Overview

Improving health and education systems throughout Afghanistan is a necessity for people to live in peace and prosperity. IOM, with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) seeks to contribute to the Government of Afghanistan’s nation-building efforts by addressing the critical healthcare and education needs of Afghan citizens.

IOM’s cooperative agreement with USAID for the Construction of Health and Education Facilities (CHEF) programme builds on the successful completion of the Schools and Clinics Construction and Refurbishment Programme (SCCRP).

With generous funding from the USAID, under SCCR P the IOM has constructed and refurbished a total of 502 schools and clinics in 23 provinces across the country.

The USAID-funded project was implemented in close cooperation with communities, district, provincial and central government authorities, particularly the Ministry of Education and the Ministry of Public Health, from May 2004 to September 2007.

Despite progress, significant challenges still remain in the areas of health and education in Afghanistan. Even though the Afghan Government re-establishes and slowly strengthens relevant social services, it finds itself facing a multitude of technical, managerial and operational challenges. A continuing successful transition to peace and democracy is contingent on adequate attention being paid to health and education.

USAID AND IOM PARTNERSHIP AND EXPERTISE

The IOM has been an implementing partner of the USAID in Afghanistan for infrastructure projects since the inception of the Afghanistan Transitional Initiative (ATI) programme in 2002. The ATI was designed to support the process of recovery and implemented a variety of small grants projects focusing on community level infrastructure. As a result of the ATI’s success, relatively larger infrastructure projects coordinated with local government have been implemented under subsequent USAID and IOM programmes such as the Quick Impact Programme (QIP) and the SCCR P.

Over the course of this time, and through a joint effort, the USAID and IOM have developed and refined
The latest USAID and IOM infrastructure partnership for the CHEF programme combines the previously gained expertise and the lessons learned with modern internationally accepted building standards for design and construction.

IOM’s design and construction team has established a strong international reputation for its technical capabilities and achievements over the years. The current IOM CHEF team consists of international engineers with experience totaling over 70 years which, when combined with national staff, total over 250 years of national and international experience, and the team continues to grow. Professional expertise includes surveyors, architects, structural, mechanical and electrical engineers, quantity surveyors and technical translators.

When a project site is identified, the team, in coordination with USAID representatives and relevant Ministries, conduct feasibility assessments, site survey, geotechnical, demining (if required) and environmental investigations prior to developing designs.

The IOM/USAID partnership develops contemporary design solutions to ensure a fully constructible set of drawings and specifications, suitable for the limited available materials and local maintenance capabilities. The Ministries’ Construction Departments are also involved in the process ensuring that the final designs incorporate their actual and urgent needs.

Together with the preparatory work, the CHEF team pre-qualifies potential suitable contractors (large and small) by assessing works the companies have already completed. It facilitates a transparent bidding process in line with IOM’s procurement standards and procedures, and awards contracts to the most proficient contractor, based upon its submitted bid. Upon commencement of construction, the projects are monitored by the IOM CHEF engineers to ensure quality control and site safety. For Quality Assurance, USAID, through the International Relief and Development (IRD), work together with the IOM engineers.

The IOM and USAID team engages with members of communities at every critical stage of the project through engineers and local government partners. Depending on the technical aspects of the works involved, contractors are encouraged to use local labor and provide skills training in order to increase sustainability and the sense of local ownership. CHEF is thus contributing not only to the rapid reconstruction of the infrastructure in Afghanistan but also to providing the opportunity to the local labor and skilled workers to obtain experience and develop their abilities with international standards, while at the same time increasing the local economy.

The success of the Programme and delivering high quality facilities for the benefit of Afghan people is ensured through a joint effort, coordination and planning all activities by the three involved parties; USAID as donor, IOM as implementer and the Government of Afghanistan as beneficiary.

**HEALTH**

Afghanistan’s standard health indicators, including the infant mortality rate, the childhood mortality rate and the maternal mortality rate, are some of the world’s worst. Currently there is one hospital bed per 2,400 people and only one doctor for 15,000, according to a recent Oxfam study. One child in four does not survive beyond its fifth birthday. Only 16% of women are attended by trained personnel during pregnancy, particularly in rural areas.

In this light, the programme addresses the healthcare needs of nearly over one million Afghan citizens through the construction the following facilities:

- One 100-Bed Hospital in Gardez city (Paktiya province)
- One 20 Bed Hospital in Khair Kot/Zarghone Shahr (Paktika province)

These facilities will provide urgently needed health services, including in-patient and out-patient referral and treatment, to communities in adjacent provinces. The hospitals will also serve as a training facility for health professionals and be a venue for medical seminars.

Recognizing the importance of encouraging long-term sustainability in the health sector reform, the programme considers the training of building maintenance personnel as a critical component. Without training, the programme will not remain effective once foreign aid personnel have departed.

