

AFGHANISTAN ARISING

A bulletin of positive news from Afghanistan



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REBUILD AFGHANISTAN SUMMIT

Rebuild Afghanistan Summit will hold its next conference, Afghanistan 2014 & Beyond: Economic Growth and Stability Summit, at the George Washington University Marvin Center on March 17th, 2014. Industry leaders from Afghanistan's most lucrative emerging markets will discuss opportunities for investment in mining, telecommunications, textiles, agribusiness, and media entertainment. The summit will also present charities, non-profits, and other non-governmental organizations and discuss how their work, combined with socially conscious entrepreneurs, ensures the best opportunities for stability and economic expanse in the country.

These summits are held to raise public awareness and garner support. As the years have gone by, the efforts to rebuild have become hampered by increased instability in Afghanistan. This makes the need for increased public support even more crucial as time has once again become a factor in the race to assist Afghanistan. This upcoming summit in Washington, DC, is being held in conjunction with The Stability Institute, a leader in rural stability issues. See more at www.afghansummitorg.

ALLIANCE IN SUPPORT OF THE AFGHAN PEOPLE



The Alliance in Support of the Afghan People (ASAP) is a newly formed coalition dedicated to preserving and protecting progress made by the Afghan people over the last 12 years. It seeks to amplify Afghan civil society voices in policy discussions and support their aspirations for further political and economic development and the protection of basic human rights.

The ongoing transition process and military drawdown are critical for the country's future. Despite formidable obstacles, a critical opportunity exists to protect and sustain the progress and investments of the last decade for all Afghans, particularly women and youth. ASAP encourages Afghanistan's international partners to prioritize support for a popularly accepted Afghan National Security Force while strengthening the economy, reinforcing democratic processes and educating Afghanistan's next generations. ASAP works to support a credible political transition by promoting free, fair and timely elections as well as continuing international assistance.

ASAP publicizes the significant progress and gains made over the last 12 years to build broad-based support within the United States and posts a constant stream of positive news articles. Please visit www.afghanalliance.org to learn more.

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HELPING AFGHAN CHILDREN

The Afghan-American Women Association (AAWA), in conjunction with Aschiana (a local Afghan non-governmental organization), has been supporting organized classes for internally displaced children in the Charrahi Qambar Square IDP camp. Thanks to the leadership of Ms. Malal Nezam and to AAWA donations, this IDP camp school re-opened for children after having been shut down for almost two months due to lack of funds. Here, over 600 children between the ages of 10 and 15 are receiving education according to the basic literacy curriculum. In the next school year, they will be integrated into public schooling where they can continue their education normally with other school children. There is also an awareness raising programs for the families of the children where once a month the mothers of the children receive training in such important topics as health education, child rights, and protection awareness.



This particular effort is only one of Aschiana's programs, as it serves children affected by the Afghan war and working on the streets, children with special disabilities, and children and their families in different IDP camps in Kabul and the provinces. AAWA is a women-led non-governmental organization based in Northern Virginia. It offers services and programs for the local Afghan community and also supports a number of other humanitarian projects inside Afghanistan, such as launching an annual Winter Coats Drive, providing donations to keep the Merman Orphanage open, and conducting tailoring projects to promote women empowerment. Visit www.a-awa.org for more information.

COMMODITY RATES REMAIN STABLE

Despite concerns on the stability of the market economy, the prices of essential daily-use commodities remain stable in Kabul, a tribute to local confidence in market operation. Prices on Pakistani rice, Indonesian green tea, flour and sugar have been essentially unchanged from. Even prices for diesel and patrol registered no change. On the financial side, the price of gold remained unchanged and exchange rates were only minimally different from earlier.



This note is from the Wadsam's Afghan Business News Portal, a wide-ranging daily compilation of news articles related to Afghanistan's business and economy. Wadsam serves as a great resource for anyone interested to learn about Afghan economic trends, the global approach to Afghanistan's economy, and internal economic issues. The site also has a section on Afghanistan's Arts and Culture and an "Afghanistan in Pictures" section reflecting on the natural beauty of Afghanistan. See www.wadsam.com/category/afghan-business-news/ to learn more.

