

HUMANITARIAN AND RECONSTRUCTION ASSISTANCE TO AFGHANISTAN, 2001-05

FROM DENMARK, IRELAND, THE NETHERLANDS, SWEDEN
AND THE UNITED KINGDOM



MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS OF DENMARK

Danida

Humanitarian and Reconstruction Assistance to Afghanistan 2001-05

**From Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands,
Sweden and the United Kingdom.**

A Joint Evaluation

Summary Report

October 2005

**Chr. Michelsen Institute (lead agency), Copenhagen
Development Consulting and the German
Association of Development Consultants.**

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Preface

The international assistance to Afghanistan following the ousting of the Taliban-regime at the end of 2001 has in many ways been unique. First, it has sought to combine the immediate humanitarian and rehabilitation efforts with a longer-term post-conflict reconstruction and development perspective. Secondly, the donor countries at a very early stage attempted to coordinate a joint strategic approach of harmonised efforts, including prioritisation of a limited number of selected sector interventions by each donor. Finally, by focusing on capacity building of the new Afghan government aligning the donor assistance mainly through the government-administered programmes, a new agenda of post-conflict assistance has been set.

The evaluation of the assistance to Afghanistan has also set new standards of collaboration. Even before the new government had been elected, representatives of the evaluation departments of the five donor organisations, the Danish and Dutch Ministries of Foreign Affairs, the Development Cooperation of Ireland (DCI), the Swedish International Development Agency (Sida), and the United Kingdom's Department for International Development (DfID), in 2003 agreed to undertake a joint evaluation of the Afghanistan humanitarian and reconstruction assistance. The evaluation aimed at assessing the relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact, coherence and connectedness of the assistance identifying lessons for improving the response by donor organisations in future complex security, humanitarian, rehabilitation and development situations. In addition, the evaluation was also to assess the degree to which the assistance responded to the needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs) within Afghanistan.

The preparation of the evaluation has been quite extensive. The approach was discussed at a workshop at King's College, London, in the summer 2003, and several pre-studies were undertaken. Peter Marsden and David Turton, Refugee Council, UK, produced a preliminary study of assistance to IDPs in Afghanistan, and John Cosgrave and Rie Andersen, Channel Research, collected and analysed the information of the aid flows to Afghanistan from the five bilateral donors. Moreover, the Public Expenditure Review made for DCI, has also been available.

The evaluation was commissioned by Danida in December 2004 to a consultant consortium led by Christian Michelsen Institute, Bergen. After visits to the partners' headquarters, the extensive field work in Afghanistan was undertaken in March-April, completed with a workshop in Kabul with participation of key Afghan stakeholders. Finally, the draft reports have been submitted to the reference group, and commented upon by all involved through June-August.

A number of key recommendations and lessons learnt are highlighted by the evaluation as undertaken by the international consultant team. It should be noted that while the draft reports have been commented upon by the five Donors the responsibility of the analysis and the conclusions of the evaluation rests with the evaluation team. However, we would like to express our thanks to all individuals and officials involved for the support and valuable information which the team received and which highly facilitated the work of the evaluation.

This report is a short version, intended for a wider audience, of the findings and recommendations of the evaluation. The Main Evaluation Report, with additional Sector Studies, and pre-studies are available from the website of Danida's Evaluation Department www.evaluation.dk

Danida's Evaluation Department, October 2005.

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Map: Provinces & Towns in Afghanistan



List of Abbreviations, Acronyms and Afghan Terms

AIA	Afghan Interim Authority
AIHRC	Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission
ARTF	Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund
ASP	Afghanistan Stabilisation Programme
ATA	Afghan Transitional Authority
CDC	Community Development Committee
DACAAR	Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees
Danida	Danish International Development Assistance
DAARTT	Danish Assistance to Afghan Rehabilitation and Technical Training
DAC	Danish Afghanistan Committee
DDG	Danish De-Mining Group
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Program
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
GoA	Government of Afghanistan
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization
HR	Human Rights
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Persons
IOM	International Organization of Migration
ISAF	International Security Assistance Forces
LOTFA	Law and Order Trust Fund Afghanistan
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
NSP	National Solidarity Programme
OCHA	(UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OEF	Operation Enduring Freedom
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
RC NL	The Red Cross Society of the Netherlands
SCA	Swedish Committee for Afghanistan
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNAMA	United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner of Refugees
UNICEF	United Nation International Children and Education Fund

UNOPS	United Nations Office of Project Services
UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Service
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation Afghan Terms

Afghan Terms

Hoquq	The mediation part of the Afghan Ministry of Justice
Mufti	Islamic cleric
Mujahideen	Islamic warrior – those fighting the Soviet invasion
Taliban	Literally ‘student’ (of Quran schools). In the Afghan context the Islamic movement that held power between 1996-2001.

1. Introduction

'We are not satisfied with the level of assistance provided by the international community, but we are very pleased to see that the Donors send teams to check how their assistance has been utilised.'

(Community Council, Enjil District, Province of Herat)

Denmark, Ireland, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK (the five "Donors") decided that their aid to Afghanistan from 2001 to 2005 was to be evaluated to find out how relevant, effective and efficient it had been, what impact it had had and how sustainable it was. The evaluation was also to assess how the aid providers had coordinated their efforts amongst themselves and with the Afghan authorities, how well the aid had connected with the longer-term problems and whether there was coherence between different aid instruments, including the political, humanitarian, development and civilian-military parts. Based on the findings, the evaluation was to provide recommendations for the future and identify lessons learnt.

The task was given to a team of independent international and Afghan consultants, selected according to experience with the sectors to be covered, gender balance and ability to work in a culturally sensitive way in Afghanistan. In January-February 2005 the team studied the documentation and interviewed representatives from the aid agencies in the five Donor countries and from the international organisations and NGOs through which most of the aid had been channelled. In March-April field studies took place in Afghanistan, where the team split into sub-teams that went to the different parts of the country, meeting with a total of 692 stakeholders and beneficiaries.¹ Subsequently, the information was analysed and the findings discussed with the Donors, the Afghan authorities and other stakeholders. The Evaluation Report was finalised in September 2005.²

The Donors had limited experience in cooperation with Afghanistan, except for some NGOs from the five countries. The development cooperation that took place

1 The quotations in this Report are from the interviews undertaken by the evaluation.

2 The full Evaluation Report covers in detail the same issues as in this short version. Attached to it are the Terms of Reference, lists of the interviewees and of the available documentation used by Danida's Evaluation Department and a CD-ROM with additional background studies. The Evaluation Report is available from the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs (www.evaluation.dk, tel. +45 33 92 00 00).

in the 1960s and 1970s had Germany, the USA and the USSR as the main donors before it was interrupted by a communist coup in 1978, which was followed by permanent armed conflict up to the present time. In Pakistan, NGOs, including some from the five Donor countries, started solidarity-based aid delivery to the 3 million refugees who had arrived there by the early 1980s. This developed into their provision of cross-border humanitarian aid, and from 1989 onwards also of rehabilitation and smaller development projects inside Afghanistan. Throughout the 1990s most UN agencies and NGOs maintained head offices in Pakistan, with limited staff based in Afghanistan.

The 9-11 attack placed Afghanistan at the centre of international politics and development cooperation. The five Donors, except for Ireland and Sweden, participated with military forces in the US-led attack, “Operation Enduring Freedom” (OEF), on the Taliban regime and Al Qaeda in October 2001. The Donors took part in the subsequent international provision of humanitarian and development aid with grants of Euro 791 million, or 25% of the entire aid to Afghanistan from 2001 to mid-2004:³ 383 million from the UK, 165 million from the Netherlands, 123 million from Sweden, 99 million from Denmark and 21 million from Ireland.⁴ With the exception of Ireland, their military contributions were also to support their civilian interventions under UN-mandated NATO command in Northern Afghanistan. Their contributions exceeded the initial pledges and were disbursed in full and on time. The largest donor was the US and Japan was the second largest.

The Afghanistan intervention was unique, and demanding for the Donors in addressing a complex emergency, including large humanitarian and development challenges, within the context of ongoing nation-, state- and peace-building processes, as elaborated in the Background and Lessons Learnt sections below.

3 *The five Donors also made contributions through their membership of the European Union. These included, the entire contribution of their aid to Afghanistan would come closer to 30% than 25%.*

4 *Prior to the evaluation, the Donors had commissioned three background studies, including “Aid Flows to Afghanistan”, which provides an overview of the size of the grants and the channels used for aid provision. The financial information in this report is taken from “Aid Flows”, which is available on the CD-ROM attached to the full Evaluation Report, or from www.evaluation.dk.*

2. The Afghanistan Background to the Aid

‘During the time of communism all educated people supported the Russians, but not the rural people. Now they see the same happening again.’

