

Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief and Development



ACBAR Annual narrative and financial report

1st January - 31st December 2016

1. Introduction

During 2016 the situation in Afghanistan has continued to be difficult, both for the government and for civilians. Insecurity has increased in many parts of the country, restricting movement and economic development. The National Unity Government (NUG) is still struggling to work effectively and to deal with the legacy of corruption inherited from the previous decade.

As a result of the Brussels conference in October 2016 the NUG has been assured of international donor support for the next 5 years based on their National Peace and Development Framework, but the conference was overshadowed by a secret deal between the EU and the NUG to return Afghan refugees from Europe. One requirement of the NUG in the SMAF deliverables from the conference is that donor funding should be increasingly be “on-budget”. This is perhaps reasonable from a development perspective but in the present context of corruption and insecurity can the NUG manage and implement programmes effectively? At present NGOs find themselves with shrinking “off-budget funding” from regular donors and some are increasingly obliged to fill gaps with humanitarian funding for shelter, wash, health, education and protection. The role and responsibilities as NGOs and civil society actors have to be re-examined. We need to be both partners of development but also continue to guard our independence and ability to support and represent those who are the most vulnerable in the community.

Humanitarian needs increased dramatically during 2016 with large numbers of registered and undocumented Afghans returning home after an anti-Afghan campaign by the Government and media in Pakistan. A pull factor for registered refugees was also the increased payment of UNHCR of 400 USD per registered refugee. At the end of 2016, according to UN figures 620,766 Afghans returned from Pakistan – 372,577 registered refugees and 248,189 undocumented and deported returnees. From Iran, 443,968 undocumented and deported Afghans returned as well as 2,290 refugees. So far, similar trends are expected in 2017, starting from April, with planning figures for return of registered refugees from Pakistan to reach 600,000 individuals. In addition the number of Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Afghanistan in 2016 reported by OCHA was 654,143 individuals (96,627 households). This is a grand total of over 1.7 million Afghans on the move.

Security - In its 2016 report, UNAMA documented 11,418 civilian casualties (3,498 deaths and 7,920 injured); marking a two per cent decrease in civilian deaths and six per cent increase in civilians injured. These figures amount to a three per cent increase in total civilian casualties compared to 2015. Figures for children and women casualties increased. NGOs continue to face difficulties in access in many districts in the country - kidnapping and attacks on aid workers and impediments to their activities continued in 2016. Access has been reduced with 40% of the country held in opposition hands and most major routes in the country are increasingly contested.

In addition local authorities are often obstructive with NGOs, regarding them as a source of benefits rather than as partners. Central government processes have continued to be bureaucratic and complicated rather than enabling. On issues of bureaucratic impediments and explaining to Government the role of NGOs, ACBAR continued to advocate and lobby on provincial levels through its regional managers and their Advisory Board members and on a national level in Kabul with the support of Steering Committee members.

2. Coordination

ACBAR continued to provide a platform for its members and other NGOs to network with government, UN and civil society through regular meetings in its offices in Kabul and four provincial regions: Jalalabad, Mazar-e-Sherif, Herat and Kunduz (opened in March 2016). In addition to organizing regular meetings, ACBAR disseminated information through its information-coordination

department to members from the government, donors, the UN, research bodies and other relevant stakeholders. The website was upgraded and made more user-friendly in order to provide members and the wider public information about NGO member activities in Afghanistan.

A strategic plan for ACBAR for 2017 -2019 was finalized and approved at the mid-term General Assembly in Oct 2016 after inputs from 3 working groups and the Steering Committee. An new vision and mission statement have been adopted.

In January 2017 ACBAR conducted an online satisfaction survey with its members to assess whether its activities and services in 2016 had been useful. Members who replied were satisfied with ACBAR services generally. Additional meetings have also been requested such as: donors meetings to identify fund raising opportunities, sector based meetings in education, agriculture, health, mine action, DRR and conflict sensitive approaches, integration and insertion of returnees, and different components in NGO management (HR, Finance, Logistics, IT and programming). ACBAR will be following up on this in 2017.