Mohammad Nader was tending his family's vineyard in the Panjwayi district of Kandahar province when a military convoy from the International Security Assistance Force passed by on the road next to his house. Insurgents started shooting at the convoy and the soldiers returned fire. Caught in the crossfire, Mohammad was shot directly in the face. The 26-year-old was knocked unconscious and fell into a ditch. As soon as the incident ended, his family rushed him to the hospital where surgeons removed eight shattered teeth and stitched up his jaw. While extremely lucky not to have been more seriously injured, Mohammad was nevertheless depressed by the way he looked and could not eat normally. "The pain in my jaw was terrible," he said. "I became very unhappy, because I looked like an old man and had great difficulty eating. I felt ashamed."

Despite the obvious need, Mohammed's family could not afford dental treatment.

The Afghan Civilian Assistance Program (ACAP) stepped in to help. ACAP assists civilian victims of ISAF operations, whether by the international forces or insurgents. Thanks to the program, Mohammad now smiles again after receiving a set of custom-made dentures. His family also received food, household items, and a dairy cow so that they can earn an income by selling milk, cheese, and butter. Mohammed said, "ACAP took me to a dentist who made new teeth for me in a week. Now I am happy and live a normal life."

Mohammad is just one of many Afghan civilians whose lives have been transformed by ACAP since 2007. The program is managed by International Relief & Development (IRD) with funding from the US Agency for International Development; it works directly with the Afghan government, international military forces, and local organizations to identify eligible beneficiaries. Particular attention is given to the needs of women, especially where the primary breadwinner has been killed or injured. IRD also facilitates beneficiary access to a network of third-party service providers, which increases the ability of Afghan communities to respond to future incidents. To date the program has supported more than 15,000 families with non-monetary assistance (food and household items) within days of an incident to help stabilize communities and ensure basic needs are met. In addition, ACAP provides tailored assistance, such as livestock or equipment, livelihood and vocational training, structural repair to small businesses, or physical rehabilitation. ACAP also provides psychosocial assistance to those who have experienced traumatic loss, an important but often unfulfilled need in conflict zones. The assistance supports families to recover from their injuries and gives them a crucial opportunity to replace lost family income. Learn more at www.ird.org/our-work/by-region/asia-and-pacific/afghanistan.



PHOTOS:
Courtesy of
IRD/ACAP II

PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS



The PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS® program, under the umbrella of the Institute for Economic Empowerment of Women, is a business training and mentorship program for women entrepreneurs in Afghanistan and Rwanda. Created in 2006 by Dr. Terry Neese and supporters, the program is implemented through three major components —*In-Country Education, Leadership Development, and Train the Trainer*—which combine to create a continuing program to educate women, promote their business and leadership skills, build a strong public policy agenda in the women’s business community and help build a stable democracy. In-country classes in Kabul for 2014 will be held mid-January through March. Thirty-seven applicants have applied for the 30 spots available.

Manizha Wafeq, a member of the first graduating class in Kabul, exemplifies how the program gives women the opportunity to hone their skills. Manizha spent six weeks in the United States and came away with a mission to cooperate and collaborate with her competitors in order to expand industry in Central Asia. She began volunteering and became an executive board member in the Afghan Women's Network (AWN) and gained a reputation for volunteerism and commitment. During her service in AWN, Manizha organized the largest march for the international campaign, One Billion Rising, on February 14, 2013. This walk raised funds to help stop violence against women. Manizha speaks around the country on gender, violence, and economic issues and has teamed with other leading Afghan business women to raise the platform on women's economic issues within the organization Leading Entrepreneurs for Afghanistan Development (LEAD). Manizha is also a member of the Afghan Innovative Youth Association whose mission is to help underprivileged youth create sustainable lives, and build a culture of acceptance, tolerance and volunteerism among Afghan's youth. Read more at www.ieew.org/blog/manizha-wafeq-founder-wonderland-woman-afghanistan.