(Afghan NGO worker)

2.1 The Ethnic, Political and Gender Situation

The present borders of Afghanistan were drawn as a result of a British-Russian compromise in the 19th century on the creation of a buffer state between their empires, and do not reflect the regional distribution of the country’s ethnicities. Southern Afghanistan is mainly populated by Pashtuns; approximately half of the total population of some 23 million. Pashtuns live in the adjoining parts of Pakistan. Northern Afghanistan is inhabited by Turkmen, Uzbek and Tajik ethnicities. The central part of the country is populated by Hazaras, who have traditionally held an underprivileged position in society, partly due to their allegiance to Shia Islam rather than to the Sunni Islam followed by the majority of Afghans.

The Pashtuns were politically dominant until the changes in 2001, when the “Northern Alliance”, representing a diverse ethnic and religious opposition to the predominantly Pashtun Taliban, joined Operation Enduring Freedom and ended up on the winning side. By the early 1900s the then King had located Pashtuns in the North by force to strengthen his influence; many of them were displaced after the defeat of the Taliban. The balancing of the ethnicities has been a major concern for the nation-building endeavours of the present government. Traditionally, Afghan society is male dominated, with strong cultural and religious limitations to women’s participation in public life and employment.

Village elders and farmers interviewed in 16 villages in the Nangarhar Province gave very straightforward answers when asked whether women had been involved in the projects: *‘No’*. The response of a village headman in Shinwar district illustrates the challenge: *‘You know our (Pashtun) culture, women are not included in things like that’*.

Box 1: The Recent Conflicts in Afghanistan

The Soviet invasion in 1979 resulted in war and civil war in which the resistance armies acted in the name of Islam as holy warriors, “mujahideen”, supported militarily and financially by the US, Western and Islamic countries. Competing mujahideen parties/armies were created, operating out of the large refugee camps in Pakistan and Iran. In 1989 the Soviet troops withdrew and in 1992 Kabul was conquered by the mujahideen, only to be subjected to civil war between their parties, which destroyed the city and killed or displaced half of the inhabitants. Most of the country was under the control of regional “warlords” and local commanders. In the 1980s the mujahideen assassinated large numbers of educated people, notably teachers, while alleged communists were also killed or fled the country after 1992, depriving Afghanistan of a large part of its educated human resources.

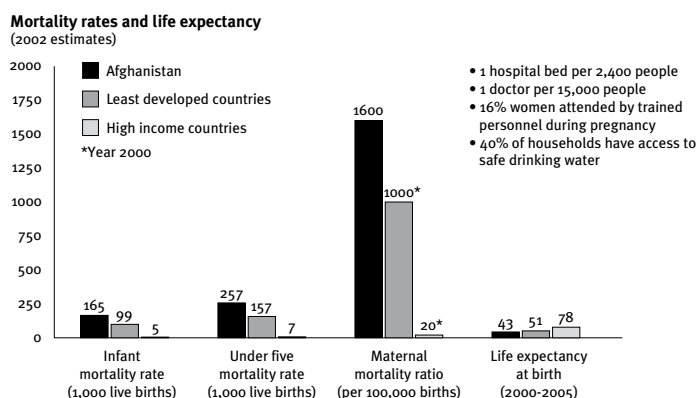
The radical Islamist Taliban faction reacted against the chaos and atrocities and took power in most of the country from 1994 onwards. It controlled all except the Northeast region by 1998, where the Northern Alliance resisted their advance. The Taliban regime liaised with international militant Islamists and harboured Al Qaeda camps, as had the mujahideen before it. However, its visible suppression of women and destruction of Buddha statues, recognised as part of the world’s cultural heritage, created international revulsion against the Taliban, which was not compensated for by the regime’s reduction of opium production. Under the more orderly regulation of society by the Taliban, NGOs were allowed to play an important role as providers of humanitarian aid, including medical aid, basic education, water and sanitation and agricultural inputs.

The invading US-led coalition in October 2001 cooperated with the Northern Alliance, warlords and commanders. The Taliban withdrew to the mountainous South and Southeast, from where they have continued armed resistance. In 2005 there has been an increase in attacks and kidnappings on the Iraqi pattern, which have been attributed to Al Qaeda.

2.2 The Humanitarian Situation and the Effects of the Wars

In 2004 Afghanistan ranked 173 out of 178 on the Human Development Index of the United Nations Development Programme. Life expectancy is extremely low, in line with the female literacy rate, while vulnerability to natural disasters is high, as demonstrated by the recent prolonged drought, earthquakes and floods. The gravity of these problems has been reinforced by the armed conflict since 1979.

Figure 1: Mortality Rates and Life Expectancy in Afghanistan – Estimates from 2000



The long conflict impacted negatively on relations between the citizens and the state, militarised society and weakened traditional civil society structures and the social fabric. It caused massive destruction of the environment and traditional agricultural livelihoods, including the felling of forest, the destruction of a large part of the raisin and almond production for which Afghanistan was famous, and the deployment of large numbers of landmines. It inhibited development and forced six million Afghans to flee to Iran and Pakistan, from where some made their way to Western countries, and to the displacement of approximately one million inside Afghanistan. While the production of narcotics (cannabis, and the economically more important opium/heroin) had started to grow in the 1970s, it boomed during the wars, and Afghanistan became one of the largest drug exporters in the world.

Despite all these changes, Afghans remained strongly influenced by their culture, traditions and religion. Their ethnic, tribal and family networks were safety nets in the absence of a functional state.

2.3 The Creation of the New Afghanistan

The design of the new Afghanistan was made by the international community, with the United States and the World Bank in the forefront, and its Afghan partners, as expressed in the Bonn Agreement of December 2001. The Agreement placed the responsibility for peacebuilding with the new Afghan Interim Authority, AIA, while the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan was established to assist the AIA with the political and development processes. International Security Assistance Forces, ISAF, later under UN-mandated NATO command, was to provide security in Kabul and later in the Northern part of the country, while the US-led forces continued the warfare against the Taliban in the South and South East. The five Donors, except for Ireland, contributed to ISAF. As a new institution in development cooperation, Provincial Reconstruction Teams, PRT, were created to combine the military intervention with humanitarian and development aid.

At a donor conference in January 2002, pledges of Euro 3.7 billion for humanitarian and development aid, including aid from the five Donors, reflected the urgent priority given to the rehabilitation of Afghanistan by the international donor community.

In June 2002 the AIA was transformed into the Afghan Transition Authority and Hamid Karzai was elected Chairman. A Constitutional Assembly, with 20% female representatives, approved a new constitution for the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in January 2004. In the presidential elections of October 2004, in which 78% of the electorate voted in spite of the difficult circumstances, Mr Karzai was elected President. Parliamentary elections (to the lower house of the new Parliament) took place in September 2005. These will finalise the transition to constitutional democracy and fulfil the Bonn Agreement with only a slight delay. While this political process has been successful, it has also entailed a cost of approximately Euro 120 million. The political system of Afghanistan requires 8-10 elections every decade. This is a large financial burden considering the income level of the country.

Early figures supported a positive outlook for economic recovery and growth, although the increase in 2002 and 2003 was at least partly due to reduced drought, income from expanded poppy production and rapid urban growth. The population of Kabul quadrupled from 2001-05, driven to a great extent by the incomes derived from the international community and by the large number of refugees seeking security and job opportunities. Contributing factors to economic development have been the introduction of a new currency, the Afghan, which remained fairly stable throughout the period, and large infrastructure aid projects.



Male Community Development Council (CDC) in the Sara-e-Naw village, Herat

While Afghanistan has received large amounts of aid, it was a common perception among people that they had not benefited as they should. However, the National Solidarity Programme, NSP, has been able to bring the aid to the villages in a visible and appreciated way. The individual villages are provided with an amount of money, which they receive guidance in using, in accordance with their own priorities, provided that they elect a male, and a female, Community Development Council. The CDCs constitute the villages' experience of local democracy and they have created a sense of ownership of the projects.

