



Danger! Mines

They're putting their lives on the line for every step forward in the effort to rehabilitate the most mined country in the world. Through support for mine education, the mapping of mine fields and the removal of these deadly threats to life, limb and livelihood, Canada is playing a major role in demining Afghanistan. Globally, we also actively promote the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, known as the Ottawa Convention.

Silent Hopes

The lobby of this school is unusually quiet, in spite of the presence of students of all ages. Of the 40 students here, 30 are hearing impaired, and 10 are orphans. In war-torn Afghanistan, these boys and girls are among the most vulnerable. They are working to better their chances for a future in spite of the challenges they face. At the end of their 10-month carpentry training with the Hearing Impaired Foundation of Afghanistan, a CIDA-financed project, they will no doubt find jobs. Through the sign language that they are also learning, these children will provide a link between the hearing impaired and the rest of the community.

The Joy of Safe Drinking Water

You would smile too if a new well and hand pump were installed in your neighbourhood after years without access to safe drinking water. It's difficult to think of clean water as a luxury, but 77 percent of the population of Afghanistan goes without. Improving water quality contributes to improving community health. CIDA is helping the Rehabilitation Organization of Afghanistan to drill wells and install hand pumps in a rural district of Kabul, providing safe water to more than 5,000 families in the area.

was quickly put in place, coordinated closely with Foreign Affairs and International Trade, National Defence and other key partners.

First came humanitarian assistance to feed and clothe Afghans. Even today, some six million Afghans are still in need of food aid, so the crisis has by no means ended.

Next came basic reconstruction. The immense task of clearing mines has been accelerated, with strong Canadian support. Many roads have been rebuilt and water systems repaired. Yet these and other tasks are proving to be long-term challenges in a region still wracked with violence and uncertainty.

To help build a society where law and order can take root, CIDA has invested some \$18 million, working with partners such as the RCMP, Elections Canada, Justice Canada, various NGOs and most especially Afghans themselves, to nourish the seeds of a democratic tradition. Those seeds may bear fruit when elections are held, hopefully in mid-2004.

Because elected officials need a professional public service to function properly, \$58.5 million has been provided for the operating budget of the transitional government. A number of Afghan-Canadians have

returned to work in the transitional government, helping to establish modern practices and standards.

Overall, Canada has contributed \$300 million in humanitarian and development assistance to Afghanistan since 1990, and is providing a further \$250 million over the next two years. The programs funded by Canadians operate in an environment of risk, and the road to democracy is neither straight nor smooth. Enemies and difficulties are real. Success is not guaranteed.

Canada's contributions to rebuilding Afghanistan are not just monetary or advisory: the men and women working for CIDA and other Canadian, UN, non-governmental and local organizations are at great personal risk. But the risk of inaction is greater. 🍁

To find out more about Canadians making a difference in the world through the Canadian International Development Agency as well as development programs in Afghanistan visit www.acdi-cida.gc.ca.