Meetings recorded by ACBAR January – Dec 2016

ACBAR Meetings	No of meetings	Average no of participants
Afghan Development Forum (ADF)	10	27
Afghan Humanitarian Forum (AHF)	11	27
Advocacy Working Group	8	13
Directors Meetings	4	27
Steering Committee Meetings	13	9
Annual General Assembly (April/ October)	2	93
Special meetings in Kabul (presentations, workshops, consultations)	25	23
West - ACBAR coordination meetings in Herat.	12	25
Advisory Board meetings in Herat	9	4
East - ACBAR coordination meetings in Jalalabad, Kunar and Laghman.	11	18
Advisory Board meetings in Jalalabad.	8	4
North – ACBAR coordination meetings in Mazar-i-Sherif, Samangan.	13	16
Advisory Board meetings in Mazar.	11	3
North-East - ACBAR coordination meetings in Kunduz, Takhar and Faizabad.	13	14
Advisory Board meetings in Kunduz (established September 2016)	3	3
International meetings (ACBAR representation outside Afghanistan)	SATHI, Nepal, Interaction, USA WHS, Turkey,	1 1 3

	BCA, Brussels	2
	ICVA, Bangkok	1
	ACMDRR, Delhi	1
	SCA, Sweden	1

2.1 Meetings with Line Ministries

The following meetings were held at ACBAR in this period:

- Jan 5 - MoLSAMD - Introduction to National Skills Development Program (NSDP)
- Feb 7 - MoRR - NGO partners MoU issues
- Mar 9 - MoPH – Review of MoPH programmes
- May 9 - MoLSAMD - Draft Pension Regulation for NGO and Private Sector
- June 12 - MTO/MoFin about tax payment procedures, complaints mechanism / presentation on new income tax law (MoFin)
- Aug 14 – UN-Habitat advisor to ARAZI on land-housing and property rights.
- Sep 19 – meeting with Independent Monitoring and Evaluation Commission (MEC) on MoPH vulnerability to corruption report.
- Sept 25 – Presentation of Citizen’s Charter – Min of Finance and Independent Directorate of Local Government (IDLG)
- Oct 16 - meeting on Kunduz emergency situation
- Nov 1st - presentation by new head of NGOs Department, Ministry of Economy.

2.2 Follow up with Government

- ACBAR met the Minister of Economy regularly to discuss delays in MoUs for NGO members in different line ministries and general operating difficulties NGOs have with government,
- ACBAR met the Deputy Minister of Education and the Director of Policy and Planning to discuss MoU problems faced by NGO members. ACBAR attended the HRDB at the Min of Education to represent ACBAR members.
- ACBAR represented members in a Working Group revising the NGO law in the Ministry of Economy and submitted comments from ACBAR members on the current law,
- ACBAR had two meetings with Ministry of Finance to discuss the proposed new income tax law and submitted comments from its members
- ACBAR had several meetings with Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled regarding the labour law and proposed pension law as part of a working committee,
- ACBAR had several meetings with Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) to discuss delays in granting of individual MoUs for NGOs and a proposed general or standard MoU. Feedback on this MoU was gathered from NGO members and shared with MoRR.
- ACBAR Steering Committee members requested a special meeting with CEO, Dr Abdullah, to discuss NGO concerns in June. Minister of Economy and the Deputy Minister of Finance were also present.
- ACBAR had several meetings with ANDMA on Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) to prepare for the Asian Ministerial Conference for DRR in Delhi in October and to plan how Afghanistan can start to implement the Sendai Framework.

2.3 Achievements

- 18 new members applied to join ACBAR in 2016 at the two General Assemblies,
- ACBAR’s database for field level activities was updated at the beginning of the year and then again in the second half of the year in order to have a pictorial mapping of who works where with the support of IMMAP.

- ACBAR participated in all Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) meetings in OCHA (every 3/6 weeks) and all CHF Advisory Board Meetings with other representatives from the UN and NGOs delegates.
- In February ACBAR and DFID Girls Education Challenge (GEC), facilitated 18 organizations working in the education sector to contribute feedback to the Education Sector Analysis and to inform the National Education Strategy (NESP III). ACBAR also regularly attended the Human Resources Development Board within the Ministry of Education to represent the views of NGOs in the education sector.
- June - ACBAR attended the first meeting of the new national Education Coalition set up ANAFAE. A Chairperson and vice chair were elected. ACBAR is a member of the Board.
- September – a decree was signed by Deputy Minister (MoF) at ACBAR's request to clarify the payment for tax in the provinces.
- 21 December – ACBAR Director presented NGO achievements and challenges at the official launch of the 2015 NGO Report produced by Min of Economy.

2.4 Challenges/Solutions

- NGOs continue to face issues obtaining MoU's for projects from different line ministries and getting tax clearance from the Medium Tax Office.
Solutions: ACBAR will continue to advocate with government through the new NGO tax and reporting advisory group based on Article 24 of the SMAF.
- On provincial levels some government line departments and district governors interfere in NGO activities in provinces.
Solutions: ACBAR regional managers and regional advisory committees continued to lobby with local authorities on behalf of member NGOs.
- Corruption continues to be a problem both on local and central levels, ministry officials are often unwilling to complete work without a bribe. This is more difficult in areas where there are fewer funding resources and especially difficult for Afghan NGOs.
Solutions: NGO members should document and share information on corrupt officials with ACBAR to pass on systematically to the relevant authorities and ensure that they respect the NGO Code of Conduct.

