

# Canal Enables Farmers to Return

## Initiative

USAID provided a grant of \$33,405 to build a 2,500 meter stone masonry canal, which is bringing green fields and families back to the Fatmasti Valley of Bamyan Province. The project is benefiting more than 600 families by providing water to irrigate an area commonly referred to as the "hunger belt." In addition, 350 men earned a small salary helping to build the stone canal.



Photo by USAID

**“Men would come every day to work and be happy to work because we are making our land better and we have a chance to begin again.”**

**—A returned refugee**

## Challenge

Most of the fields in the Fatmasti Valley of Bamyan Province were not cultivated for years after war and drought forced most of the people in the valley to flee to Iran. Since agriculture is a way of life for 70 percent of Afghanistan's people, building the canal and other infrastructure is key to re-establishing this crucial source of income.

## Results

During a visit in January, USAID staff met an older man who had returned recently to the country and was working his fields for the first time in years. Last spring, he sent two of his sons from Iran to Fatmasti to "find the truth with their own eyes," that the Taliban were really gone. He spoke proudly of how he and his sons helped build the canal and said, "Men would come every day to work and be happy to work because we are making our land better and we have a chance to begin again."

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