health workers at hand, working as a midwife or nurse is increasingly accepted.

The Afghan Midwives Association (AMA) plays a central role in changing these attitudes. Established in 2004, it is the first Afghan labour movement for women. Cooperating with the Norwegian Association of Midwives, NAC works to strengthen AMA's organisational and leadership capacities.



Training in the community midwifery school in Wardak



A young woman graduating as a midwife in Jalalabad



Health: Public health in rural areas

Hygiene and health education

One of the key components of the NAC health programme builds the capacity of communities to raise awareness about good hygiene practices. In 2013, NAC trained 130 hygiene promoters in communities and schools in Badakhshan and Ghazni provinces. The training covers topics such as personal hygiene, waterborne diseases, safe drinking water, waste disposal, the importance of vaccinations, breast feeding, child nutrition and family planning. Many of the health and hygiene promoters are teachers at the local schools. They visit families at least once or twice a month to encourage and support them in practicing what they have learned through campaigns and training. Pictures and illustrations play a big role in the communication, as a majority of the population has little or no formal education.

Female community health promoters

The most effective way to bring information on health and hygiene into families is through trained female community members. They have unparalleled access to homes and to families, which no outsider could ever have. This enables them to

spread information more effectively than a visiting NGO worker could ever do.

The role of the female community health promoters is to increase health awareness and to encourage people to use the available health services. The aim is to build a strong information and referral system that will help community health workers attend to pregnancies, births, family planning and illness.

During 2013, NAC trained 220 women from ten villages in Ghazni and three villages in Badakhshan. The women are carefully selected as they need to enjoy a certain respect in their communities to effectively deliver information. They also need to be willing to work on a voluntary basis, taking responsibility for 10-15 households. Most of the women are also mothers themselves, which gives them the status and weight to carry this important message. The community health promoters received training from NAC on various themes including reproductive health, antenatal and post-natal care, the benefits of breastfeeding, family planning, vaccination, nutrition and hygiene practices, and referring patients to health facilities. At least 2,000 households have received visits by the health promoters.

Community health promoters save lives: Hafiza's story

Hafiza is 26 years old, the mother of three children and one of NAC's female community health promoters. Born and raised in Takhar Province, she got married at the age of 16 and left her hometown for the neighbouring Badakhshan province, where her husband's family lives.

"Through the training provided by NAC, I learned very valuable skills to help the people in my community stay healthy. I learned to identify the symptoms of pregnancy complications, how to prevent illness by improving personal hygiene and how to keep drinking water clean and safe. I now refer children and pregnant women to vaccination and teach women about safe motherhood and post-natal care. When we get ill we now know that we should go to a health facility.

I was once asked to help a woman who was struggling to give birth. I saw that the baby's head was already out, but the woman didn't have any contractions. The family had bought an oxytocin injection, which can be very dangerous for both mother and baby if used incorrectly. They wanted me to give her the injection but I refused and advised them to bring her to the Keshem district hospital instead. They agreed. At the

hospital, she was able to deliver her baby, and six hours later we returned to the village. The whole family was very happy and grateful for my help in assuring a safe delivery. I hope to keep passing on the knowledge and skills that I have learned to those who need it."



With improved sanitary practices, fewer students miss out on school

"I am Kamila Haqjo, the principal of Posht Chob High School in Jaghori district in Ghazni province. NAC supported the school in building latrines for the students and the teachers, and worked with teachers to raise awareness among the students on good hygiene practices.

We have witnessed significant positive changes in our school. The number of students suffering from diarrhoea has reduced substantially. The school environment is always clean nowadays; a clear sign that the students learned a lot from the campaigns. A total of 1,159 students and 37 teachers benefited from the programme in our school. I have been advocating at the Ministry of Education to introduce latrines and the promotion of good hygiene practices in other schools. The idea to recruit local labourers for the construction of the latrines also helped some of the community members to provide an income to support their families."



Infrastructure for health

Safe drinking water is essential to good health but many of the communities and schools where NAC works have never had a safe water source. People have had to walk far to fetch water, often from unprotected and polluted water sources. Fetching water is often a chore that women and children do, increasing their exposure to waterborne diseases. In communities where wells have been dug, water pumps have been installed and clean drinking water is now available, the general health has improved. In these communities, men and women are trained and provided with the tools for maintaining their new water infrastructure.

In 2013 NAC provided safe drinking water for 5 schools and 43 communities in Badakhshan and Ghazni provinces, benefiting 3,960 students and 3,840 households. More than 40 existing wells have also been improved and fitted with new hand pumps. The construction of new wells and improvement of existing wells has significantly reduced the prevalence of waterborne diseases and dehydration among both children and adults in rural and remote communities in the targeted districts in Badakhshan and Ghazni.

Latrine construction

In 2013, NAC built latrines in five schools and renovated two more. In total, this improved the sanitary situation for 7,202 students. Before this intervention teachers and school-children either used unprotected latrines or open spaces for defecation, both sources of diseases and contributors to a pollution of the environment in schools and

communities. If a school lacks proper sanitation facilities, many parents get concerned for their daughters' health, privacy and safety. Girls and female teachers have especially benefited from the new and renovated latrines as it enables them to stay healthy and attend school.

Treating intestinal worms

Intestinal worms are a common problem for children throughout Afghanistan. The worms affect the children's digestive systems with serious consequences for their physical, social, emotional and cognitive development. NAC has therefore provided deworming medicine for 18,317 school children in Ghazni and Badakhshan. Drugs against intestinal worms are very effective but re-infection within 6 to 12 months is very common. Therefore, NAC offers children repeated treatments in collaboration with the departments of education in the targeted provinces and districts.