3. Advocacy and Civil Society

The Advocacy working group (AWG) is a monthly forum held in ACBAR for NGOs to prepare and review advocacy papers and policy matters. This year, the AWG supported the following activities:

3.1 Achievements

- The advocacy and communications strategy for the next 3 years was entirely reviewed
- ACBAR published advocacy papers and/ or represented members in the below international conferences
 - **World Health Assembly** (May 2016): Extensive report on attacks against healthcare in Afghanistan
 - **World Humanitarian Summit** (WHS) -May 2016: 1) Stakeholder consultations in Mazar, Herat, Kandahar and Jalalabad, and one national consultation meeting in Kabul with NGOs, UN agencies and government Ministries. 2) Position paper on DRR published ahead of the WHS in partnership with AfghanAid. 3) Representation at the main conference by the Chairman and one SC member and organization of a joint side event with Afghanaid and the ARC partners on Partnership, Humanitarian Aid and Disaster Risk Reduction in Afghanistan
 - **Brussels Conference for Afghanistan (BCA)** – Oct 2016: 1) ACBAR led the consultations in the North East, ensured the administrative and logistical support for the National Conference in Kabul, and actively supported the Civil Society Working Committee for BCA

- in the organization of the conference consultation. 2) ACBAR coordinated/ participated in 4 joint position papers for the BCA including joint papers on attacks against healthcare, protection of aid workers, Civil Society, Education, and DRR. 3) ACBAR represented members in CS events in Brussels 4) ACBAR organized feedback sessions to the 4 sub offices after the BCA
- **Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction (AMCDRR)** – Oct 2016. ACBAR actively participated to the representation of Afghanistan and preparation of the GoA in the AMCDRR for the application of the Sendai Framework.
 - **Road to Self-Reliance (Swedish Committee led forum)** – Dec 2016. ACBAR’s Chairman participated in the service delivery working group to brief donors on current challenges and gaps
 - Policy making:
 - **Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF):** ACBAR contributed to the inclusion of enabling environment for civil society in the document as well as to raise the profile of health, education.
 - **Self-Reliance Through Mutual Accountability Framework (SMAF):** ACBAR negotiated the creation of a working group between the Government of Afghanistan (GoA) and NGOs to resolve tax issues and reporting challenges. This initiative is included in the SMAF.
 - NGO awareness:
 - **ACBAR’s website** was completely re-designed to be more user friendly, the online library is upgraded, and regular stories on ACBAR members and success are published to promote NGOs and promoted on social media
 - **Outreaching to local media** (Nov 2016-Dec 2017) ACBAR organized with the CSO “Nai Open Media” 4 workshops on Humanitarian Principles to promote NGO work
 - Humanitarian Advocacy: Dec 2016: ACBAR coordinated a letter to the HCT on behalf of NGOs denouncing Afghan returnees’ treatment by Pakistani authorities and questioning the Humanitarian Response Plan.

4. Regional Offices

4.1 Jalalabad Regional Office – Dr Sharaf/Eng Qiamuddin Rahimi – based in FGA office

ACBAR Jalalabad covers four provinces – Nangarhar, Laghman, Kunar and Nuristan. ACBAR has 47 member agencies (20 national and 27 international) in this region. The Advisory Board members for ACBAR Jalalabad office elected for 2016 are NPO/RRAA, JVC, DRC and SCA..

- The manager also participated at 70 other meetings including UN agencies. The manager also had 30 meetings with government departments and had meetings with 62 NGO members and advises them accordingly.
- Regional manager also supported Brussels conference result coordination meeting in December in Jalalabad.

4.2 Mazar-e-Sharif Regional Office – Eng. Qaderi – based in NPO/RRAA office

ACBAR Mazar has 40 members with projects in Balkh, Samangan, Saripul, Jawzjan and Faryab provinces in the North (24 International and 16 National). The Advisory Board members for ACBAR Mazar office in 2016 are AWEC, CARE International and ACTED..

- Regional manager’s activities included arrangement of 13 NGOs coordination meetings, 11 advisory board meetings, 49 Government meetings, 41 visits to Government departments, 70 NGOs visits and 18 UN member and 5 donor visits,
- provided support for 5 ACBAR trainings.