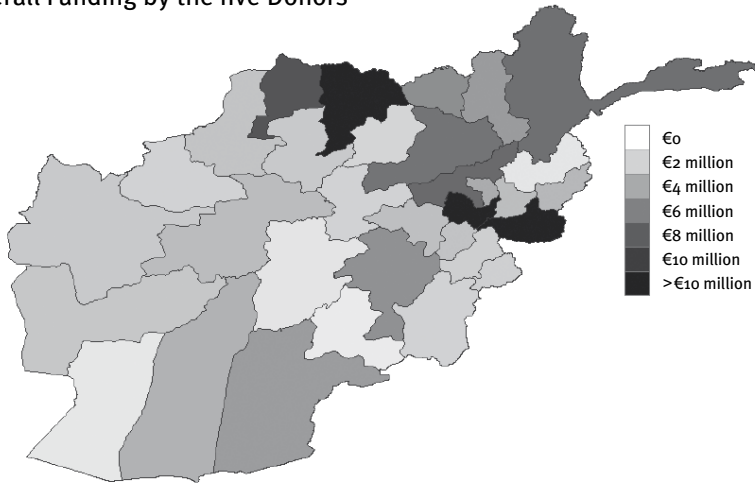
2.4 The Conditions for Aid Provision

When the international community started to plan for their humanitarian involvement in Afghanistan in late 2001 they faced a number of challenges. Sporadic fighting continued in parts of the country, where the de facto power rested with newly armed commanders, warlords and self-appointed Governors. Kabul had been taken over by one military faction, posing a threat to the forthcoming political process. Large numbers of people had been internally displaced by the bombing campaign. The Central and Local Administrations were extremely weak, both due to a neglect by the previous mujahideen and Taliban governments and by the sanctions that had been imposed since 1999. No international banking system functioned, infrastructure had been destroyed and large parts of the country suffered from the effects of a drought. The provision of aid since then has taken place in the context of a number of problems, which include:

- Slow progress in the establishment of the rule of law and the cooption of commanders to positions of power, which have been conducive to reduced state legitimacy, continued human rights violations, and land disputes.
- Weak management capacity and slow and uneven capacity building within the Afghan government, together with increased corruption, which have reduced the value of aid and the legitimacy of the state.
- A shortage of Afghans with management, foreign language and computer skills, which has led to competition and inflationary pay, draining both government and NGOs of core staff to the benefit of international organisations and private companies.
- Difficulty in attracting skilled senior international staff to what were considered to be hardship postings, resulting in some frustration among experienced Afghanistan aid workers, who often felt pushed aside by ignorant newcomers.
- The high visibility of international actors, often referred to as ‘NGOs’, including their, allegedly high, housing and transportation standards. When this coincided with a slower rehabilitation pace than the population had anticipated and the Government of Afghanistan had projected, anger turned against the international actors.
- Logistical, security and economic factors, which caused rampant price inflation in Kabul.
- Lack of baseline data, needs assessments and agreed benchmarks for rehabilitation and development, which has inhibited the measurement of progress and impact.
- A sharp increase in opium poppy cultivation and processing, which has negatively influenced the state-building and humanitarian processes. The Government warned that Afghanistan could become a ‘narco-mafia’ state if the problem was not promptly addressed. Donors responded with substantial support to anti-narcotics initiatives.
- Last, but not least, the continued conflict, which has increased the security risks, reduced aid provision to large parts of Afghanistan and increased the implementation costs.

Figure 2: Geographical Patterns of Aid Distribution within Afghanistan.
(Source: Aid Flows to Afghanistan)

Overall Funding by the five Donors



As indicated by the map, the security situation had a negative influence on distribution to the provinces in the South and South East. The high level of aid to some provinces under effective government control is partly explained by government salaries supported through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, ARTE, which was used by the donors as a main funding channel for the public sector.

3. The Donor Response

'Afghanistan was invented in 2001!'

(An international NGO representative in Afghanistan)

First, it should be noted that the five Donors made it a high priority to respond to the urgent need for humanitarian, rehabilitation and development aid and for assistance to the creation of a new, reunified democratic polity in Afghanistan. The situation required a quick mobilisation of political priority and financial resources from them, and they lived up to this requirement. Their pledges were quickly forthcoming, the contributions exceeded the initial pledges and were disbursed in full and on time, in contrast to the criticism the Government of Afghanistan has made of other donors.

3.1 The Design of the Interventions

The decision-making by the five Donor countries on the use of the funds was shaped by the need to respond urgently and simultaneously to humanitarian, rehabilitation, development and security imperatives. Given the unfamiliarity of Afghanistan, the five Donors relied to a great extent on the UN organisations, the World Bank, the USA and, to some extent, on their national NGOs with experience in Afghanistan regarding the design of the interventions, and to some extent for the subsequent channelling of aid.

Each Donor had its own priorities, requiring adequate human resources in the home agencies and in Afghanistan. However, with the partial exception of the UK, the human resources allocated by the Donors to the implementation of their policies did not quite match the high prioritisation of the task and the complicated aid environment in Afghanistan. Staffing was often at a junior level and/or without prior Afghanistan experience, and turnover rates were high. Given the continued conflict, complexity and uncertainty about the future of Afghanistan, the evaluation finds a need to remedy that situation.

While the creation of the ARTF was a successful novelty based on experience from earlier international interventions, the experience from earlier complex emergencies was not exploited systematically by the Donors, although this might have helped to address some of the problems encountered. This may be due to the fact that the

interventions were designed under considerable time pressure and with insufficient knowledge management capacity in the donor agencies.

The haste with which activities were subsequently implemented reflected both the urgent needs in Afghanistan and the pressure to demonstrate results given the high political priority attached to Afghanistan. The spirit of emergency; the difficult working conditions and the fact that each donor was to prioritise 2-3 sectors in a situation “where everything was needed” resulted in an overall low priority being given to gender, in spite of continued suppression of women,⁵ and to the environment, another traditional priority of the Donors.

3.2 Resulting Donor Strategies

While the five Donors together have contributed a significant part of the aid to Afghanistan, have a similar approach in their support of the Afghan Government and have collaborated well on particular issues, they have not acted as a group, and there has been no ‘European model’ for assistance to Afghanistan. Instead, the donor community as a whole accepted the US- and World Bank-designed ‘Bonn model’, emphasising the political processes and the minimum prerequisites for a functional (lean and efficient) state by prioritising the Ministry of Finance and the creation of a new police force and army. Not only has the US been the largest donor nation, its political and military influence in the new Afghanistan is uncontested.⁶

In their provision of aid, the five Donors had in common the fact that most of their aid was provided through the UN (40% of their total aid), the International Red Cross Committee, ICRC, (6%) and international NGOs (21%). They shared a high priority for the repatriation of refugees through the UNHCR and contributed significantly to state-building through the World Bank-managed Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund, which received 24% of their total aid.

⁵ *While the crisis context and the cultural traditions made it difficult for the donor community to give major aid for women, the important support for primary education, human rights and for National Solidarity Program was partly motivated by the gender aspects in these fields.*

⁶ *It is therefore interesting to note that the US Government Accountability Office, the investigative arm of Congress, stated in July 2005 that USAID had not developed a performance management plan to monitor projects, nor had it focused contractors’ efforts on developing project-specific performance plans, and had lacked a comprehensive strategy to direct its efforts.*

Table 1: The Twelve Largest Recipients of Aid from the Donors
(Source: Aid Flows to Afghanistan)

	Denmark		Ireland		Netherlands		Sweden		UK	
1	UNHCR	15.2%	ARTF	19.7%	ARTF	42.5%	SCA	17.9%	ARTF	28.6%
2	DACAAR	9.9%	Goal	9.2%	UNHCR	13.5%	UNHCR	16.2%	UNDP	17.1%
3	ARTF	9.8%	UNICEF	9.1%	OCHA	10.7%	UNICEF	15.6%	ASP	7.6%
4	DDG	7.1%	Concern	8.2%	UNICEF	7.8%	UNOPS	9.2%	GoA	7.2%
5	MRRD	7.0%	Trócaire	7.3%	WFP	7.5%	ICRC	7.1%	UNHCR	6.1%
6	WFP	6.7%	WFP	7.0%	UNDP	4.9%	ARTF	6.6%	WFP	5.1%
7	MoE	5.7%	UNHCR	6.2%	ICRC	4.6%	WFP	5.5%	UNICEF	4.6%
8	UNICEF	5.0%	Christian Aid	4.2%	IOM	1.2%	GoA	5.1%	ICRC	2.3%
9	ICRC	4.9%	IFRC	3.5%	BTHW	1.2%	OCHA	2.5%	WHO	2.1%
10	DAC	4.8%	HALO Trust	3.0%	SV	1.1%	AIAF	2.0%	IOM	2.0%
11	UNDP	3.5%	LOTFA	2.4%	HNI	0.9%	Forum Syd	1.9%	UNMAS	1.2%
12	DAARTT	2.8%	AIAF	2.4%	RC-NL	0.9%	IOM	1.4%	FAO	1.2%
		82.5%		82.2%		96.8%		91.1%		85.1%

All Donors but Ireland established embassies/representation offices in Afghanistan and contributed significantly to stabilisation through Provincial Reconstruction Teams. Denmark, the Netherlands and the UK collaborated with the International Organisation for Migration on the return of refugees and rejected asylum seekers from their countries. In addition, the five Donors had differing priorities, as shown in figure 3 below.

Ireland represents one end of the continuum, in which only civilian, that is political, humanitarian and development, parameters have been applied. A large part of its aid to Afghanistan has been channelled through Irish NGOs.

At the opposite end of the continuum is **the UK**. Here the military and civilian components appear to have been given equal importance, and synergy between the two components, in conflict management and other sectors, has been an objective in itself. The UK has prioritised a visible presence in Afghanistan at embassy and DFID level, which allows it to be operational in the pursuit of overall political and poverty eradication goals, along with a priority for state-building. The UK has been lead nation on counter-narcotics, and the return of asylum seekers has been a priority, while DFID has emphasised support for alternative livelihoods. Relatively little funding has been allocated to British NGOs working in Afghanistan.