A NAC staff member explains to children in Badakhshan how to take the deworming medicine.

Our work: Natural resource management

Sustainable management of the natural environment has long been a key focus for NAC. Around 80% of the Afghan population live in the countryside and most of these rely on agriculture, at least to some extent, to feed themselves and their families. Good natural resource management also produces other results. The sustainable management of pastures contributes to food security, and thereby to better health. And reforestation and water management can greatly reduce the risk of natural hazards.

Vegetable gardens

Women in rural Afghanistan have limited possibilities to work outside the home, therefore NAC provides them with the knowledge to produce food in kitchen gardens in their own backyard. In 2013, NAC established 4 demonstration kitchen gardens in Ghazni and 13 in Badakhshan, where the women could learn basic horticultural techniques. 250 women received training and were given a start-up package with various vegetable seeds, such as onion, cucumber, leek, radish, coriander, spinach, lettuce and tomato. Some of the vegetables were completely new to the women. Therefore, they also got advice on how to cook the new vegetables and information about the nutritional value of fresh vegetables. NAC also trains women in how to preserve vegetables.

NAC also established larger demonstration vegetable plots, to help farmers achieve large scale commercial vegetable production. In 2013, NAC established 4 such vegetable plots in Ghazni and 13 in Badakhshan. The demonstration plots served as a training ground for 256 farmers and 40 students from the provincial agricultural faculty.

NAC strives to introduce new, adoptable and high



yielding species of vegetable seed to farmers. In order to anchor the knowledge locally and create employment, 60 farmers from the area have been employed in the set-up and management of the vegetable plots. Thus they have acquired the technical skills that will allow them to establish their own commercial scale vegetable plots.

The small and large demonstration plots have become one of NAC's more popular initiatives. Some neighbouring villages have already established their own gardens through this initiative.



Many women grow both vegetables and tree saplings for reforestation. Examining onions from a vegetable demonstration plot.

Learning the necessary skills to maintain an orchard

"My name is Mohammad Ali. I live in Tabqus village in Jaghori district, Ghazni province. Four years ago, I planted close to 300 apple tree saplings, establishing my own orchard. Unfortunately, I did not have any idea how to manage or prune an orchard. No one in our village knew either, so we had to get someone from outside the village to do it for us.

But then we learnt of NAC's training programme for orchard management. I spoke with all the farmers of the village and 33 of them participated in the training. We learnt about orchard layout, plantation, treatment, pruning and grafting. We even made a video clip during the training. We are very happy with the knowledge we gained from the training. This year, we pruned our orchards ourselves and my son even helped other farmers with their orchards."



Horticulture development

Afghanistan has long been famed for its fruit and orchards. However, decades of insecurity have left many of the orchards in disarray. Through its demonstration orchards, NAC restores the orchard tradition and updates farmers on modern-day horticultural practices. In 2013, NAC established 24 orchards for farmers and schools. In most of these, apples are the dominant fruit type, along with pears and apricots. In 2013, 280 farmers and 1120 students underwent training on orchard layout, pruning, grafting, and pest and disease control, and got to know new fruit varieties. By the end of the year, 10% of the farmers had replicated the techniques they had learnt. Others will no doubt follow suit.

In 2013, NAC established two mother stock nurseries in Ghazni in order to raise saplings from fruit seeds. These contained seedlings of apple, apricot, almond, cherry, pear and peach trees.

Environmental awareness raising

With NAC's assistance, 11 schools in Ghazni ran environmental awareness campaigns, engaging over 2400 students. The students worked with topics such as the impacts of environmental pollution on human and animals, how to reduce pollution and the importance of using natural resources in a sustainable manner. Given the success of the Ghazni school campaigns, similar campaign will be run in other NAC-supported schools in Badakhshan, when a new school year starts there.

NAC also ran environmental awareness campaigns aimed at the communities at large. These campaigns covered pollution, reforestation and sustainable management of natural resources, and provided the communities with simple equipment to start

improving waste management, such as trash cans in the bazars, wheelbarrows and shovels.

Maintenance of the Rawza watersheds

The Rawza watersheds in Ghazni provide water for around 40,000 people. They were built by NAC in 2008 and were up for some regular maintenance in 2013. This included irrigation, repairing the terraces around the watersheds, mulching, pruning and planting 14,290 saplings in the watersheds.

The rehabilitation has had significant results. Wild life returned to the watersheds and the risk of floods, soil erosion and landslides has been greatly reduced, as an area of 100 hectares is now completely covered by vegetation. A part of the watershed has even been turned into an amusement site.

Livestock development

In cooperation with the Dutch Committee for Afghanistan, NAC conducted an awareness campaign for livestock vaccination in 25 villages in Ghazni. The training was aimed at elders and community leaders. NAC also trained 2 persons from Malistan and Jaghori districts in Ghazni to do veterinary work.

Potato production

Potatoes are a vital crop in subsistence farming in rural Afghanistan. NAC has been promoting improved agronomic practices and introducing high yielding potato varieties to farmers for several years. In 2013, 54 farmers in Ghazni and 180 in Badakhshan received training in new techniques to propagate and retain potato seed for the coming year. All in all, NAC distributed well over a tonne (1194 kg) of improved potato seed in the two provinces.

Participatory technology development

Participatory technology development (PTD) is an approach that advances rural communities' internal capacity to develop innovations that meet their needs and are functional in the society where they live and work. The aim of the PTD groups is to introduce or further develop a practical technique to suit local conditions. In 2013, the focus has been on saffron growing, bio briquettes for heating and cooking, urea treatment of wheat straw for fodder, and the construction of brick fridges. In a 2013 evaluation of the previous year's PTD groups, 35% of the farmers had replicated techniques they had learned in the course of 2012.