4.3 Herat Regional Office – Mr. Zalmai Sultani – based in DACAAR office

This office was re-started at end of September 2015. ACBAR Herat has 25 members with projects in Herat, Ghor, Badghis and Farah provinces (14 International and 11 National). There are also 49

national non-members of ACBAR NGOs that participate in the monthly coordination meetings. In 2016 the Advisory Board members elected for ACBAR Herat office are DACAAR, DRC, AWEK and SDO. Activities include arranging of 9 NGO coordination meetings, and 5 Advisory committee meetings.

- The manager paid 110 visits to government directorates, supported 2 ACBAR trainings, 2 ALSO trainings, 1 WHS consultation and attended 1 project management training in Tajikistan.

4.4 Kunduz Regional Office – Mr. Sultan Sultany – based in Child Fund office

The office was opened in March 2016 and covers Kunduz, Takhar and Badakshan with 35 members (29 International and 6 national). The Advisory Board for the NE region was elected in September and consists of 3 representatives: NRC, IMC and SCA.

- The manager arranged 13 NGO Coordination Meetings, advocacy meeting with DoRRD Kunduz, 17 other special meetings and attended 18 other government meetings, 5 OCHA meetings, 3 INSO meeting and visited 64 NGOs,
- Manager organized the Focus Group Discussion for the North Eastern region civil society organisations and prepared the report for BAAG and the BCA team
- Meetings have been held and local authorities visited in 3 provinces

4.5 Achievements

During this period ACBAR regional managers were active in solving problems faced by individual NGO members in each region and accompanying them to different directorates or to local Governors as well as keeping good communication channels with local authorities and representing the NGO community in local government meetings. ACBAR Kunduz and the Kunduz NGOs were thanked by the governor of Kunduz for their work done in the province. The elections of the Advisory Boards at the beginning of the year and regular Advisory Board meetings is intended to give a more significant role to NGO members to support and advise the regional managers in advocacy and representation of ACBAR members with local authorities and stakeholders.

5. Training and Capacity Building Department

The aim of the program is to strengthen the work of NGO members and other civil society actors and develop professional skills. The trainings are conducted in Kabul and different provinces selected on needs assessments. Regular surveys are carried out post-training, to obtain feedback on the quality and customer satisfaction. During this period topics covered were: project design, team management, Afghanistan's Income Tax Law, Labor Law, the NGO Law and the Code of Conduct for NGOs. The training team consists of 3 trainers (1 female), 2 M&E officers (1 female) and 1 Assistant Training Manager under the Capacity Building Manager. (See training activities at end of report).

As well as training, ACBAR provided small grants to two member NGO partners under the Peace Winds Japan funded programme (ADVS and DAO) to run training courses in the first part of 2016. Two other NGO members (AOAD and ALSO) were contracted to provide mainstreaming of disability training in different provinces with Tawanmandi funding.

6. ACBAR Twinning Program

In 2016, the Twinning Program continued to focus on increasing NNGO's membership in the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) through the successful completion of the Due Diligence (DD) process and participation in the clusters. Six NNGO Twinning Partners passed the DD process due to mentoring, policy document review and training from ACBAR and the INGO Twinning Partners. Of the 22 NNGO Twinning Partners, 2 received CHF projects and 20 Twinning Partners were awarded projects with other agencies that included 7 projects with the INGO Twinning Partners. Only 2 partners did not have new projects. Eleven INGOs participated in the Twinning Program.

Thirteen training sessions were provided throughout the year and included proposal writing, Sphere principles, gender mainstreaming, disability awareness, and anti-corruption. Management training sessions were held for integrity in NGO management, financial management, and project cycle management.

A Mid-Term Program Review was conducted in the last quarter to identify ways the program can improve in its support to NNGOs, INGOs, and other partners. Results of the review will be used as the basis for strategic planning for the 2nd phase of the Twinning Program in 2017. Activities identified for the 2nd phase will focus on increasing NNGO's membership in the CHF, participation in the humanitarian clusters, ability to access future funding, ability to conduct quality assessments, and the sharing of knowledge between NNGOs and INGOs. Suggested training for the NNGOs will cover donor mapping, monitoring and evaluation, mock proposal writing, technical trainings by INGOs and additional topics suggested in the review.

Additionally, all NNGOs participated in a SWOT analysis to determine strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to their organizations and the Twinning Program. Based on the results of the SWOT analyses plans are in process to strengthen the ACBAR, INGO and NNGO partnership through specific activities in new MOUs based on feedback from the partners.

