

Improving human security by rebuilding urban communities in Kabul

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Afghanistan has suffered greatly from domestic and international conflict over the last quarter of the 20th century. As a result, nearly all social services and infrastructure in Afghan cities and villages have collapsed or been heavily damaged. This has contributed to making Afghanistan one of the poorest countries in the world.

Reconstruction of both physical and service infrastructures in Afghanistan commenced in 2002 with pledged assistance from the international donor community for the rebuilding of the national government.

In early 2005, the donor community approved the Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy, the medium- and long-term development plan for the country. However, the implementation of development projects and programs has shown only gradual progress, as Afghanistan's post-war reconstruction has been hindered by increasing incidents of violent attacks throughout the country, including Kabul.

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has implemented several post-war reconstruction projects in Kabul as part of an emergency rehabilitation program. The program began with an a priori analysis of

general socio-physical demands in post-war urban communities. The study quickly identified urgent reconstruction projects to be pursued and implemented in the areas of physical infrastructure, education, health and telecommunications.

Rehabilitation and reconstruction projects that have been undertaken as part of Kabul's post-war development include:

- > Reconstruction of arterial roads in Kabul to facilitate urban transportation. The improved roads allow better traffic flow and provide increased safety for both vehicles and pedestrians.
- > A national radio and TV station, which included the construction of the building, equipment set-up, and technical assistance in broadcasting skills and technology. The radio and TV broadcaster is believed to be an indispensable tool for promoting good governance and rebuilding social networks.

In addition, JICA has assisted several programs that serve the needs of demobilized and disarmed soldiers reintegrating into Kabul. In 2004, the agency launched the Vocational Training Project for Ex-Combatants

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to provide vocational training for instructors and ex-combatants in such fields as sheet metal working, welding and lathe operation, to prepare them for employment in urban areas. The need for reintegration services is overwhelming given Afghanistan's ongoing insurgency, high unemployment and estimated 60,000 former combatants.¹ ●

¹ For more information, see <http://www.jica.go.jp/afghanistan/english/pdf/afghanistan.pdf>.