NAC's staff in Jaghori, Ghazni established a saffron research plot to develop a set of best practices for growing saffron in this area. In Badakhshan 42 farmers have been working on urea treatment that breaks down fibres in cereal straw so that it can be used as animal fodder. 184 farmers in 9 groups have been perfecting techniques on grafting fruit tree saplings.

One group of Jaghori farmers worked on constructing brick fridges following a Nepalese design. A fridge for one family only requires around 500 bricks or stones, some sand, a water hose and a plastic bucket. In Badakhshan and Ghazni, 175 women in 7 groups worked on techniques to produce bio briquettes from local organic materials. These briquettes are a more efficient heat source for cooking and heating, and better for the environment than collecting firewood in the forests.

Research and best practices

In 2013, NAC signed an agreement with Jaghori Department of Agriculture Irrigation and Livestock for coordination on developing best practices and new techniques in agriculture. As a part of this cooperation, staff and students from Jaghori Agriculture High School participated in the



Perfecting techniques to make bio briquettes for cooking and heating.

establishment and harvesting from NAC's saffron research plot. They also cultivated various species of vegetables and planted tree seeds of species like walnut, pistachio, takhom trees and sea buckthorn.

Forestry

By planting forest in strategic locations, communities in mountainous areas can reduce the risk of landslides and other natural hazards, a risk that has been exacerbated by deforestation in recent decades. NAC helps these efforts by paying local women to foster up saplings through the foster mum project, advising on the best places to plant the saplings to prevent natural hazards and by spreading knowledge about the importance of reforestation.

NAC's long-standing 'foster mum' project combines natural resource management, food security and livelihood skills. In 2013, 250 families in Ghazni and Badakhshan, mostly widows supporting several children, got assistance in setting up home-based nurseries. NAC set up 10 demonstration nursery plots where the women get trained to mix soil, sand and manure to make the most fertile soil, and to set up irrigation to provide just the right amount of water. They then receive saplings for four different tree species, including fruit trees, and get paid to foster up tree saplings that are to be planted into nature. For their work, the women are able to gain an income without challenging conservative norms whereby women are not encouraged to work outside the home. The foster moms earned on average 8600 Afghani (\$150) which is a significant contribution to the household income.

In 2013, NAC also established two temporary nurseries in Ghazni and five in Argo, Darayem and Yaftal-e-Payan districts of Badakhshan province. These temporary nurseries will produce all the saplings required for next year's tree plantation campaigns.



Apples that are packaged properly fetch a higher price at the market.



Our work: Disaster risk reduction

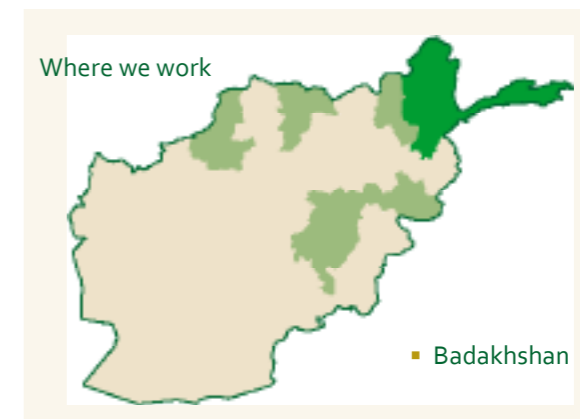
The mountainous Badakshan province is particularly prone to natural hazards, such as earthquakes, flash floods, drought, landslides and avalanches. NAC's activities cover many fields, but training and capacity building is a common feature of them all. The local population regularly trains responses to disaster: searching for victims, rescuing them out of house ruins and giving first aid. In addition, local masons are taught how to build earthquake resistant houses.

Response in the face of disaster

70% of Badakshan's population is cut off from road connection during wintertime, some villages for as long as six months a year. NAC supports these villages to be self-sufficient in both preparing for and responding to natural hazards.

Local ownership and participation is a key element of all disaster preparedness. NAC's experts begin with a rapid assessment of a village and its environment, identifying potential risks. Working with village elders and those who know the area best, NAC's experts map natural hazards and construct a response plan. This group gets a seven-day training on the preventive value of natural resource management; how forests, pastures and watersheds reduce the risk and the impact of natural hazards.

Then follows the main training round, where the communities train disaster response for three days. In a culturally sensitive way, the training stresses that both women and men must respond in disasters. Male and female disaster response groups are instructed on which roles to take, with women taking responsibility for helping other women. In addition, each group gets different tasks, with one taking responsibility for first aid, while others do search and rescue or logistics. 120 training sessions were held in 2013 for 1,777 men and 1,545 women.



This is followed up with a refresher training that recaps the practical training on first aid and search and rescue techniques, but also adds a stronger focus on coordination, planning and decision making. 5,497 community members received this training in 2013.

Training by disaster simulation

In simulation exercises the population enacts and responds to a simulated but realistic disaster scenario. In each community, the scenario was customised and based on the actual hazards that the community faces. Most commonly, the communities were presented with a flood scenario, while other villages simulated landslides, earthquakes, avalanches or rockfall.



Rescuing "victims" at an exercise in Argo, Badakshan.



In the case of disaster, women will rescue and care for other women.



Making a plan for disaster response in Yaftal-e-Payan, Badakhshan.



Local masons were taught to build earthquake resistant houses.

Evaluating the response

Simulating disaster response in this way helped the communities identify what needs they had and where they needed to improve their response or top up on equipment. The participants were asked to evaluate the simulation and identify gaps in response management, emerging lessons and recommendations for reducing risks. Many mentioned first aid material and equipment for search and rescue or communication. Others pointed to the need for more posters to explain and remind the population of the correct response.