7. Finance Department

During the year the Finance Department had over 50 meetings with different departments of government and member NGOs to follow up on tax and finance issues. Monthly reports were presented at the Steering Committee meetings and regular meetings were held with ACBAR treasurer to review budget expenditure. Regular meetings were held with donors in Kabul (Tawanmandi and DFID) and by skype with Peace Winds Japan (PWJ) – our donor in Japan. The Finance manager and Training manager went to Japan to visit PWJ in November. Two finance members also went to Tajikistan for financial management and audit for one week in February.

8. HR and Administration Department

In 2016 ACBAR consisted of 47 national and international staff (including 11 women and 3 persons with disabilities). Recruitment during 2016:

- Regions - interns for regional offices (2 men, 4 women), Kunduz regional manager (male)
Kabul office - Guard (male), Finance assistant (woman), receptionist (woman),
Remote managers for Twinning Department (2 men, 1 female),
Small Fund Projects (SFAN) M&E officer (woman), Trainer (woman), Advocacy Manager (woman), policy officer (male),
 - Admin department completed ACBAR's revised staff policy in line with Labour Law,
 - Extension visas and work permits for expats completed on time.
 - Prepared time sheets, attendance sheets, guard schedules, reports, staff leave and DSA for staff.

9. Priorities for 2017

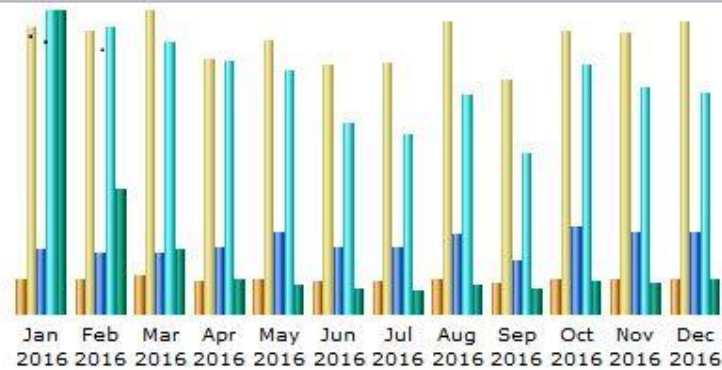
- Follow up implementation of ACBAR 2017-2019 strategic plan in each department,
- Identify new funding after end of Tawanmandi grant in April 2017,
- Follow up coordination initiatives with regional /international networks – Pakistan Humanitarian Forum (PHF), International Consortium for Refugees in Iran (ICRI), South Asian Together for Humanitarian Imperative (SATHI), International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), Interaction USA.

Training Department Activities - 1st Jan - 31th Dec 2016

No	Date	Province	Donor	Training Subject	# Participants		
					Total	Male	Female
1	Jan	Kabul & Herat	PWJ	Project Cycle Management, (PCM), Afghan Laws	101	70	31
		Faryab	DFID	Sphere Projects (humanitarian charter)	11	4	7
2	April	Daikundi	TAWNAMANDI	Managing a Team according to Project Objectives	29	16	13
3	May	Bamiyan & Nangarhar	PWJ	Project Design (Proposal Writing)	56	46	10
		Farah	TAWNAMANDI	Managing a Team according to Project Objectives	82	72	10
4	June			No training in Ramadan			
5	July	Kabul & Kunduz	PWJ	Project Design (Proposal Writing)	57	41	16
			TAWNAMANDI	Managing a Team according to Project Objectives	52	41	11
6	Aug	Ghor	PWJ	Project Design (Proposal Writing)	21	21	0
			TAWNAMANDI	Managing a Team according to Project Objectives	19	19	0
7	Sep	Ghazni & Badakhshan	PWJ	Project Design (Proposal Writing)	81	51	30
			TAWNAMANDI	Managing a Team according to Project Objectives	61	44	17
8	Oct	Balkh	PWJ	Project Design (Proposal Writing)	24	14	10
			TAWNAMANDI	Managing a Team according to Project Objectives	26	26	0
9	Nov	Logar	PWJ	Project Design (Proposal Writing)	26	26	0
			TAWNAMANDI	Managing a Team according to Project Objectives	26	26	0
10	Dec	Herat	PWJ	Project Design (Proposal Writing)	44	28	16
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16 trainings conducted in 13 provinces 				Total Participants	716	545	171

Evaluations of Provincial Trainings							
#	Date	Province	Donor	Activity	Total	Male	Female
1	July	Nangarhar & Bamyan	PWJ	Training Evaluation	29	21	8
2	Aug	Kabul & Kunduz	PWJ	Training Evaluation	27	23	4
3	Sep	Ghor	PWJ	Training Evaluation	14	14	0
4	Oct			No evaluation			
5	Nov	Ghazni & Balkh	PWJ	Training Evaluation	34	26	8

Monthly history



ACBAR Website Visitors - 2016