The Netherlands decided at an early stage to channel most of its aid through the multilateral agencies, including a UN administered NGO fund with preference for

Dutch NGOs. The Netherlands has been a strong advocate for and supporter of coordination within the aid community. The military component and its interplay with civilian aid have also received considerable priority.

Swedish aid has been delivered mainly through multilateral channels. Sweden has been actively engaged in rebuilding the Kabul–Torkham highway within the context of a collaborative arrangement with the European Commission. The military component has been relatively modest and without institutionalised linkages to the civilian component. Swedish NGOs, in particular the Swedish Committee for Afghanistan, have received considerable government support for their activities, especially in the health and education sectors, and they played an important role in the initial design of the Swedish aid.

In the **Danish** case, the military component has been relatively large and attempts were made to combine it with the civilian aid, including that from Danish NGOs. In addition to the multilateral channels, considerable aid has been given to the Afghan Ministry of Education; water supply through the Danish Committee for Aid to Afghan Refugees (DACAAR); National Solidarity Programme through the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development; human rights; de-mining the Danish De-mining Group (DDG); and, on a smaller scale, for gender and the media. DACAAR participated in the Danish MFA's 'Afghanistan expert group'; however, they felt that their previous sector experience was under-utilised in the Danish strategy formulation.

Figure 3: Rough Overview of Intervention Areas Prioritised by the Donor Countries

	Main Aid Sectors	Own NGOs	Anti-Narcotics	Civil-Mil Action	Asylum Seekers	Military Interventions
Denmark	ARTF, UNHCR HR, NSP, Education	Medium	Low	Medium	High	Medium
Ireland	ARTF	High	Low	None	None	None
Netherlands	OCHA ARTF UNHCR	None	Low	High	High	Medium
Sweden	ARTF, UNHCR UNICEF, Health	Medium	Low	None	None	Low
The UK	State-building, Economic management, Alternative livelihoods	Low	High	High	High	High

4. Main Findings

'Democracy is not just political but is the participation of the people in all aspects of society. The political process is not alone democracy'.

(Leading Islamic cleric, Mufti, of a regional capital)



Deputy Chief of District in Shari Safa District, Zabol Province, with portrait of the President of Afghanistan, Hamid Karzai.

While the ministries in Kabul, in particular the Ministry of Finance and the new army and police, have received large amounts of aid, the civil servants at the provincial and district levels have very poor working conditions. The Afghan state is very centralised and there is little tradition for communication between the different levels of the administration or between the state and the citizens. Still, there is a strong sense of patriotic duty within the civil service that makes it work. Most of the public employees receive their modest salary from the Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund, which receives priority support from the five Donors. A general satisfaction with the election of Mr. Hamid Karzai as President was found amongst the population, as a sign of peace and stability.

4.1 Main Sector Findings

The main sectors examined are nation- and state-building, including human rights, assistance to and protection of refugees and internally displaced persons, assistance meeting basic needs and the cross-cutting gender and environmental issues.

4.1.1 Nation- and State-building and Human Rights

'Karzai is our new king!'

(Beneficiary in Balkh Province)

The political foundation of the new Afghanistan has been laid down, but the pace at which this has been done, the complexity of factional politics and the poor physical infrastructure have not yet allowed the consolidation of the structures. The civil service remained operational throughout decades of war and regime change, leaving in place the basic functions, which still constitute the modus operandi of the day-to-day public administration. Nevertheless, the solidity of these structures is now threatened by the alternative power structures. Where commanders have been co-opted into the local administration or have penetrated it by drawing on clan structures and networks, the use of state institutions may not make much difference to the people. To date these challenges have been difficult to stem, given the insufficient anti-corruption measures within the Afghan state, the poor management capacity, and the lack of vetting processes and of transparent and accountable procedures.

'There is corruption everywhere. The commanders are ruling. They still dominate the recruitment of positions at director level. Particularly in customs, traffic police, fiscal offices and court and justice.'

(University student)

Nation-building was based on the Bonn Agreement with its ambitious construction of the democratic polity, informally based on a co-optation strategy and formally secured with UNDP assistance. While the implementation thus far has been successful, the numerous elections will probably require international assistance for many years, the Afghan government being unlikely to meet the costs.

The US and the World Bank had set the overall guidelines for **state-building**, giving priority to the minimum prerequisites for the creation of a functional, lean and efficient state. Other key donor nations took over the lead responsibility for the sub-sectors, including the UK for counter-narcotics, while the Ministry of Finance has been a priority for several key donors, including the UK. Other Donors have contributed substantially to state-building through the ARTE, and in the case of Denmark, through management support for the Ministry of Education.

While the intervention has successfully obtained the minimum requirements, the question remains whether these represented the optimal choice of strategy. The evaluation finds that it would have been wise to have placed greater emphasis on justice and on the sub-national levels of administration, and, more broadly, that it would have been better if the state had been more interventionist from the outset in order to service its citizens in more visible and effective ways. For aid to have been directed towards these goals, the five Donors would have been required to take an approach that was more independent of the US and the World Bank.

It was found that the results obtained were based to a large extent on “capacity-buying”, through consultants on international contracts, rather than capacity building of the staff in the Afghan public administration. This reflected the pressure for quick results, but in the long term this balance must shift to allow for sustainable results. Greater awareness of this challenge has been emerging within the donor community from 2004

‘Human rights are new in Afghanistan. They are reflected also in the new constitution. But there are no improvements in government institutions and violations continue. Neither Islam nor human rights are observed.’

(Member of a council of Islamic clerics)

Human rights awareness has been given a high priority and there are good reasons why this should remain the case. The need for human rights work in Afghanistan is almost inexhaustible, be it human rights education and training, the rights of vulnerable groups, monitoring and investigation, or transitional justice. The Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission, AIHRC, therefore has a large mandate to fulfil, especially as justice and law enforcement remain weak. However, the Commission is not yet very well connected with the Afghan state and its potential for collaboration with local NGOs and civil society is currently under-exploited. It is important that the Commission makes monitoring a key priority, and for the

Donors to support and back the AIHRC actively when it highlights human rights violations.

4.1.2 Stabilisation

Nation- and state-building have been supported by the contributions to the stabilisation of the country provided by the UNDP programme for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration, DRR of ex-combatants not included in the new army, and by the international military Provincial Reconstruction Teams, PRT, which have also taken on some humanitarian and development tasks.

The DDR programme overall appears to have been relatively successful, especially in relation to Demobilisation and Disarmament. In addition to some 50,000 men who have been disarmed, demobilised and supported in finding alternative livelihoods, another important accomplishment has been to limit the legal cover of the commanders, thus encouraging them to seek peaceful co-option into the political system. The results obtained have, according to all stakeholders, been conditioned by the interest of the main players in becoming peaceful politicians, allowing the DDR a catalytic role in this process, and by the visible background presence of the PRTs.



Official of the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration programme, DDR, with Afghan soldier

The DDR programme has managed to collect an impressive quantity of large weapons from the warlords, including this "Stalin organ". In this task it has been assisted by the PRTs. However, there are still a lot of small arms in circulation in Afghanistan and many irregular armed groups. Among the five Donors, the DDR programme has been supported by the UK.

However, no illusions are entertained about the sustainability of the results of the DDR if these conditions do not hold. The programme has curtailed the commanders' power, but they and their networks have not been dismantled completely. The continued widespread availability of weapons in Afghanistan, together with the commanders and their followers, are potentially destabilising factors.

'DDR is completed 50%. Warlords and commanders still have guns. If these are not collected there will still be tension at local level.'

(Member of an Islamic council of clerics)

PRT

"Provincial Reconstruction Teams" is the term used in the Afghan context for military units, under the US-led Coalition or under NATO's ISAF force, which are supposed to combine their military tasks with the provision of humanitarian or development activities. In addition to the military staff, they are therefore equipped with civilian staff and budgets. The Donors, except Ireland, participated in ISAF PRTs. In the Northern provinces, Denmark, the Netherlands, Sweden and the UK have contributed to the military and civilian PRT activities in different ways, as illustrated in figure 4 below. No attempt has been made to harmonise the activities of the PRTs in Afghanistan, or those under ISAF, beyond the overall common objectives of contributing to stability, security and the effective outreach of government authority in the provinces concerned.

According to the evaluation, the PRTs/satellites maintained by the Donors contribute to the above objective by:

- Maintaining a friendly and visible military presence.
- Gathering information for the government police and intelligence service, and for the US-led Coalition forces.
- Providing the Afghan New Police with various forms of support.
- Supporting the provincial and local administration.

In addition to these activities, the practices and priorities of the PRTs vary a great deal.