Provincial coordination

When a crisis situation occurs, it is equally important that the authorities at the district and provincial level are prepared for it. A natural disaster is rarely as completely isolated and localised as one may think. An earthquake will hit a whole region in one strike and floods and landslides often occur in many places at the same time, as extreme weather washes over the area. Therefore, in addition to training at the local level, NAC also does capacity building at the district and provincial level. These are the authorities that will need to have the oversight and capacity to coordinate the disaster response in several places at the same time.

NAC participates in the DRR working group, with other organisations, to strengthen the capacity of stakeholders at the provincial level. These include the provincial governor, the Afghan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA), and the provincial disaster management committee (PDMC). NAC also conducted a one day workshop for ANDMA, PDMC and government departments, aimed at sharing experiences among stakeholders. Through the DRR working group NAC has also given technical support to ANDMA and the governor's office, such as risk assessment and imagery base maps at the district and provincial level.

Summer drought events

Badakhshan suffers both from an excess of water, causing floods and landslides, and water shortages in summer. NAC has conducted a drought zoning assessment for the most vulnerable communities, in order to map the risk and frequency of summer drought. Through the assessment, NAC identified the five most vulnerable communities and developed a drought coping mechanism for these. NAC also conducted social water management training for four communities and built awareness around the importance of watersheds, reforestation and the good management of pastureland in reducing the occurrence and impact of natural hazards.

Infrastructure for prevention and preparation

The communities where NAC implements DRR and other projects are physically vulnerable a variety of natural disasters: floods, avalanches, landslides, rock fall and earthquakes, to name a few. Some are unavoidable, but other hazards can be prevented with the correct infrastructure. Most of these aim to divert excessive water or stabilise the unstable earth layers that would otherwise threaten to swipe away houses, fields, roads, and people's lives. NAC therefore helps communities build protection walls, dig water diversion canals and establish watersheds, and plant forest. Most of the communities we work with are income-poor and have neither the knowledge nor the resources to do these things by themselves. But when NAC provides assistance, the villagers are eager to contribute with their time and work.

In 2013, NAC also built two disaster response centres in Yawan and Kohistan districts in Badakhshan. NAC trained two masons from each community on building the earthquake resistant houses from local materials. All of the other skilled and non-skilled labourers on the construction site were also locals.



Our work: Advocacy and information

Being a Norwegian organisation, NAC's main target groups are the Norwegian population and decision makers. The main goals are to keep Afghanistan high on the agenda and Norwegian politicians accountable for their political actions.

Core activities

Our information and advocacy work is coordinated by the Oslo office, but with support from our staff in Afghanistan and volunteers in Norway. Influence and outreach guide the choice of information and advocacy activities. In 2013 some of our main activities were:

- Meetings with decision makers
- Open meetings: seminars and workshops
- Press work
- Web page and Facebook
- Publications
- Teaching programmes for school classes of all ages

Advocacy

NAC's head office in Oslo coordinates the network of Norwegian organisations working in and with Afghanistan. The aim of this network is to align advocacy efforts targeting Norwegian decision makers.

During Sima Samar's visit in Norway in April, she and NAC's staff in Oslo had meetings in the Norwegian Parliament and with Espen Barth Eide, Minister of Foreign Affairs. The main topics for the meetings were the international support to Afghanistan, the upcoming presidential and provincial elections, the education sector in Afghanistan, and the challenges and insecurity connected with the withdrawal of the international military forces.

In October 2013, the NAC Oslo office led the network in a very effective advocacy process in the Norwegian parliament. The main message was that the planned cut in bilateral aid by 50 million NOK should not affect the total aid to Afghanistan, but that the funds should rather be channeled through other actors.

NAC rallied the other organisations to support its message: that although the cut in bilateral aid was justified by lacking implementation, this should not affect the overall aid to Afghanistan. "This is not the right time to cut aid to Afghanistan," Liv Kjølseth, NAC's Secretary General told the Standing



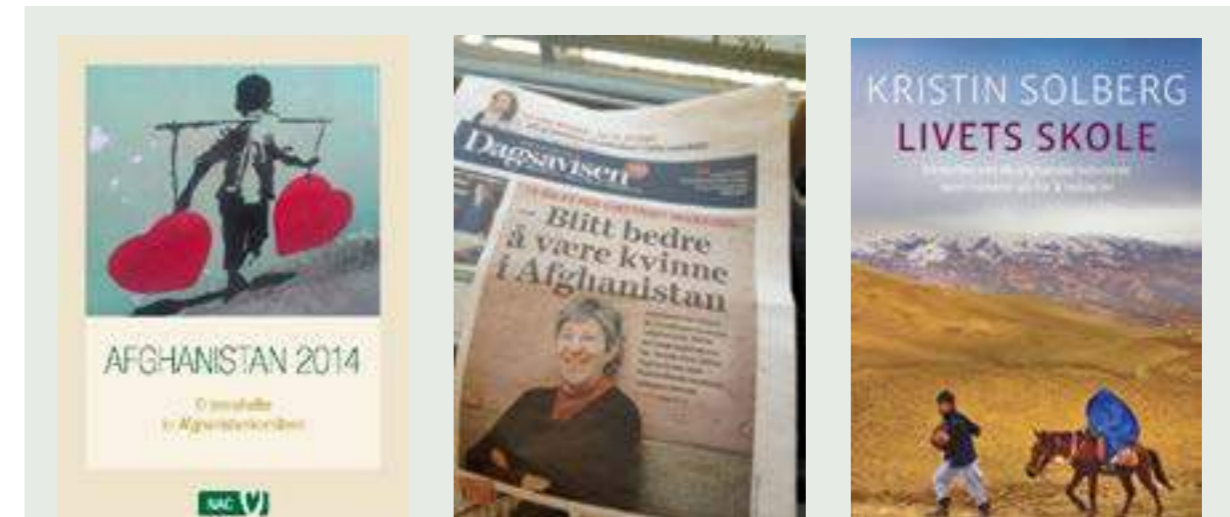
Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defense at an open hearing. "Instead of cutting the money from the Afghanistan budget altogether, the amount should be moved to other budget posts and channeled through non-state implementing partners working on women's rights or strengthening civil society".

