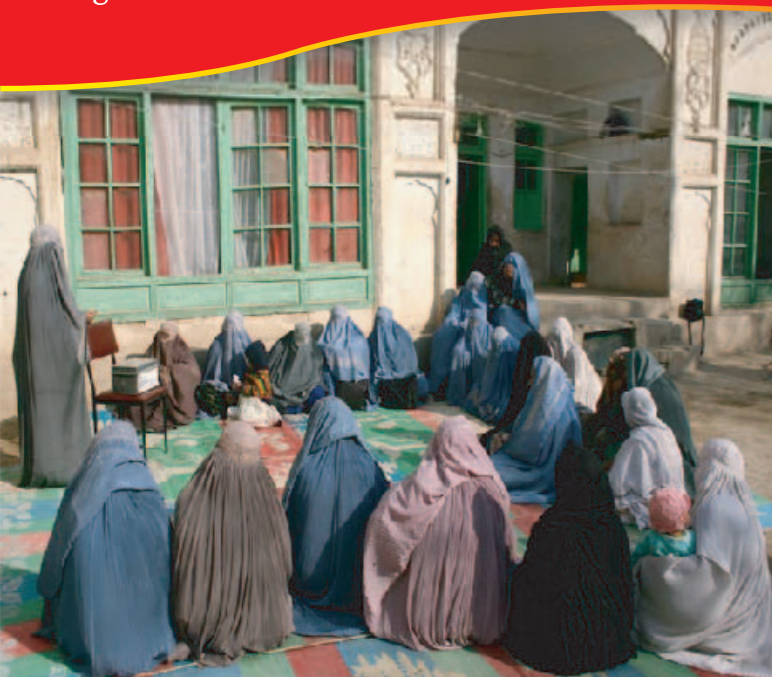


CDCs are the village institution which has been directly elected by people they represent for the first time in the history of rural Afghanistan



Urban Programme

In the recent past the focus was on addressing immediate needs in selected municipalities arising out of influx of IDPs and the returnees and prolonged period of disrepair and disinvestment in urban services. Shelter and infrastructure for returnees constituted the main thrust of UN-Habitat's programme. Parallel to this, UN-HABITAT was also engaged with the Ministry of Urban Development to secure appropriate priority to urban sector by way of assisting it in sector programming and policy articulation. UN-HABITAT is also the designated Focal Point for Urban Programme Consultative Group - a forum of donors, government ministries and other stakeholders - formed to assist the government in preparing sector annual programmes and the Afghanistan National Development Strategy. Through a number of operational projects in various municipalities, UN-HABITAT seeks to bring institutional reform in the sector. In this context two initiatives are currently underway: reviewing the municipal law with a view to prepare a draft revision for detailed discussion with various ministries and actors in the sector, and profiling cities to assess their needs that can be addressed through sector programming. It is expected that, along with a few medium-size operational projects (urban upgrading and shelter reconstruction) these institutional support initiatives will enable UN-HABITAT to focus its technical assistance on urban governance with particular emphasis on generating good practices in responding to urban poverty.

Main Projects



City Profiles and Municipal Strategic Action Plans (MSAP)

The City Profiling and preparation of Municipal Strategic Action Plans for Herat, Jalalbad and Mazar-e-Sharif funded by EC.

Upgrading of Informal Settlements in Kandahar, Jalalbad and Mazar

Upgrading of 48 settlements completed at the end of December 2006 with funding from Human Security Trust Fund (Japan) (US\$ 3.3 m). Other donors have indicated interest to continue and expand the project. In addition physical upgrading of the settlements, families have been granted security of tenure by the Municipality.