Figure 4: Overview of the PRT Engagement of the Donors

Donor Nation	Military PRT Contribution	Military Budget	Civilian Staff	Civilian Budget p.a.	Development Activities	Governance Activities
UK	PRTs in Mazar and Maymana Some 400 staff	Not available	DEVAD* POLAD*	Approx. Euro 3 mio.	Rapid impact Rebuild police stations	Rebuild courthouses
The Netherlands	Dutch PRT in Baghlan (Some 170 staff)	Euro 17 mio. (rough staff estimate)	POLAD	Euro 5 mio. to date plus 1.3 mio. ear- marked for Baghlan	Rapid impact projects, plans for support to NGOs	Support to the Governor
Denmark	Satellite Samangan, 6 staff Satellite Badak-Shan (German-led), 40 staff	Approx. Euro 22 mio. (incl. other ISAF-related costs)	DEVAD DEVAD	Approx. Euro 400,000	Water supply	Training civil servants
Sweden	Contingent Mazar, 75 staff	Not available	None	None	None	None

*DEVAD: Development Adviser; POLAD: Political Adviser.

It was found that the PRTs have performed very well in the important tasks that lie within their particular expertise – the provision of stability and support for the police – thus promoting an enabling environment for development. The staff should be commended for their ability to combine a show of force with cultural and political sensitivity. Scope for further improvement is found in:

- Improved institutional PRT memory through more elaborate handover mechanisms.
- Greater inclusion of the local NGO community in information gathering.
- A higher degree of realism in the analysis of local power structures, including the continued importance of the commander structure.

By contrast, they have performed less well in development tasks, which have generally not been well prepared and coordinated with the national priorities of Afghanistan, and where the staffing of the PRTs has been critically low in terms of numbers and experience in relation to professional development skills and the magnitude of the political and financial investment. This situation appears difficult to remedy, given restricted Afghanistan desk staffing in the home ministries, limited recruitment possibilities and the complicated relations with the different home ministries. In addition, there is reason to believe that cost-effectiveness is low.

Nevertheless, ambitions still seem to be high, if rather vague, regarding the role of the PRTs in overall societal development, in particular within the governance sector on the level of the provinces where they operate.

4.1.3 Refugees and IDPs

'We cannot return home until the government uses its power to control the commanders, otherwise these will continue to punish us for our ethnicity.'

(Pashtun IDPs from Maimana)

Afghanistan witnessed a massive return and reintegration of 3.5 million refugees and more than 1 million internally displaced persons, IDPs, during the evaluation period. Both processes have been managed well by the UNHCR. However, two concerns should be mentioned:

The first relates to the high number of returnees settling in Kabul for reasons of security and job availability, and to the fact that only 22 per cent of those returning over the evaluation period have been assisted with shelter rebuilding because of the requirement for land ownership and of declining funding towards the end of the period.

The second concern is that the donor funding for return and reintegration has been substantially reduced since 2003, as has the importance attributed to return and resettlement. However, the number of returnees remains the same as in the last 3 years and those now returning are generally poorer and more likely to be landless than earlier returnees.

An innovative and timely process has been initiated by UNHCR with the Governments of Afghanistan, Iran and Pakistan to shift the focus from refugee return to migration management. This process deserves the full backing of the five Donors.

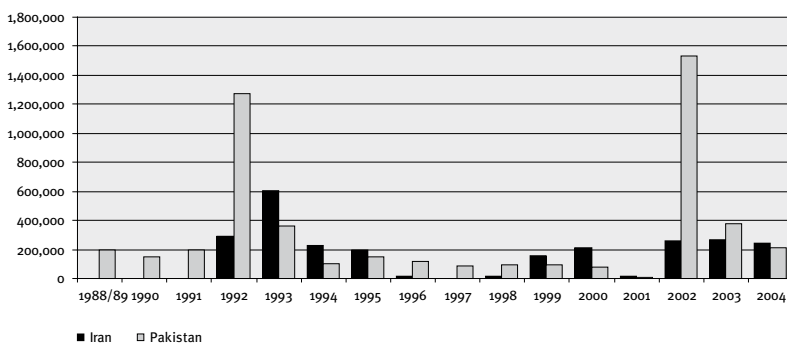
Further support and protection are needed for the remaining group of IDPs, mostly nomads. Here, efforts should be concentrated on finding political or developmental solutions to the security and ecological challenges that either inhibit return or prevent the permanent settlement of the IDPs in the areas where they are currently displaced.



UNHCR shelter in Old Kandabar village, Kandahar Province

One of the greatest accomplishments of the new Afghanistan and the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees has been the return of 4.5 million Afghans from internal and external displacement. Support for this operation has been a priority for the five Donors.

Figure 5: The Return of Refugees to Afghanistan from Iran and Pakistan, 1988 - June 2004 (Source UNHCR)



4.1.4 The Coverage of Basic Needs and Securing of Livelihoods

The Donors have made substantial contributions towards meeting the basic needs of the Afghan population in the education, health, water and sanitation and livelihood sectors, and have funded the de-mining that is a prerequisite for rehabilitation and development. All interventions are regarded as highly needed, though many

were initially based on limited needs assessment, and subsequent monitoring and evaluation have been lacking. What is notable is the low support for the agricultural sector until mid 2005, given both its importance to the Afghan economy and substantial NGO involvement in this sector prior to 2001.



Open air school in Surkh Rod District, Nangarhar Province

A major accomplishment of the aid has been the rehabilitation and further development of primary education after the Taliban. Since 2002, 5 million children have been enrolled, one third of them girls. This has created considerable pressure for the construction of new schools, educating teachers and developing education materials, and it has been difficult for the quality of education to match the rise in quantity. Primary education is a priority for several of the five Donors and a top priority for Denmark.

As for **education**, the ‘Back to School’ campaign led by the United Nations Children Fund has been successful, increasing school enrolment to five million children by 2005, including girls previously deprived of public education opportunities. Given this massive enrolment, the challenge now is to improve the quality of the education, secure appropriate teaching facilities, and improve the planning and management capacity of the Ministry of Education.

The **health sector** has undergone a major restructuring with the introduction of the Basic Package of Health Services. The Donors have funded this sector primarily through the Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund, UN agencies and the ICRC, and through implementing NGOs. So far, the Government of Afghanistan has lacked the capacity and ability to assume its stewardship roles. Given the massive health problems faced by the Afghan population, the health sector is in need of greater and more comprehensive attention.

A woman in Rabat Sangi, Herat said: *'We have lots of problems in reaching the clinic. We have one doctor for more than 30 villages. When we reach it, there may be 100 people waiting, and only 50 get help. We are told to come back another time and then it is the same. Emergency cases cannot be helped. We have to go to the city, and this is more difficult and too expensive.'*



Pharmacist in the village clinic of Rabate Sangi, Herat Province

In spite of considerable international support for the health sector, not least from Sweden through the Swedish Afghanistan Committee, which is an important actor in this sector, there is still a long way to go before the majority of the Afghan population has access to an efficient health system.

Except for Denmark, the Donors have not given high priority to **water and sanitation**. Efforts to supply safe drinking water and latrines for the population have been judged both important and cost-effective. The establishment of an Integrated Water Resource Management system, which is also important for agricultural production and protection of the environment, should have been prioritised at an earlier stage.

By contrast, the **livelihood** sector has been highly prioritised, through support for the World Food Programme, the government's national programmes, and various alternative livelihood initiatives, including those within the counter-narcotics campaign. Projects with a development orientation and larger beneficiary involvement, such as the National Solidarity Programme, were found more appropriate than the

more emergency oriented ones, including a range of short-term projects primarily aimed at assisting women.



Water pump in the village of Bala Karza, Dand District of Zabul Province

The stable provision of safe water is a top priority for the village people. One of the most important providers of wells, in the context of rural development, is the Danish Committee for Assistance to Afghan Refugees, DACAAR, which is supported by various donors, including Denmark.

4.1.5 Gender and Environment

'Violence against women remains dramatic in Afghanistan in its intensity and pervasiveness, in public and private spheres of life.'

(Professor Yakin Ertürk, Special Rapporteur of the
UN Commission on Human Rights on Violence Against Women)

While notable results have been achieved in primary education for girls, the securing of women's right to stand for election and the emphasis placed on the rights of

women in the Constitution, less is seen when it comes to policy development for the Government of Afghanistan and a change in the daily lives of the rural population. The gender mainstreaming that donors and the government have subscribed to seems not to have had the desired impact, while recognising that issues related to women, which is what this is primarily about, entail a range of cultural and religious constraints and need careful handling.

Afghanistan is faced with a critical and unprecedented environmental problem that affects the present and future livelihoods of millions of Afghans. The lack of safe drinking water, desertification due to the drought, the lowered water table, and the loss of 70 per cent of natural forest over the 30 last years are all alarming signals. As worrying is the low attention environmental security has received from the Government of Afghanistan and the Donors.