The message got through to the parliamentarians, who made a specific mention of the Norwegian organisations' work and their combined message, in the standing committee's recommendation to the parliament. That is a sign of a powerful message that is heard and accepted by the politicians.

Book about the students at the midwifery school in Wardak

In October 2013, renowned Norwegian journalist Kristin Solberg published *The school of life*, a critically acclaimed book that relates the stories of the brave students and staff of the NAC-run community midwifery school in Wardak. The main character is our employee Dr Kadija. Her courage, persistence and visions have impressed and inspired Norwegian readers.

The book's launch was an opportunity to draw attention to maternal health in Afghanistan, particularly the huge needs in the Afghan countryside. The Oslo office arranged a book evening at Tronsmo bookstore in Oslo, wrote a review and ran a fundraising campaign.



NAC's goal is to get Afghanistan higher on the agenda in Norwegian media and society, using many different methods and channels.



The webpage gives an updated overview over our work, while the Facebook page raises commitment through frequent postings.

Sima Samar's visit to Norway

Together with other Norwegian organisations, NAC invited Sima Samar to Oslo. NAC's head office in Oslo coordinated her visit. Her reputation as a human rights advocate is well known worldwide. Having her in Norway made it possible to draw media's attention to Afghanistan and to have important meetings with Norwegian decision makers, both diplomats and parliamentarians.

Norwegian media did an extensive coverage during her visit. She was on the front page of one of Norway's biggest newspapers Dagsavisen and was interviewed on URIX at NRK1, the most important foreign affairs programme on Norwegian television. She visited a Norwegian school and contributed to a workshop with young Afghans in Norway with the topic "How can we contribute to peace and development in Afghanistan?" She also participated in two seminars, at Litteraturhuset in Oslo, and at The Nansen Centre for Peace and Dialogue in Lillehammer.

Teaching programmes for school children

School children and students are an important target group for our information work. This is why NAC has developed teaching programmes for pupils and students of all ages, from the very beginning of elementary school and up through high school. The



Sima Samar's visit attracted great attention among Afghans and Norwegians.



Photo: Nareen Mizoory

The spokesman course attracted 22 very dedicated young Afghans living in Norway, who want to spread information on Afghanistan.

programmes are based on the Norwegian national curriculum and are easily accessible online for teachers to consult.

Through the programmes the pupils learn about Afghan culture and religion, everyday life and challenges. In 2013 a role play for pupils on upper secondary level (16-19) was added to the list. The scene is the copper mine in Mes Aynak, Logar province. It opens the students' eyes to the relation between economic progress and sustainable development, poverty reduction and equal distribution, as well as the dynamics of Afghan politics and relations to the international community.

Spokesman course

Influence and input from Afghans living in Norway is important for our organisation. In November a spokesperson course for young Afghans was arranged in Oslo. The aim of the course was to enable and encourage young Afghans to do advocacy on behalf of their native country. 22 young Afghans from all over Norway spent a weekend together, learning how to reach and influence Norwegian decision makers and how to approach and talk to the media. Many of these also participated on the workshop with Sima Samar. The course was a collaboration between NAC and The Nansen Centre for Peace and Dialogue.

Thematic publication "Afghanistan 2014"

This year's thematic publication gathered an impressive cast of academics, journalists and Afghanistan-specialists, writing about the challenges Afghanistan will face in and after 2014. The volunteers in the information committee played a key role in defining the theme and collecting material from the various authors.

The publication contained articles on Afghan politics, development, women's situation, health and education. It included interesting perspectives on the Afghan elections planned for 2014, the consequences of the withdrawal of foreign soldiers, mental health and post-traumatic stress, and the role of the young generation. It also touched upon the friction between Afghanistan's need for continued support from the international community and the country's need to stand on its own two feet. We were proud to receive input not only from some of the top Norwegian Afghanistan experts, like diplomat Kai Eide and researcher Arne Strand, but also from internationally renowned Afghanistan writers like Ahmed Rashid.

The publication has been distributed to journalists, politicians and the general public and has been received and read with great enthusiasm.

Our work: Friendship schools

NAC currently has three pairs of friendship schools. Vinderen School in Oslo is friends with Gul Dara School just outside Kabul, Krohnengen School in Bergen is friends with Girls No 2 School in Faizabad, Badakhshan and Sulitjelma School in northern Norway is friends with Ganda Chasma Middle School, also located in Badakhshan.



The pupils of Girls no 2 School in Faizabad excitedly present letters and gifts from their friends at Krohnengen School in Bergen.



Even the principal of Vinderen School dressed up for the school's fundraising event.

Cultural exchange and learning

The main goal of our friendship school programme is cultural exchange and learning between Norwegian and Afghan children. The pupils exchange letters, pictures, drawings and handicrafts. Experience and knowledge about each other's country and culture is shared through parallel teaching programmes, for example comparing how potatoes are grown in the two countries. This exchange is very precious for the pupils in both countries. The Norwegian schools also use the teaching packages available on NAC's web page. These cover topics like Afghan culture, religion and the humanitarian situation.



