



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AFGHANISTAN

SUCCESS STORY - Road Project Links Community, Builds Peace



A bulldozer working to level the Tantil to Upper Tantil gravel road, Tantil, Pech District, Kunar Province [July 15, 2008].



The excavator cutting the hillside to extend Tantil to Upper Tantil gravel road, Tantil, Pech District, Kunar Province [July 15, 2008].



Community laborers working on the Tantil to Upper Tantil gravel road, Tantil, Pech District, Kunar Province [July 15, 2008]

Shura leaders in Kunar province have banded together in defense of development to ensure radical *Mullahs* don't undermine rehabilitation efforts in the region. Extraordinary levels of community support for the newly begun Tantil to Upper Tantil Road saw *Shura* members reject threats from 'fanatic *Mullahs*' warning that anyone who worked on the road rehabilitation project was putting their life in danger. Rehabilitation of the Tantil to Upper Tantil Road will link 1,700 residential families the district center in Dara-I-Pech and to the newly paved Pech Valley road which will tie them to Asadabad and Jalalabad.

Residents of Kunar province currently have significantly limited access to basic services. Rugged mountainous terrain and poor roads make it one of the most difficult provinces in Afghanistan. Residents in Tantil and Upper Tantil in particular continue to suffer transportation difficulties that limit their access to larger towns, health, education, business opportunities and markets.

As a result, district leaders and village elders proposed a road to link the villages of Tantil (on the paved Pech road) and Upper Tantil, making it more accessible to the district center of Dari I Pech and the provincial capital, Asadabad. Community members contributed land and secured the area for the initiative. Representatives from the provincial Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), local *Shura* members, and USAID staff worked together to select appropriate contractors in order to ensure better access to basic services for the community.

Yet radical *Mullahs* sought to block this access to health and education services by threatening the communities who planned to work on the project. One community member explained that: "One of the fanatic *Mullahs* intimidated the subproject workers and said those who are working for USAID will put their lives in jeopardy. Then all of the *Shura* members verbally reacted and told him that they abhor the threats and will not accept the orders of those who are against development activities." With the support of the *Shuras* and local community providing security, work on the road began in early July.