Youth Empowerment Project

Youth with no avenues to engage productively is a serious threat future security of the country. Considering this critical issue for the society, the Youth Project was designed to give an opportunity for the youth to actively engage in creative pursuits. The project is funded by USAID (US\$ 2.1 m)

Civil Society Empowerment Programme (CSEP)

This project provides small grants to cultural and artistic groups to revive art and culture and to provide Youth with the opportunity more involved these activities. This is being implemented with a national NGO, Foundation for Culture and Civil Society. The project is funded by EC (US\$ 2.9 m)



The National Solidarity Programme has put rural communities in the driving seat, giving them fully authority on decision making and management of the resources allocated to them

Reintegration of Returnees and IDPs through Policy, Planning and Targeted Assistance

Project commenced in April 2006 and on-going in two districts of Kabul. In addition to physical upgrading, 600 most vulnerable families have been assisted in improving their houses. Project funded by EC (US\$ 3.5)

National Solidarity Programme (NSP)

UN-HABITAT assisted the Government in the design of the National Solidarity Programme in 2002. Currently UN-HABITAT is the single largest facilitating partner of NSP with coverage of as many as 30% of all communities under NSP operation. Developed the Implementation Manual and providing training for the other facilitating partners. Currently in the third phase of implementation covering 2,848 villages. The total budget for this programme is over US\$ 23 m. Funding for this programme is provided by the Government from the Trust Fund established by the World Bank.

Literacy and Economic Empowerment Programme (LCEP)

LCEP, is being implemented in NSP villages coming under the UN-HABITAT'S facilitation. The Economic empowerment component has made an impact in the communities with the formation 901 savings groups in the pilot districts. The total number of members is over 10,000 having savings of over 1.7 million Afghanis. This project is funded by USAID through Education Development Centre. (US\$ 4.4 m) This came to an end in December 2006 and negotiations are underway with USAID for a much larger project in the next phase.



Empowering Communities

Development issues confronting Afghanistan are well documented in various government papers but the two challenges that continue to vex its policy makers and politicians are security and instituting sound governance. Security is both a precondition for and a result of development.

In a post-conflict situation, good governance deepens security and accelerates development. Based on more than a decade of engagement in community development in the country, UN-HABITAT considers community empowerment a starting point for both. It promotes this concept by assisting the country to create institutions at local level that are representative, consultative, performance oriented and accountable to their constituents.

What are the keys to success?

01. UN-HABITAT is the only UN agency working directly with people
02. Recognition of UN-HABITAT'S methodology of People Centred Development
03. Committed group of national staff numbering over 1,400 and 7 internationals
04. UN-HABITAT'S outreach and operational infrastructure: 48 Offices in 11 Provinces



National Solidarity Programme

Under the broad umbrella of its rural programme, UN-HABITAT is assisting the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) in implementing the National Solidarity Programme (NSP) in some 3,000 communities in 11 Provinces. The programme addresses two objectives: establishing and empowering elected Community Development Councils (CDCs) to take charge of their development agenda and to establish community level governance supported by block grants for essential community needs.

With funding from USAID, Education Development Centre (EDC) and UN-HABITAT have formed a partnership to develop an integrated programme of support to 200 rural communities that have completed their first year of activities under the NSP. The Literacy and Community Empowerment Programme (LCEP) will strengthen community capacities in four specific areas: (a) promoting literacy, numeracy and practical life skills using a non-formal education approach; (b) local governance, including strengthened management capacity, promoting transparent and accountable governance, and promoting linkages between CDCs, formal Government institutions, and NGOs; (c) promoting community savings and investment through self-help groups; (d) micro-enterprise development to enable communities and individuals to access new technologies and business opportunities. A people-centred strategy promoting community self-reliance underpins all four components.

UN-HABITAT is also working in partnership with the Foundation for Culture and Civil Society (FCCS), with support from the European Commission (EC), to implement the Civil Society Empowerment Programme (CSEP). The project's aim is to contribute to the empowerment of civil society, leading to an increase in social, artistic and cultural activity and to the strengthening of local and national governance. The project has four principle components: a small-grants programme to support civil society activities over 24 months; capacity-building civil society organisations; strengthening the capacity of regional partner institutions to support civil society activities; and, the establishment of an independent Afghan grant-making institution with the necessary capacity to support civil society activities.



strengthening participation and consultation