Girls at Gul Dara High School document the arrival of spring, to send to their friends in Oslo.



A pupil at Sulitjelma School in northern Norway writes a letter to friends in Ganda Chasma Middle School

Fundraising

For the Norwegian schools, the friendship school programme also involves fundraising. Through their friendship day in June, Vinderen raised 86,795 NOK that was used to make improvements in their friendship school Gul Dara outside Kabul. Krohnengen raised 62,205 NOK through their Christmas market for their friends in Girl's No 2 School in Faizabad.

The money raised by the schools in Norway was used to make needed improvements in the friendship schools but also for other schools that are targeted by NAC's education activities.

NAC's volunteers

It would be impossible to do the work that we do without the dedication and hard work of members who give so generously of their time and energy in a voluntary effort. They provide valuable advice on NAC's development work in Afghanistan and contribute to spreading solidarity with Afghans among Norwegians.

The board of management

NAC's board of management stakes out the organisation's strategic direction and is involved in taking all major decisions regarding NAC's daily work.

Anne S. Hertzberg, Chair of the Board

A trained psychologist and physiotherapist, Anne has worked with aid and project development within health, rehabilitation and the social sector since 1995, focusing on Afghanistan since 2002.

Hege Jacobsen, Deputy Chair of the Board

Currently a project manager for Norsk Hydro, Hege has previously worked in several UN agencies and been stationed in Geneva, Vienna and Western Sahara.

Andrea L. Rivrud, women's committee representative

Elisabet Eikås, project committee representative

Farshad Tami, information committee representative

Solveig Sandalsnes, Bergen committee representative

Gry Synnevåg, Board Member

Norunn Grande, Board Member

Elisabeth Palerud, Board Member



Masooda Dostyar, deputy representative of the women committee

Stein Gjendem, deputy representative of the information committee

Mike Fergus, deputy representative of the project committee

Helge Liland, deputy representative of the Bergen committee

Luke Dokter, deputy board member

Terje Skaufjord, deputy board member

Volunteerism: a cornerstone of NAC's work

NAC has around 200 full-time employees in Afghanistan, but in Norway where most major decisions are made, it has only 3 staff members. This is because, ever since its founding in 1980, NAC's volunteer members have always been the organisation's core resource.

For many years, NAC sent volunteer medical and technical staff from Norway to work in Afghanistan. Today the board of management consists of volunteers: academics, medical personnel, civil servants, journalists and pensioners. They develop

policy, negotiate with donors, take decisions, participate in debates and travel to Afghanistan all in their own time. Only the chair receives a token remuneration.

NAC's current body of active volunteers consists of hard-working Norwegians, Afghans and others. They constitute a unique resource in implementing a complex development programme in difficult conditions, spreading Afghanistan-related information in Norway and advocating for more solidarity with the Afghan people.

Information committee

The information committee acts as a resource group supporting the offices in Oslo and Kabul, discussing relevant issues, and producing information material. In particular, the information committee works closely with NAC's information officer at the Oslo office.

The information committee has contributed to getting input from specialists such as Ahmed Rashid for NAC's annual thematic publication. The 2013 publication covered the challenges Afghanistan will face in and after 2014. Another forward-looking activity was the preparation of an online information package about the Afghan elections in 2014. The information committee has also assisted in the production of policy briefs, a plan for strategic communication and articles for NAC's website. The committee also supported the Oslo office in organising seminars and meetings.

Project committee

The project committee gives technical assistance and advice for the development and implementation of the programmes in the field and ensures alignment with NAC's strategies. The committee has regular meetings to give advice to the secretary general and the Oslo head office.

In 2013 the committee has had a particular focus on assessing the progress on implementation of phase II of the integrated rural development programme. Representatives from the committee visited programme sites and have subsequently reported on the status and given recommendations for follow-up. The committee has also advised on organisational structure, staffing and the division of labour between staff members. A working paper on gender and agriculture was developed during the year to lay the foundation for further gender mainstreaming in NAC's future programming.



Women's committee

The women's committee works on gender related events, activism, networking and information in Norway. In 2013, the committee supported the Oslo head office in organising events in connection with the visits of Afghan human rights pioneer Sima Samari and psychologist Frozan Esmati.

The committee is the main channel for NAC's cooperation with FOKUS, Norway's Forum for women and development. The committee is responsible for project follow-up on NAC's midwifery education and support to the Afghan Midwives' Association in Jalalabad, both of which are funded through FOKUS. In relation with this, committee members have visited the projects in Jalalabad.

The Bergen local committee

The Bergen local committee spreads information on Afghanistan in and around Bergen and encourages the local population, from school children to local politicians, to support the development of Afghanistan.

In 2013, the committee has actively spread information about current affairs in Afghanistan and the importance and effectiveness of solidarity and aid to rural Afghans. Committee members have written op-eds in the local media, arranged information meetings and had an information stand at the Bergen international week. The committee has also engaged with local politicians, challenging them to consider how they can contribute to development in Afghanistan.

The Bergen local committee contributes actively to the fundraising work of NAC's friendship school in Bergen, Krohnengen school. At the annual Christmas market, the school displayed Afghan artefacts and committee members teamed up with sixth graders to produce traditional Afghan food.



The Norwegian Afghanistan Committee

Our organisational structure

The Norwegian Afghanistan Committee (NAC) is a member-based solidarity organisation, doing development work in Afghanistan and information and advocacy in Norway. Through our dual focus on rural development and the education of female health workers, we strive to improve the quality of life of Afghans in rural and remote areas.