2013 Survey of the Afghan People

As the 2014 presidential election and security transition quickly approaches, what do Afghan citizens think of critical issues in the country? Explore demographics of the country's longest-running poll.

SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS



962 male and female enumerators conducted interviews in 34 provinces, often under challenging conditions. 55,000 Afghans have been polled since 2004.



Respondents were 18 years and older, residents of Afghanistan, and divided between men (62%) and women (38%).



Respondents included both urban (14%) and rural (86%) households.

Ethnic groups polled: Pashtun 43%, Tajik 32%, Hazara 10%, Uzbek 7%, Turkmeni 2%, Arab 2%, Baloch 1%, Nooristani 1%, Aimak 1%, Sadat 1%

2013 SURVEY OF THE AFGHAN PEOPLE

The Asia Foundation recently released its ninth annual public opinion survey. In July, local pollsters interviewed a nationally representative sample of 9,260 Afghan men and women face-to-face in all 34 provinces. Afghans cite insecurity (30%), corruption (26%), and unemployment (25%) as the three biggest problems facing Afghanistan as a country. They also identified unemployment (27%), electricity (24%), and roads (19%) as the biggest local problems. More than half of Afghans polled say that the outcome of the 2014 election will make a positive difference in their lives, but 81% are concerned about election-day security.

Although Afghans' confidence in most government institutions is at an eight-year low and the country is approaching major security and political transitions in 2014, Afghans continue to say the country is moving in the right direction. And they continue to support and have high levels of confidence in the Afghan National Army and Afghan National Police while acknowledging that the police will continue to need foreign assistance. The survey also reveals changing perceptions towards the women who still face significant challenges, particularly illiteracy and a lack of job opportunities.

'Afghans continue to say the country is moving in the right direction.'

You can read more about the Asia Foundation at www.asiafoundation.org. The 2013 Survey of the Afghan People can be found at www.asiafoundation.org/country/afghanistan/2013-poll.php.

ASCHIANA'S MEDICAL CLINIC



In May of this year, Aschiana opened a medical clinic in its Children's Center in Kabul, in an area generally lacking medical services. The clinic provides treatment of illness, immunizations, health promotion and preventative programs, family planning, pharmaceutical and laboratory services, and antenatal and postnatal care. Operating in cooperation with American Medical Overseas Relief and the Afghanistan Health Organization (which also operates Afshar Hospital in Kabul), the clinic exemplifies Aschiana's philosophy of self-reliance - the clinic's small staff serves the children of Aschiana for free and charges a small fee for other patients, but no one is denied treatment. Anticipated profits will help sustain the clinic and support other programs, including the wider scope of the Children's Center activity: literacy and vocational training, arts programs, and hot meals for working street children. Aschiana also provides education, food and clothing to those in the internally displaced persons camps.

The clinic also helps maintain broader medical programs by supporting Kabul's only certified biomedical equipment repair technician. His repair services address a critical problem of maintaining medical equipment which can easily fall into disuse due to inability of staff to maintain and repair it.

A profit-sharing arrangement combines Afghanistan's entrepreneurial spirit and Aschiana's dedication to service to sustain their programs and enhances financial independence. Learn more at www.aschiana-foundation.org.

AFGHANISTAN INVESTMENT FINANCING



The US Agency for International Development has a major project to help the Afghan government and the private-sector generate job creation and stimulate economic growth. The five-year Financial Access for Investing in the Development of Afghanistan (FAIDA) project brings together more than 100 representatives from banks, microfinance institutions, mobile network operators, and relevant government offices to increase the financing capacity of Afghan institutions. The FAIDA program helps to develop market infrastructure and also directly assists Afghan women entrepreneurs by providing targeted business development training.

