



# NEWS RELEASE



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## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **U.S. engineers help Afghans build skills for future**

By U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Michael Chigbrow and 2nd Lt. Brittany Clark  
54th Engineer Battalion, Task Force Dolch

LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – An old proverb states, “If you give a man a fish, you feed him for a day. If you teach him how to fish, you feed him for a lifetime.”

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in Afghanistan Engineer District-North has taken this saying to heart and is determined to help establish technical and vocational schools throughout Logar Province to provide fruitful skills to the Afghan people.

Soldiers of the 54th Engineer Battalion partnered with USACE personnel on a four-day mission, Jan. 22-25, to visit the Logar provincial governor and several district sub-governors to discuss local support for these schools in an effort to provide Afghans with technical training. Areas of concentration included welding, masonry, carpentry and electrical work. By establishing these trade schools, USACE will also increase the number of skilled laborers available for hire on future projects.

USACE has many goals for capacity development in Afghanistan over the next four years. They will provide plans and funding for countless projects throughout the country.

In an effort to collaborate with the local population and instill a sense of ownership in the projects, USACE plans to build these schools, train the local population and hire them for the construction of other projects. Additionally, the Afghans will benefit from their newly acquired skills, as they can use them in the future.

“The purpose is sustainability,” said Marie Huber, Jacksonville, Fla. native and branch chief of capacity development for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Afghanistan Engineer District-North. “If we are putting in billions of dollars of construction, we would prefer that it not turn to rust when we leave.”

By having the Afghans involved in the entire process, USACE believes they will be able to maintain and upkeep the finished product.

Soldiers assigned to Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 54th Engr. Bn. escorted USACE personnel and key civilians to the meetings and the proposed construction sites. These Soldiers are normally confined to supporting the battalion's other companies from inside the wires of Forward Operating Base Shank. They thoroughly enjoyed the opportunity to practice the skills they learned at basic and Advanced Individual Training.

"I liked interacting with the people and handing candy and water to the kids," said Spc. Tavarus Durgin, HHC, 54th Engr. Bn. Soldier from Mobile, Ala. "It was nice to actually get out and do some of this stuff that I had seen on TV."

The purpose of these meetings was to ensure the local government would support the proposed schools. Additionally, USACE wanted to gather input from local leaders as to the types of skills the trade schools should emphasize.

"Agriculture and auto mechanic courses would be good for the future," suggested Khoshi District Sub-governor (DSG) Bismillah Koshiwal. The design of the schools must also allow for the curriculum to change as labor needs of the region change.

"We want to make certain that when we construct the school, that it is flexible to accommodate any training that may be used in the future," added Huber.

Logar Provincial Governor Atiqullah Lodin likes the work the Corps of Engineers has done so far and is glad they are willing to help build these types of trade schools in his district.

"I really appreciate the programs for this province. If a person is jobless, they can go to a vocational school and get the skills to get a good job", said Lodin.

As of Jan. 25, Lodin, Khoshiwal and DSGs Mohammad Rahin Amin and Abdul Hamid have all signed letters of support for trade schools to be built and staffed in their areas.



LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – From left, Atiqullah Lodin, Logar provincial governor; Marie Huber, district chief of capacity development for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) in Afghanistan Engineer District-North (AED-N) from Jacksonville, Fla.; Ahmad Seyar Ziayeen, a USACE legal advisor in AED-N; and U.S. Army Reserve Lt. Col. David R. Staggs, Fort Sill, Okla. Active Guard Reserve USACE officer in charge at Forward Operating Base Shank in

AED-N, meet at Lodin's residence, Jan. 22. They discussed local support for trade and vocational schools that are planned to be built in Logar province. (Photo by U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Michael Chigbrow, Task Force Dolch Public Affairs)



LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – Khoshi District Sub-governor Bismillah Koshiwal (left) and Jacksonville, Fla. native Marie Huber, district chief of capacity development for U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Afghanistan Engineer District-North, meet in Koshiwal's office review a letter of support for trade and vocational schools that are to be built within the Khoshi District of Logar Province, Jan. 23. (Photo by U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Michael Chigbrow, Task Force Dolch Public Affairs)



LOGAR PROVINCE, Afghanistan – From Left, an Afghan translator; Ahmad Seyar Ziayeen, a U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) legal advisor in Afghanistan Engineer District-North (AED-N); Mohammad Rahim Amin, district sub-governor for Baraki Barak district of Logar Province; Marie Huber, district chief of capacity development for USACE in AED-N, of Jacksonville, Fla.; and U.S Army Reserve Lt. Col. David R. Staggs, Active Guard Reserve out of Fort Sill, Okla. and USACE officer in charge at Forward Operating Base Shank in AED-N, meet at the Baraki Barak district offices, Jan. 24. The group met to gather input and discuss a letter of support for proposed trade and vocational schools to be built in the district. (Photo by U.S. Army 2nd Lt. Michael Chigbrow, Task Force Dolch Public Affairs)

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