NAC shall contribute to an Afghanistan free of poverty where equality, democracy, human rights and respect serve as the bases for political action and development. The cornerstone of our organisation is the fundamental belief in freedom, independence, democracy, human rights and a better life for all.

NAC operates with a head office in Oslo, a country office in Kabul and regional offices in Badakhshan and Ghazni. We have almost 300 short- and long-term employees in Afghanistan. Our staff possesses the experience, knowledge, skills and commitment needed to make the organisation grow. Most of our staff are Afghan nationals. The head office in Oslo has 3 employees, who are aided in their work by dedicated and specialised volunteers.

Our approach to development work

NAC operates with a needs-based approach. That means that we develop our programmes and projects based on the needs of the rural Afghans we aim to help. We identify these through a consultative process between our staff and the communities we serve.

We make sure that our activities are based on community priorities and support those who have the biggest needs. We focus our work on rural and remote areas, targeting the groups that are most vulnerable to exclusion and marginalisation, particularly women and children.

We work within the sectors of health, education, natural resource management (including agriculture, livelihood and the environment), civil society and human institutional development, community-based infrastructure, and disaster risk reduction and management through an integrated approach. Additionally, our projects support the UN Millennium Development Goals and are also in line with Afghan development priorities.

Our History

NAC was established in Norway in 1980 in response to the Soviet invasion in Afghanistan. Local committees immediately rallied public opinion against the invasion and called for solidarity with the Afghan population caught in the middle of the conflict. Fundraising, advocacy and information work became the core member activities.

In 1983 NAC opened its first office. Due to the poor security situation in Afghanistan it was placed in Peshawar, Pakistan. The first field office was established in Ghazni in 1986 and in Badakhshan in 1991. In 1997, a liaison office was opened in Kabul. In 2002 this became NAC's country office. Today NAC is still a solidarity organisation with active members working

for the wellbeing of the Afghan population. But it is also a professional organisation with international donors and a large receiver of the Norwegian aid budget for Afghanistan.



NAC's team

NAC has a head office in Oslo, a country office in Kabul, regional offices in Faizabad and Jaghori, field offices in Ghazni City, Mazar-i-Sharif and Yawan, and project offices in Laghman and Wardak. Currently, we have a team of 192 full-time employees. In addition we had 112 short-term employees in 2013. NAC promotes equal opportunities for women and more than 36% of our Afghan colleagues are female.

Oslo – head office



Kabul – country office



Badakhshan – regional office in Faizabad



Ghazni – regional office in Jaghori



Badakhshan – field office in Yawan



Ghazni – field office in Ghazni city



Budget and expenditures

Our finances in 2013

In 2013, NAC implemented projects in the provinces of Badakhshan, Balkh, Faryab, Ghazni, Laghman, Nangarhar, Takhar and Wardak. Norad and the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs remained our largest donors. NAC received funds from members and individual donors, Norwegian friendship schools and eight partner and donor organisations:

- Forum for Women and Development (FOKUS)
- German Development Agency (GIZ)
- Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (Norad)
- Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA)
- Royal Norwegian Embassy in Jakarta (RNE)
- Swedish Committee for Afghanistan (SCA)
- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)
- World Food Programme (WFP)

During the course of the year, NAC initiated new cooperations with some of the previous donors. A second phase of the Integrated Rural Development Programme (IRD II) was launched with the support of Norad for USD 9,216,667 over three years including support for an expansion of the programme into Faryab. WFP increased its support for NAC-implemented food security programmes in Badakhshan and Ghazni by almost 200%. In 2013 NAC expanded its cooperation with GIZ both for girls' education in Badakhshan and Balkh and disaster risk management in Badakhshan. FOKUS

Funding by donor

Donor	Funding in 2013 in USD
FOKUS	186,065
Friendship schools	25,052
GIZ	156,133
Norad	2,843,216
Royal Norwegian Embassy in Jakarta	126,925
Royal Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs	153,170
SCA	344,038
UNESCO Bangkok	4,000
WFP	296,460
Individual donors	99,208
Total:	4,234,266

and SCA continued their support for the education of female health professionals in Laghman, Nangarhar and Wardak. The friendship school project was supported by the school children of the partner schools in Bergen and Oslo in Norway who raised over 25 thousand USD. Through fundraising campaigns the head office in Oslo received almost 100 thousand USD from individual donors in Norway, which was used for the Norad and the FOKUS projects where NAC is required to provide a 10% match.

Geographical division of expenditures

Of the overall annual budget, activities within the natural resource management sector accounted for 38% of expenditures, while the health sector accounted for 26% and Education for 16%. The programmatic areas of disaster risk management and reduction as well as the civil society and human institutional development accounted for 15% and 5% respectively. During 2013, NAC implemented projects and activities in eight provinces. The highest expenditures were in Badakhshan (including one farm in Takhar), where NAC is implementing three of its core programmes, integrated rural development, disaster risk reduction, and civil society support, as well as other programmes related to education, food security, and disaster risk management supported by GIZ and WFP. This amounts to USD 2,722,384 USD. The second highest expenditure, 1,239,859 USD, was in Ghazni, where NAC implements the IRD programme as well as food security, infrastructure and vocational training programmes supported by the WFP. Programmes and activities in Balkh, Faryab, Kabul, Laghman, Nangarhar and Wardak provinces add up to USD 633,782.