A particularly innovative aspect of this program is support for mobile money activities which allow cell phone users to effectively have banking services at their disposal. The opportunities provided by mobile money in conjunction with a newly expanded microfinance effort significantly broaden the ability of Afghan entrepreneurs to establish new commercial operations. See more at www.usaid.gov and www.usaid.gov/news-information/fact-sheets/financial-access-investing-development-afghanistan-faida.

NETWORKS

In just the last couple years, Afghanistan's presence on business and social network sites has mushroomed. Current notable examples include:

- ◆ LinkedIn Groups associated with Afghanistan:
 - [Afghanistan's Business Development Alliance](#) focuses on business opportunities and linkages between business active in Afghanistan, with several subgroups including:
 - [Afghan Entrepreneurs](#)
 - [Afghan Women Business Development Association](#)
 - [Rebuild Afghanistan Summit](#) – focused on the Kabul section
 - [Afghanistan Professionals](#)
 - [Rally for Afghanistan](#)
 - [Afghanistan's Council](#)
- ◆ Facebook has several active groups focusing on Afghanistan, including:
 - [Hayward-Ghazni Sister City Committee](#)
 - [Afghanistan Human Rights](#)
 - [Rally for Afghanistan](#)
 - [Afghanistan Business Development Forum](#)

FEATURED VOLUNTEERS

Brad Pupello is the Executive Director for Rebuild Afghanistan Summit's Washington DC chapter. He is currently serving as a Senior Project Manager for Metis Solutions, LLC and as a Senior Human Terrain Analyst Consultant for Courage Services. Brad is currently managing efforts for the US Department of Commerce's Afghan Business Development Program, expanding capacity and best practices for the Afghan mining, construction, agribusiness and carpet sectors. In addition to his work in Afghanistan, Brad also serves as an analyst for several other countries in the Near East. His previous work includes multiple deployments to Afghanistan as a United States Marine and in support of US Central Command. He has completed three tours to Afghanistan where he served in Helmand, Kandahar and Kabul in support of a variety of commanders and mission sets. Brad has a Master's in Diplomacy from Norwich University and a Bachelor of Arts in Legal Studies from the University of Central Florida.

Mohammad Mohsen Koshan is the Executive Director for Rebuild Afghanistan Summit's Kabul chapter. He currently works for Afghan Wireless Communication Company (AWCC) as the Business Support Officer. Dr. Koshan obtained a Medical Degree from Pavol Jozef Šafárik University in Slovakia in 1992 and holds several other degrees from Regensburg University in Germany. Dr. Koshan has over 20 years of professional experience. He has held the positions of Sales Manager, Regional Advisor, Public Relations Manager, Project Manager, and Procurement Officer in several companies and organizations including AWCC, Concord of Women, and several insurance companies. He speaks seven languages fluently and understands 13.

INFORMATION

OUR MISSION & OBJECTIVES

1. Mobilize the local community to get involved with the organizations and businesses that are working to improve the lives of the people in Afghanistan
2. Provide a platform (at a one-day annual event) to help the organizations and businesses expand their projects

The Rebuild Afghanistan Summit is a project of Afghan Education for a Better Tomorrow (AEBT). AEBT is a non-profit organization, registered in California, Alaska, and Virginia, and is an IRS 501(C)(3) tax exempt organization. AEBT is also registered with Ministry of Economy in Afghanistan as an NGO. PO Box 395, Tracy, CA 95378, USA ,www.afghansummit.org, +1-510-612-5566 Skype:masood510, info@afghansummit.org

Please like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, and connect with us on LinkedIn. We would love to create an ever-expanding network of allies in our pursuit to improve the lives of the people in Afghanistan.



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<http://www.linkedin.com/groups?gid=6548178>

The Newsletter is published monthly and distributed to those who have expressed an interest in events in Afghanistan. To be added to the mailing list, please send an email to info@afghansummit.org.

Correspondent: Edward Corcoran; Editor: Ramona Taheri. Please send comments to suggestions, including suggested newsletter topics, to info@afghansummit.org.

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