4.2 Findings Related to the Evaluation Criteria

The interventions by the five Donor countries are generally considered highly **relevant** to the prevailing background, related to the needs of the beneficiaries and to GoA policies as well as to the priorities of the Donor countries. The exceptions are the relatively low priority given to support for agriculture, women and the environment – understandable in the light of the crisis spirit, but something which needs to be addressed – and part of the civilian aid provided by the PRTs.

The overall **coherence** between the different aid instruments – political, humanitarian, rehabilitation, development and stabilisation – and between donor and GoA policies has been a challenge under rapidly changing, difficult conflict conditions. However, the donors have been largely successful in supporting the government's priorities and in showing the necessary flexibility in relation to the provision of the aid needed at different periods of time. As far as the interplay between stabilisation, aid and the ISAF PRTs is concerned, it has been possible to obtain synergy between the PRT contribution towards stabilisation and the creation of an aid-enabling environment.

The evaluation finds that aid overall has been rather well **connected** with the longer-term development needs identified by the GoA as well as with interconnected problems of the policy of Afghan authorities, with the partial exception of the justice sector. As concerns capacity building of local structures at provincial and district levels, a more mixed picture was observed. Sustainability is difficult to measure at this early stage. However, the absence of a serious attempt to strengthen and connect with the justice sector, as well as the lack of effective protection of

human rights and personal security, pose a threat to the future sustainability of the new Afghanistan. The financial sustainability of the various interventions is another major concern, in the light of the expected future incomes of the Government and its consequent ability to assume increasing responsibility for functions presently covered through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund.

Overall, the **coordination** of the aid has worked well in most sectors at the central level, whereas there is a general disconnection between the capital and the provincial and district levels, with coordination systems often less efficient at these levels.

Effectiveness represents a mixed picture, with the most positive elements coming from the provision of humanitarian aid, in particular regarding the return of refugees and IDPs and the rehabilitation of the water supply. In the primary education sector, assistance has been very effective in terms of quantity, whereas the quality of teaching is in need of improvement. In the health sector, coverage is low.

The nation-building efforts have effectively materialised the objectives of the Bonn agreement, though the implementation of the constitution has fallen behind. State-building has been effective in relation to the key budgetary and fiscal functions, while there has been little progress in most other parts of the state, including the key justice sector. The PRT and DDR contributions to stabilisation and the strengthening of the state have been effective, given the absence of major upheavals, to which they would have been vulnerable.

It follows from the above that the **impact** of aid can be expected to be considerable, provided that there is sufficiently effective action in civil service and justice reform to curtail the risk of criminalisation of the state and that open conflict comes to an end. Both prerequisites will require the continued and active presence of the aid community in Afghanistan for a considerable period of time. So will the prospects for the financial sustainability of the Afghan state.

Regarding the cost-effectiveness aspect of **efficiency**, it has been difficult to obtain information, but all factors point downwards: logistics, security overheads, an inflated price level for support costs and high manpower expenses related to capacity buying. The development aid provided by the PRTs appears to have been particularly expensive.

In the timeliness of aid provision, the overall picture is positive, with the notable exceptions of civil service reform outside the Ministry of Finance in Kabul, and justice reform, where the initiatives have been very slow in getting off the ground.

4.3 Findings Related to the Donors

Danish contributions, outside the multilateral channels, were found to have had a positive impact on stabilisation, water supply, progress in primary education including the investment in teachers' education and teaching materials, which is expected to yield future results. The management capacity of the Ministry of Education has been a bottleneck, which might have been ameliorated through the assignment of a larger number of expert staff to the sector. Similarly, the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission could probably have benefited from a closer involvement by Denmark, again through additional representation and/or more expert staff.

Irish contributions were directed to several sectors through Irish NGOs, while maintaining a humanitarian approach. This enabled Ireland to economise on manpower and transactions costs. The price has been a lack of influence in the relevant sectors in Afghanistan, although some of the NGOs have contributed significantly to policy debates and have undertaken innovative capacity-building within Afghan NGOs and civil society.

The Netherlands decided almost from the start to concentrate its aid on the ARTF and multilateral channels, including NGO support through a UN administered fund, with the exception of some civilian aid provided by the Dutch Provincial Reconstruction Team. The Netherlands has been a consistent advocate of multilateral coordination and un-earmarked funding, thus limiting its opportunities to prioritise specific development sectors in Afghanistan.

Sweden's greatest and most valuable input has been to the health sector through the Swedish Afghanistan Committee. The networking of this Committee, in Afghanistan and in Sweden, has given Sweden greater influence over policy than might have been expected from a modestly staffed representation office. Furthermore, Sweden has used its expertise to undertake joint road construction with the European Commission, thus being the only Donor to implement projects directly with the EC. Unlike the other Donors, Sweden did not combine its Provincial Reconstruction Team contribution with civilian activities.

The UK has been a major player in Afghanistan. DFID has been a major donor, supporting state-building and economic reform and becoming the largest donor to the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund. DFID has increased its support for alternative livelihoods since 2002 combined with the UK lead nation role in Counter-Narcotics. Further, the UK has been a major Provincial Reconstruction Team

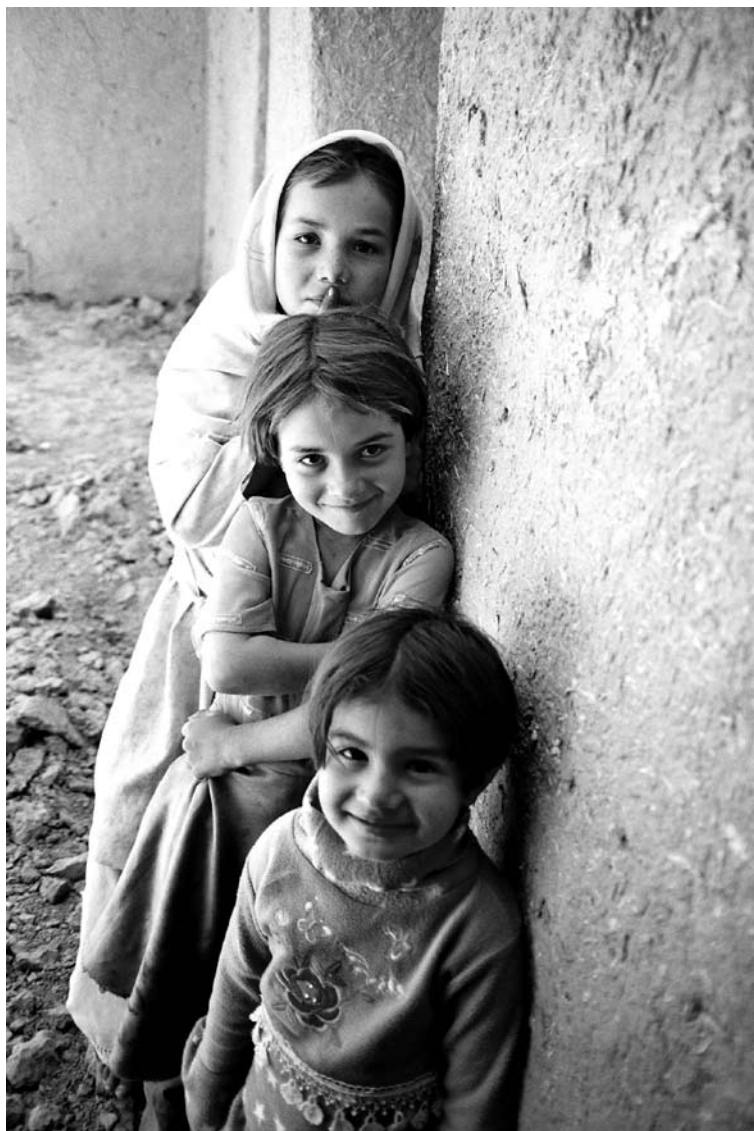
supplier. Given the size of the British financial contributions and of the human resources devoted to the undertaking, a more visible effect of the UK engagement in state-building might have been expected. Within Counter-Narcotics, the UK has mustered donor support for its approach, which emphasises alternative livelihoods, but there has been a tension with US engagement in the issue, given the latter's emphasis on poppy eradication. Within the Provincial Reconstruction Teams, the UK has had an important military lead role for the contributions from Denmark and Sweden.

4.4 Findings Related to the Implementation Channels

There is widespread agreement that the ARTF has been a very useful funding channel, reducing each Donor's administrative costs while ensuring compliance with GoA policy priorities. The transaction cost is low, while transparency is high. Three concerns were noted, however. One relates to the increasing sums of money spent on paying salaries, reducing the funding available for rehabilitation and development projects. The second is the donors' increased use of preferred funding allocations, (although this is a necessity for some donors due to more rigid budget allocation procedures), and the third is the minimal Afghan involvement in setting policy directions.

There is a major concern related to the policy development and handling capacity of the Government of Afghanistan, and its general dependency on 'bought expertise', though some ministries have proven ability. More concerted and better co-ordinated efforts are required to increase the government's capacity to handle development, including at provincial and district levels.

