

Voices of the Community Newsletter

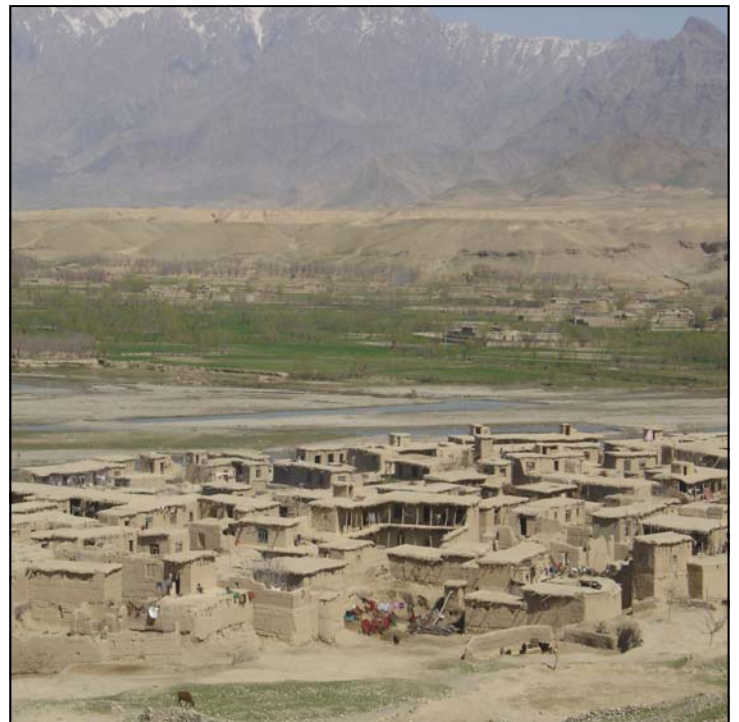
The Literacy and Community Empowerment Program (LCEP), a USAID-funded community development initiative, is implemented by the Education Development Center (EDC) and UN-Habitat.

What Does an LCEP Village Look Like?

A development project in a rural environment has particular characteristics which made it distinct from an urban-based project. But what does an Afghan village look like?

The Education Development Center is helping to implement LCEP in more than 170 rural villages across five provinces of Afghanistan. LCEP combines literacy activities with governance and economic development initiatives in order to create the synergy necessary to effect change in a village.

The village of Sayed, for example, in Parwan Province, is a small community of 1,700 people. Sayed is situated 40 kilometers from the provincial center, and 80 kilometers from the capital of Kabul. Typical of the demographic profile of Afghanistan, 51% of the inhabitants are under the age of 18. Very few inhabitants have electricity; instead, most people use



An Afghan village in Parwan Province.

kerosene lights and wood for fuel.

Nearly all families in Sayed characterize themselves as poor. Their income is derived from agriculture or livestock, and many families have taken loans of several thousand dollars from relatives and friends.

Although there is a primary and secondary school one kilometer from the village, only 20% of school age girls attend school. Among all inhabitants of Sayed, an

Scenes from an LCEP Village:



A village generator and a posting of a village newsletter, written by and for community members.



LCEP literacy students' village map.

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average of 35% have finished primary school.

Thus, the LCEP Learning Centers are a critical local educational resource. Both the male and female Learning Centers have 25 students—the maximum number permitted to enroll. Most of those students are between 13-18 years old, emphasizing that it's never too late to learn.

Did You Know?

- 77% of Afghans are classified as rural
- There are more than 30,000 government-incorporated villages across Afghanistan
- Nationwide, only 13% of Afghans have access to safe water, and 6% with electricity

Source: World Bank Afghanistan Country Overview 2006; <http://www.worldbank.org.af>

For more information, please see LCEP's

website at <http://lcep.edc.org>

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