AKDN’s Commitment to Afghanistan

AKDN has worked in Afghanistan since 1996, when we started distributing food aid during the country’s civil war. We have about 10,000 Afghan staff, based in numerous provinces. Afghanistan is one of the few countries where all our agencies are involved, combining economic, social and cultural inputs for the greatest impact on quality of life.

We help people meet their basic safety, food, health, housing and educational needs, and build a secure economic future. We support community-led development, working with public and private institutions. We build connections between villages, regions and neighbouring countries, with infrastructure such as roads, cross-border bridges, telecommunications and clean energy power lines all underpinning livelihoods. Throughout, we build human capacity to thrive, study, work and collaborate to become self-reliant.
Areas of Work

AGRICULTURE AND FOOD SECURITY
We strengthen community management of natural resources, and build infrastructure such as roads, irrigation channels, storage facilities and greenhouses. We reached 308,100 farmers in 2020.

HABITAT
Using assessments, habitat planning and sustainable construction, we try to create enabling habitats to enhance people’s health, education and economic development. As part of our water and sanitation programme we have constructed more than 1,000 wells. We planted over a million trees in 2020.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION
We provide basic health and hospital services to a population of more than 1.5 million people in remote areas, developing digital health tools to increase access. We provide nutritional supplements for mothers and babies in need. In 2020, we gave 1.25 million children, adolescents and pregnant women nutritional screening and counselling. We run 191 health facilities, including the ISO-certified Bamyan Hospital and the Aga Khan Medical Centre in Baghlan, and operate 1,015 health posts within villages.

We provide complex tertiary care, from bringing laparoscopy to rural communities to undertaking the first successful surgery to separate conjoined twins at the French Medical Institute for Mothers and Children in Kabul.

DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE
Working in remote and hazard-prone mountainous areas, we enhance communities’ capacity to assess, prepare for and respond to natural disasters. Our tools range from weather monitoring posts to emergency stockpiles. Over the last decade, we have responded to 721 incidents and have assisted 11,600 people.

EDUCATION
We help strengthen the education system and remove obstacles to school attendance. In 2020, we supported over 1,000 schools and learning spaces, and provided professional development training for 5,500 teachers and school heads.

We also offer non-formal education programmes to over 18,800 students per year, often in remote villages. Programmes include supplementary assistance in English, maths and science, and employability skills for older students.

The University of Central Asia operates six satellite learning centres in Afghanistan.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT (ECD)
We work with parents, children and teachers to give children a good start in life. We offer education on health and nutrition, and access to health services and early learning programmes. We run 73 pre-primary units for children aged three to six. Our ECD models reached 19,500 children and their families in 2020.

CIVIL SOCIETY
We work to strengthen Afghan institutions for long-lasting stability and prosperity. We help communities develop local development strategies, and strengthen community development councils in planning and monitoring. We work with civil society organisations (CSOs) to identify and address institutional gaps, using face-to-face and video-based training. In 2020, we supported 12,100 CSOs, reaching 644,100 people.

MICROFINANCE
The First Microfinance Bank of Afghanistan, launched in 2004, helps drive inclusive economic development in rural areas. Its products include agricultural loans and housing microfinance loans with integrated construction advisor services. The Bank has over 58,000 borrowers in 14 provinces.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
We work at all economic levels: helping youth create start-ups, supporting businesses to expand, and investing in large-scale energy and communications provision. Profits are reinvested into development activities.

Roshan, launched by AKDN and partners, has over 6.5 million subscribers across all 34 provinces. It is Afghanistan’s single largest private investor and taxpayer, contributing approximately five percent of governmental revenue. It provides indirect employment to over 30,000 people.

We export hydroelectricity generated by the Pamir 1 facility in Tajikistan to northern Afghanistan, giving 35,000 people electricity for the first time.

We opened the first five-star hotel in Afghanistan in 35 years, encouraging external investment and employing almost 400 people in Kabul.

CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT
Our restoration work in Kabul, Herat, Balkh and Badakhshan not only conserves Afghanistan’s cultural heritage and improves living conditions, but also spurs economic and social development. We have restored over 150 historic sites and trained 6,380 people in employable skills such as carpentry and tailoring.