Expenditure by province

Geographical area	Expenditure in 2013 in USD
Badakhshan (and Takhar)	2,722,384
Balkh	56,185
Faryab	4,941
Ghazni	1,239,859
Kabul	5,000
Lagman	207,829
Nangarhar	191,374
Wardak	168,453
Total:	4,596,025

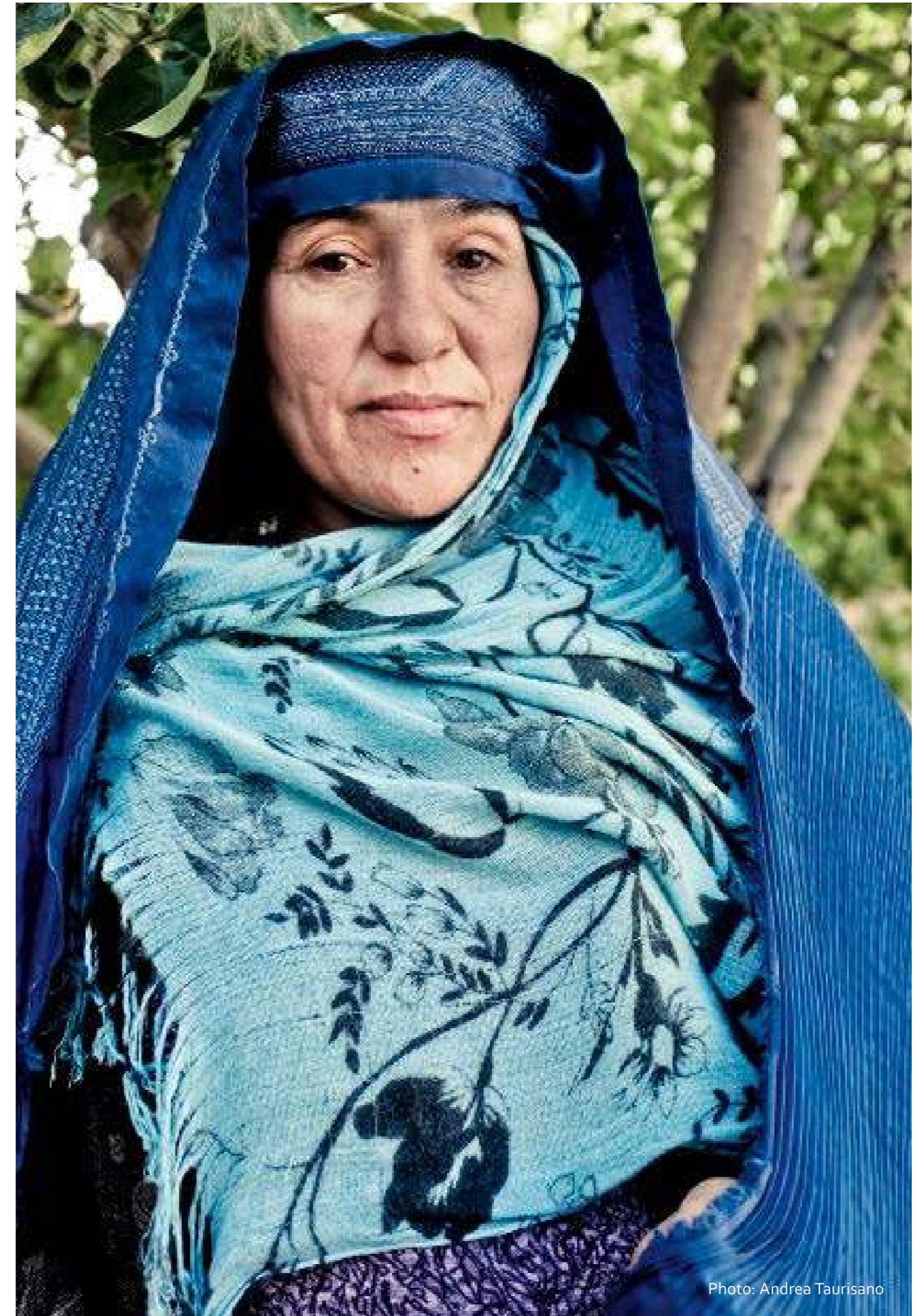


Photo: Andrea Taurisano

NAC's Key Messages

Maintain aid levels to Afghanistan

The Norwegian Afghanistan Committee encourages the Norwegian Government to maintain the current aid level to Afghanistan and to channel the support to where the poverty and needs are the greatest.

Serving the needs of the Afghan population

Development aid should be distributed according to the Afghan population's needs. All development work should be guided by a holistic development strategy, with the aim to fight poverty and promote human rights. Development aid must not be used to obtain diplomatic or military objectives.

Sustainable development

Sustainability must be the basis for all development aid. Quick fixes give short-lived results. Spreading knowledge and building capacity, using local workers and materials, gives the local population the possibility to take over and maintain the results of successful aid projects.

Local ownership

The Norwegian Afghanistan Committee has always worked closely with the local population and let their needs define the focus for our work. This is a prerequisite for sustainable development. Working with local authorities is crucial to building their capacity to serve the needs of the people.

Ensure women's participation

Women must be included in all areas, at all levels and in all decision-making processes. This is a prerequisite for proper and equitable priorities that benefit everyone. Women's situation was part of the rhetoric to justify the war in Afghanistan. We can not turn our backs on Afghan women now.

The Norwegian Afghanistan Committee has been working for Afghanistan since 1980 and will continue to help Afghans build a better life.

We have a heart for Afghanistan!

NAC offers

- 34 years of experience and commitment
- Acceptance in communities where we work
- A long-term holistic approach to sustainable development
- Cost-efficient high quality projects
- Focus on the people who are most in need, including women
- Ability to adapt to changing circumstances

The Norwegian Afghanistan Committee (NAC) is a member-based solidarity organisation. NAC aims to support the rights of the Afghan people for independence and democracy, and to contribute to the reconstruction and development of the country. Our work builds on knowledge, experience and a mutual understanding and friendship between the Afghan and Norwegian people.

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