The UN agencies and international organisations have in general performed well (UNHCR performance has been excellent), though at a fairly high cost due to additional security measures and high living and transaction costs. The NGO sector presents a more mixed picture. The very real achievements of the professional organisations, implementing the majority of UN and government initiated programmes and projects, tend to have been overshadowed by the criticism levelled at the large number of newly established NGOs.



Girls returned to their village from a refugee camp.

5. Overall Conclusions

The evaluation finds that the aid, combined with internal Afghan political stabilisation and economic recovery, has produced successful responses to the humanitarian challenge, to the need to rehabilitate vital parts of the Afghan polity and society, and, to a certain extent, to the challenge of sustainable development. In particular, the following accomplishments are noted:

- The realisation of the political process, which has seen a visible government installed, the new constitution adopted, and a president elected in a way that promoted peace, stabilisation and regime legitimacy in the eyes of the majority of the population.
- The promotion of stability by the DDR Programme and the PRTs.
- The promotion of return, agricultural development and reduced numbers of victims from mines through significant progress in de-mining.
- The establishment of the basic requirements for a working state apparatus in terms of
 - A Ministry of Finance able to manage basic budgetary and fiscal state functions in cooperation with the ARTE, which has served this purpose well.
 - The exercise of a degree of state authority over most of the territory.
- Mainly adequate responses to the humanitarian imperative in terms of
 - Emergency aid through food for work programmes, which reduced the impact of drought.
 - The fast and successful resolution of a large part of the refugee and IDP problem, which ensured the return of 3.5 million refugees and 1 million IDPs.
- Some progress in meeting the basic needs of the population, most notably in primary education where 5 million children now attend school, improved access to water and sanitation, and some of the development programmes, such as the Microfinance Investment Support Facility and the National Solidarity Programme. By contrast, progress in health and short-term livelihood interventions still leaves much to be desired.

- In addition, large infrastructure projects are supposed to lay the foundations for the enhancement of the already ongoing economic recovery in society at large.

Interviewees in the five Donor countries stressed the above accomplishments, along with others, including the work of the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC). There seemed to be a general conviction that ‘Afghanistan is on the right track, although there may still be a long way to go’. Without questioning the commendable results achieved under difficult conditions, the evaluation has found progress in rehabilitation and development less stable than perceived by the Donors, for the reasons elaborated below.

Unintended Consequences of Democracy

Below the surface, political stabilisation is less firmly rooted than at first appears. Open conflict with the ‘Neo-Taliban’ still continues. Endeavours to unite the nation through coalition building under democratic procedures have had unintended consequences. Parts of the state have been captured by political appointees, who include former warlords and commanders. These lack the needed management motivation and capacity and are prone to corruption and crime, thus jeopardising the credibility of nation- and state-building. The numerous elections required by the new system lead to long periods of impasse, as they entail the replacement of the higher echelons of the civil service.

While such ‘democratic excess’ may be unavoidable in a difficult transition period, it would have been desirable to give higher donor priority to the strengthening of the justice sector, which has received limited support. It appears that the donor community has been satisfied in this respect with the existence of the AIHRC, although AIHRC operational capacity is constrained by its lack of connectedness with the Afghan polity and with the NGO community. So far, the donors have also failed to develop explicit anti-corruption policies in relation to the functioning of the Afghan state.

Parallel State-Building

‘We are the most marginalised group in society’.

(Senior civil servant in the *Hoquq*, Samangan Province)

A reform of the civil service is needed towards a merit-based system that is able to manage service delivery effectively. While such reform is now underway, it appears questionable to the evaluation team whether its content will be adequate in relation

to needs it has identified. Rather obvious possibilities for strengthening the existing civil service have not been utilised. Simple and visible improvements in facilities and work conditions at the sub-national levels, of communications between the different levels of the civil service and between these and the citizens have apparently not been attempted.

Instead, donor emphasis has focused on the provision of the minimum requirements for the work of the MOF, through the establishment of 'parallel systems' of internationally paid and funded project staff. To a certain extent, this has been more about capacity buying than capacity building. The overall result has been to create extreme discrepancies in the remuneration of staff supposedly doing the same work. Internationally funded staff, including Afghans and the staff of internationally funded Afghan NGOs – often rather young people, whose main qualifications are a command of English and computer literacy – receive salaries which are many times higher than those of experienced Afghan civil servants, who, in order to be able to support a family, are forced to look for supplementary incomes. This has bred widespread resentment.

The Aid Misuse Debate

The GOA has been very outspoken in its criticism of aid manpower costs, directing this criticism at the international NGOs especially. As a result, the evaluation team found a widely shared picture in the population at large of a group of culprits called NGOs (a term including the UN agencies), who earn ridiculously high salaries, drive expensive cars, and live in expensive houses. In addition, it is a common perception that aid providers often make big and easy money by chain-outsourcing tasks to sub-contractors, with each of the 'Chinese boxes' keeping an overhead for itself, leaving an anecdotal 10 per cent of the original grant to its intended recipients.

While this discourse highlights some genuine problems about high transaction costs, and misuse of the NGO concept, it also carries the risk of turning honest NGOs into scapegoats with a 'public enemy' reputation. This is to the detriment of their potential to deliver aid more effectively, including on cost, than other aid providers and it reinforces government control of aid delivery at a time when it has not always had the capacity to handle it well. Among the Donors, the prevailing response to this problem was to voice satisfaction that the Afghan government is demonstrably in the driver's seat, and to express the conviction that the NGOs have to get used to the new realities that will reduce the freedom of action they enjoyed under Taliban rule.

However, a recent tendency has been observed within the donor community in Afghanistan to take a more critical attitude to government management capacity and to the problems of corruption, accompanied by a more cautious attitude towards the limitations of NGO capacity. This is reflected in criticism emanating from key Afghan informants of alleged donor complacency in assuming responsibility for the use of the aid.

The Impact of Insecurity on Effectiveness and Efficiency

At present, political stability has not been matched by security. Insecurity has resulted in a concentration of aid in the most secure parts of Afghanistan (the capital and the central and northern regions), at the expense of some of the neediest parts of the country. This imbalance has reduced the overall effectiveness and coverage of the aid provided.

Moreover, the security problems have entailed increased transaction costs for aid delivery. The evaluation team did not come across any attempt to detail the scale of these costs, apparently because the aid providers did not generally perceive lack of funds as a problem. However, an unofficial estimate is an average 'security overhead' of 20 per cent. In respect of Kabul, this figure excludes indirect costs resulting from the high security environment of the aid community, time lost because of the limited freedom of movement in the city, and very high accommodation and other costs.

In conclusion, the evaluation finds that aid to Afghanistan has produced important results, at a high financial cost due to difficult security and logistical problems. Aid has been unevenly distributed between regions and communities, and has sometimes failed to target the most needy, not least in the agricultural sector. A sustainable impact will require long-term development and stabilisation support to Afghanistan and will require the donor community to take an active stance to promoting the rule of law, the institution of measures against corruption and effective service delivery by the state. Furthermore, the donor community should be prepared for different future peace-building and conflict scenarios.

6. Main Recommendations

1. The Donors should reaffirm their commitment to supporting the development of Afghanistan for at least the next ten years, considering Afghanistan's poor income generation potential and the still prevailing uncertainty about future development scenarios. (This commitment is already under discussion in some of the Donor countries, within their given planning horizons).
2. The Donors should give high priority to the effective installation of the rule of law and to the fight against corruption. This should be combined with the full implementation of the constitution and its further dissemination to the Afghan public.
3. To enhance the ability of the Government of Afghanistan to assume full responsibility for future development, the Donors should, in cooperation with other donors, support the development of an interim National Development Strategy, establish a transparent system for the benchmarking of aid, combined with support for capacity building at all levels of government and for meeting immediate needs at sub-national levels.
4. The Donors should endeavour to obtain a more even geographical distribution of aid and targeting of the poorest by investigating whether factors other than security are creating obstacles to even distribution, and seek alternative implementation channels such as civil society organisations and local entrepreneurs.
5. In order to safeguard the humanitarian and development contributions of the NGOs working in Afghanistan, the Donors should actively counter unwarranted criticism, correct misinformation and use their influence to ensure that adequate Government supervision and self-regulation of the NGO community is put in place.
6. The Donors should continue to provide support for the Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund, support the formal inclusion of the Government of Afghanistan in a policy forum, and promote a gradual handover of financial control to the government.
7. The donor community at large should coordinate their practices in relation to the recruitment and remuneration of staff so as not to out-compete the government and to avoid the creation of a skewed labour market. The Donors should bring up this issue in the relevant fora since it cannot be solved by individual donor action, however commendable the attempts.

Recommendation 1 entails significant future costs combined with multidimensional system change in a large and poor country. The other recommendations probably entail modest cost increases in the short run, but have the potential for greater savings in the future. Essentially, they are more demanding politically for the Donors than financially.