In order to ensure that the government will have the resources it needs to assume substantial responsibility for managing the health sector, the programme is also constructing three Provincial Midwifery Training Centers (MTC):

- One MTC in Bamyan city (Bamyan province).
- One MTC in Faizabad city (Badakhshan province).
- One MTC in Khost city (Khost province).

These facilities will provide important training and delivery services urgently...
needed to strengthen the healthcare system, addressing the needs of over one million Afghan citizens.

The one 100 Bed Hospital, one 20 Bed Hospital in Khair Kot and three Midwife Training Centers form the main structure of the Health sector of the CHEF programme. Together with these relatively large projects, one clinic in Jawzjan province, i.e. Qawchin Clinic has been successfully refurbished before the end of 2008. The country’s only national infectious disease hospital, Antani Hospital in Kabul, has been provided with 5 pre-engineered blocks for administrative purposes and 3 rooms were refurbished and converted for laboratory purpose along with some of the hospital’s latrines refurbished too.

EDUCATION

Despite some progress made in recent years, the Ministry of Education (MoE) estimates that half of school-age children in Afghanistan still do not attend school with significant gender and provincial disparities (National Education Strategic Plan for Afghanistan, 2007-2011). Based on available data, a recent Oxfam report estimates that there is a shortage of 52,722 trained primary teachers in Afghanistan. It is projected that an additional 63,616 trained primary teachers will need to be recruited to cater to the projected increase in student enrolments in the next five years. There is also a distinct need for female teachers as currently only 28 per cent of teachers are female.

In order to address the nation’s teacher training needs, the programme will assist the MoE by providing up to 9 Provincial Teacher Training Colleges (PTTC) presently implementing four of them to educate School teachers. The facilities are being designed based on the International Building Code and IOM-developed standard concept with education buildings and two separate dormitory buildings for male and female students, in close coordination with the USAID and the MoE. The PTTCs’ educational buildings will host 600 students and their dormitories, 100 female and 100 male students.

The existing PTTC learning building in Nangarhar will be upgraded with separate dormitories and a dining hall. Complete PTTC facilities (learning, dormitory and dining hall buildings) will be built in the following provincial capitals: Wardak, Faryab, Parwan and Nangarhar provinces.

The novelty of these projects will not only add to the long list of IOM and USAID infrastructure projects successfully implemented in Afghanistan but also provide the Afghan Ministries with complete design packages and facilities built in line with international building codes.

In August 2009, Sherzad School project was added to the overall objective of CHEF Program. The purpose was to design-build, deliver to the jobsite, and assemble one (1) pre-fabricated, multi-purpose, turn-key, single story building, to be temporarily used as a school, with a minimum of 25 years longevity.
and maximum energy efficiency, in Sherzad District, Nangarhar Province, Afghanistan. The school building was constructed according to National/International Building Codes norms, to provide Resistance to the lateral and vertical forces imparted by earthquake ground motions. The envisaged result consists of an earthquake resistant 8 fully furnished classroom prefabricated school constructed in Sherzad of which up to 400 girl students and 20 teachers shall benefit from.

As the new school was requested to be a pre-engineered structure, an idea that contributed mainly to the great success of the project, it eased the procurement process, as many of the construction components could be fabricated away, assembled, transported and delivered to the site, partially finished, thus considerably shortening the building time and the skilled workers presence on the insecure grounds in Sherzad. The construction itself lasted only 5 weeks.

Upon completion, the MoE stated that the project ‘is recommended as pilot study for the use of pre-fabricated school projects throughout Afghanistan’.

CHEF’s coordination meetings with all parties involved are held bi-weekly in order for all parties to be regularly updated on the technical progress, and monthly for the senior staff on the status of the individual project and overall programme status. The support of the local governmental departments in each location is significant, in terms of allocating suitable land, resolution of any dispute on land ownership issues and advising on the local security situation during the project implementation.

The start of every new construction project is marked at its location by groundbreaking festivities where senior officials of the Afghan Government, IOM and USAID representatives attend.

The following table shows a list of IOM implemented and proposed Health and Education projects funded by USAID, together with the expected number of beneficiaries.

| 328 | New schools constructed or refurbished |
| 800,000 | Students studying at IOM-supported schools |
| 174 | New health clinics constructed or refurbished |
| 6.3 million | People benefiting from IOM-supported clinics |
| 23 | Provinces across the country where IOM has built schools and clinics |
| 2 | Hospitals will be built |
| 2 | Upgraded health facilities |
| 1 | Reconstructed education facility |
| 1.5 million | People will benefit from IOM-supported health facilities |
| 3 | Provincial Midwife Training Centers will be built |
| 1 million | People will benefit from IOM-built provincial Midwife Training Centers |
| 4 | Provincial Teacher Training Colleges are being built or upgraded |
| 2,400 | Teachers will be trained at the IOM-built Provincial Teacher Training Colleges at any given time |

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