7. Towards a New Paradigm: Lessons Learned

The Afghanistan intervention is unique in addressing a complex emergency within the context of ongoing nation-, state- and peace-building processes. However, it takes place within a new framework paradigm that began to emerge in the early 1990s and reached its peak after the 9-11 attack. While earlier interventions related either to the humanitarian imperative of helping disaster victims or to the poverty-related needs of economic and social development, the new paradigm for donor action typically also includes a comprehensive set of political, economic and military imperatives:

International political imperatives:

- The 'war'/struggle against terror.
- The wish to avoid large movements of refugees arriving in the donor countries.
- The struggle against organised, international crime, including the drugs trade.

National political imperatives:

- The introduction of democracy in the recipient country, often equating to the creation of a new polity.
- The enforcement of respect for human rights.
- The promotion of gender equality.

Economic imperatives:

- The creation of an open market economy, integrated into the globalisation process.
- A correspondingly lean and efficient state.

The military imperative:

- The use of armed forces and combined civilian-military activities (CIMIC) to enforce peace and to promote humanitarian and development action.

Interventions under this new paradigm are more ambitious and more complicated than earlier. They need to cope with novel problems on different levels, for which ready answers are as yet scarce. These include how to deal with 'spoilers', where the main options are either to co-opt them or to fight them; how to rally support for a new and different political system; and what to do with transitional justice and how to deal with crime and corruption resulting from the breakdown of norms that typically accompanies multidimensional systemic transition.

In addition, there are questions concerning how the international community can best organise joint interventions; how civilian and military interventions can be coherently combined; and, in participating donor nations, how to organise interventions involving cooperation between agencies that have little or no previous experience of working together and that often lack the knowledge and analytical capacity that are required to deal adequately with unfamiliar local settings.

In the light of this perspective, it appears that the following lessons from Afghanistan will be useful for the donor community:

1. Equip Home Offices for the New Paradigm

There is a need for strengthened knowledge management and analytical capacity within and between the donor agencies concerned to deal with multi-dimensional crisis interventions. This includes sufficient and adequately experienced staff, mechanisms for the accumulation and use of experience from similar situations, better or more appropriate use of external resources, and the development of new cooperation procedures between agencies.

2. An Efficient Justice System is Required to Counteract Risks of Transition

Given that rising levels of corruption and organised crime are the likely results of regime and norm breakdown following violence, there is a pressing need to create a strong, transparent, fair and effective justice sector, which should be connected with prevailing religious and customary law while complying with international human rights legislation. An efficient police force requires an efficient judiciary.

3. Efficient Law Enforcement and Employment to Counteract Organised Crime

Concrete measures against the likely proliferation of organised crime, often with international repercussions, appear necessary. The breakdown of the formal economy and of social norms, combined with the widespread availability of arms and men skilled in their use and the presence of the 'raw material' for criminal incomes, create the conditions for black economies to proliferate. Widespread trafficking of drugs, humans and arms has occurred in several West Balkan states and territories as well as in Afghanistan. However, the Afghanistan example suggests that the strategy of co-opting potential spoilers into the new system because of a perceived need to fight terrorism may also carry an inherent risk of promoting the growth of crime.

Without employment opportunities for ex-combatants, the struggle against crime becomes difficult. Alternative employment initiatives are called for to reduce the propensity for returning to the guns.

4. State-building is of Primary Importance

In multi-dimensional interventions, there is a tendency to focus on political nation-building. State-building, necessary to respond to the needs of citizens, easily gets sidelined. Civil servants identified with the former regime have been neglected in favour of new incumbents whose main qualification is their correct political inclination. Politicisation makes the administration prone to corruption and weakens management capacity, thus reducing the value of the aid provided.

As a result, new ways of thinking about the conditionalities and rewards of aid will be required in the new paradigm of donor intervention. Professional and good governance must be prioritised. This may require a revision of the current insistence on the need for a modern, lean state and of prevailing attitudes to the use of the human resources of the former regime.

5. Silent Victims are Easily Forgotten in Political Crises

Under a complex and somewhat chaotic crisis regime, influenced by political and market economy imperatives, established priorities in development cooperation for the poorest and most vulnerable sections of the population, including in the agricultural sector, and for the environment and human security tend to be bypassed.

6. Professionalism Under Crisis Conditions

Aid provision in high security risk areas tends to become geographically skewed, to the detriment of its long-term impact. Awareness of this problem is limited since needs assessment and monitoring are also limited. Furthermore, it tends to be accompanied by cost inflation and wage competition for limited staff resources to the detriment of the local public sector. Awareness of these problems and the introduction of counter-measures by the donor community are therefore important. Cost-effectiveness should not be forgotten since it is always a question of allocating limited funds between competing needs.

7. The Military Works Best in its Core Areas

The overall rationale for a foreign military presence in crisis situations is that the military can:

- Fight spoilers who have not been co-opted into the power-holding coalition.
- Enforce stability, extend government authority, and assist in the creation of an enabling work environment for the humanitarian and development agents.
- Implement various civilian projects, either because the military is the only actor in place or to win hearts and minds in order to enhance force protection.

With regard to the second task, the performance of the ISAF PRTs in Northern Afghanistan appears to have been instrumental in producing the desired results. However, performance has been relatively poor and expensive when the PRTs have taken on development activities. In addition, beneficiaries in the southern parts of Afghanistan often claimed that the behaviour of the Coalition-led PRTs had been conducive to more warfare in their region, not less.

The lessons from Afghanistan in this field, therefore, appear to be that:

- Military intervention works best when it sticks to its areas of comparative advantage. The military should, therefore, reduce its civilian activities to small, quick-impact projects that can be implemented with readily available resources. The chief exception is emergency situations, where the armed forces may be the only possible aid providers. Military considerations should not be permitted to determine humanitarian and development actions.
- Excessive use of military power can easily prove counterproductive in relation to peace enforcement.

8. The Role of NGOs Needs Attention

The project experience, staff, networks, and community acceptance of NGOs should be used in the early transition period and phased into government plans and capacity development wherever possible. However, steps should be taken to avoid NGOs developing into a local elite that out-competes the public sector. There is a need to find ways of regulating NGOs, fostering their self-regulation, and developing profiles of NGOs and civil society organisations to avoid misuse of the concept and to maintain conventional NGO missions and behaviours.

9. Utilise the Diaspora

Before a prolonged conflict leads to an international crisis response, millions of people have normally become refugees. While the vast majority of these remain in neighbouring areas, a substantial minority makes its way to more distant, affluent countries.

While some diaspora people return to their country of origin, the prevailing tendency is for refugees who have reached affluent countries to remain there. Financial incentives seem to be relatively ineffective in this context. From a capacity building point of view, this is regrettable since refugees often possess skills that are badly needed in their country of origin. Allowing them to stay for a limited period of

time to obtain education or job experience could help to generate valuable human resources for the home country.

Financial remittances often become an important additional source of income for their country of origin. People in the diaspora often spend vacations in their country of origin and undertake construction and business activities. This can have a positive impact on the economy, but may also cause inflation and have distorting effects on productive activity. In addition, the creation of a new 'local, global elite' has important societal effects, by defining young people's aspirations and encouraging further emigration. Recognising and understanding the opportunities and limitations of the diaspora are needed in order to make use of the human resources it possesses.

Afghanistan was a troubled country in 2001. Not only is Afghanistan one of the poorest countries in the world, but protracted armed conflict since 1978 had forced 6 million out of a population of some 25 million people to flee to neighbouring countries, caused massive destruction of infrastructure and paved the way for warlords to rule over large parts of the country. The 2001 11 September attack by Al Qaeda placed Afghanistan at the centre of international politics and provoked the US-led 'Coalition of the Willing's attack on 7 October on Al Qaeda bases in Afghanistan in collaboration with a loose alliance of Northern Afghan groups and the subsequent overthrow of the Taliban regime.

After the international military operation and up to mid-2004 Afghanistan received close to Euro 3.2 billion in total of humanitarian and development aid to rebuild the country. Of this, 25 % - Euro 791 billion came from five bilateral donors: the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Sweden, Denmark and Ireland. In 2004 the five donors decided to commission a joint evaluation of their aid programmes 2001-2005. The evaluation was carried out by a consortium led by Chr. Michelsen Institute, Bergen, Norway, contracted by Danida's Evaluation Department on behalf of the five donors.

The donors' support to Afghanistan was not just another humanitarian operation. It was a multi-dimensional intervention combining the objectives of development co-operation with broad foreign and domestic policy objectives, where the donors – of whom some had taken an active part in ousting the old regime – also aimed at supporting Afghanistan's new start through putting into place a new and democratically elected government and market economy. Bosnia, Kosovo, Cambodia, East Timor and Iraq have seen similar interventions and more are likely to follow. Evidently such interventions have to cope with novel problems, for which ready answers are as yet scarce. The findings of this evaluation regarding a range of central issues can serve as lessons learnt in the process of developing adequate answers to the new challenges.

