

ANNUAL REPORT 2013

Dear Friends,

Founded in 2003, Spirit of America (SoA) is a 501c3 tax-exempt public charity. SoA provides humanitarian and economic assistance in response to needs identified by deployed US troops and diplomats. We apply our resources at the intersection of security, humanitarian need, and US national interest. This support makes our deployed personnel safer and more successful in their missions and helps local people not reached by large-scale aid programs. At the same time, we provide Americans with an opportunity to directly support the work of those who serve, a connection that leads to a more well-informed public and more effective US engagement in the world.

As we celebrated our tenth anniversary, Spirit of America maintained its commitment to the men and women serving in harm's way in Afghanistan while also helping US military and State Department personnel prevent the next Afghanistan-style conflict from springing up in almost a dozen other countries around the world. We continued to advance our broad organizational aims of institutionalizing SoA within US national security and foreign policy activities, broadening our capacity via donor development, and most importantly, providing high-impact support to the United States' top-priority stability and security missions worldwide.

Spirit of America measures success not only by the impact our assistance has on US personnel, but also by the way it improves the wellbeing of people suffering from conflict and extremism. Our approach focuses on achieving these results by helping vulnerable populations help themselves, in sustainable, locally-appropriate ways. In 2013, SoA engaged in 62 projects valued at \$200,000 in 10 countries around the world.

AFGHANISTAN

As in years past, US efforts in Afghanistan remained the core focus of our work. 2013 was a particularly critical year in the country, as US and coalition forces were striving to set the conditions for successful national elections in the spring of 2014, as well as prepare Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) to take the lead in securing their country when international forces draw down.



SoA reps implemented several agriculture projects

Afghanistan is the only country wherein we maintain a persistent presence, with field representatives living and working full-time alongside US troops. Throughout the course of 2013, we deployed four field representatives, where they focused on supporting American efforts in the critical southern and eastern regions of the country.

Spirit of America's work continued to center on supporting US Special Operations Forces (SOF) working to holistically improve security, development, and governance at the village and district level in key areas. In addition, we implemented initiatives in collaboration with conventional Army and Marine Corps elements as well as representatives from USAID and the Departments of State and Agriculture.

Over the course of the year, Spirit of America engaged in over 50 projects in more than 25 districts spread across 10 provinces throughout Afghanistan. Project areas included education, agriculture, livestock health, sanitation, local governance, female empowerment, public health and safety, and much more. In addition, we responded to critical, time-sensitive humanitarian assistance needs as they arose.

Project spotlight – Afghanistan

Panjwa'i District, Supporting Local Governance and Security



Throughout 2013, Spirit of America helped US military advisors strengthen Afghan security forces and governance structures in the heartland of the Taliban. Support included radios and binoculars to help ANSF ward off attacks, computers to help health officials track patients, filters to provide safe drinking water, radio equipment to promote dialogue between officials and locals, and more. Result: with SoA support, the dedication and bravery of US advisors and their Afghan partners helped set the conditions for opposition to the Taliban on their home turf.

Spin Boldak, Empowering Women to Take Control of their Future



In a key district along the Afghan-Pakistani border, a US Army team alerted Spirit of America to a pressing need: women from particularly vulnerable tribes wanted to start their own NGO so they could play a greater public role in their communities. Organizing would give them a chance to have a united voice in the district's affairs and pool their resources and knowledge to improve educational and economic opportunities. SoA helped them formalize their NGO status with the government. Result: a strong group of women who could determine their own future.

WORLDWIDE

2013 marked a major expansion of Spirit of America's efforts outside Afghanistan. Our flexible, decentralized approach continues to be a great fit with the small teams of US troops and diplomats working in the world's most challenging places to prevent the next conflict before it happens. As we continue to demonstrate the value SoA can add to these missions on the ground, we are also working at higher levels to institutionalize these efforts. Accordingly, we signed a Memorandum of Agreement with Special Operations Command South in November 2013 and have similar initiatives in progress with US Special Operations Command, Special Operations Command Africa, Special Operations Command Central, and Special Operations Command Pacific. Additionally, we have partnerships underway with the State Department's Bureau of Conflict and Stabilization Operations in Central America, Asia, and the Middle East.



SoA funded several education projects in 2013

All told, Spirit of America initiated and/or completed projects in eleven countries across four continents outside of Afghanistan in 2013: Burma, Colombia, Guyana, Honduras, Jordan, Maldives, Mauritania, Peru, Suriname, Syria, and Yemen. These initiatives, focusing on agriculture, education, human and animal health, community safety, good governance, and more, were all designed to address root causes of instability in ways that fit the local context before they grew into larger issues.

Project spotlight – Worldwide

Colombia, Safe Havens for the Next Generation of Leaders



Colombia has long been a hub for narco-traffickers and extremist organizations. In key rural areas, US Army teams collaborate with local leaders to support youth empowerment initiatives that counter negative influence. Historically, violent organizations have been able to more easily recruit young people when opportunities for education and civic participation are non-existent. Spirit of America partnered with the Army team and a local NGO to help youth interact

with their community leaders to plan and build playgrounds where they can congregate safely. Result: stronger ties between civic leaders and future leaders, and safe places for youth.

Guyana, Computers to Help At-Risk Youth



The US Humanitarian Assistance Team working out of the US Embassy is tasked with assisting communities that are at risk of violent extremism. Local youth are particularly vulnerable. The US team told Spirit of America that education and jobs are the best way to counter these negative influences, but local schools lack basic equipment. We provided computer equipment at two important education centers to help youths prepare for and take national exams. Result: better

education, improved employment prospects, and greater trust between the US team and vulnerable populations.

Jordan, Support for Disabled Syrian Refugees



and improved relationships with Syrians.

The US Army team in Amman, Jordan, is focused on helping the hundreds of thousands of refugees fleeing the bloody civil war in neighboring Syria. While large international organizations are able to cover most basic humanitarian assistance needs, one especially vulnerable group has fallen through the cracks: disabled refugees. Disabled people make up some 10 percent of the refugee population. Spirit of America worked with the US team to provide equipment such as commode chairs to help the disabled attend to their daily needs. Result: greater dignity and hygiene for the disabled,

Maldives, Educating Against Extremism and Poverty



risk of influence from extremism.

The US Army civil affairs team in the Maldives is striving to counter root causes of instability in the country. Civil and political unrest, poverty, geographic isolation, and illicit activities such as human trafficking have left the Maldives' population susceptible to extremism. Children are particularly vulnerable to negative influence, especially in impoverished areas where they lack basic educational resources. Spirit of America worked with the US team to provide textbooks to schoolchildren in key remote areas. Result: better education, leading to greater opportunities, brighter futures, and less

Peru, Providing Farmers an Alternative to Coca



improved trust and goodwill, and better prospects for peace and stability in a long-troubled area.

Peru is one of the largest producers of cocaine in the world. Violent groups like the Shining Path exploit this to fund their violence against the Peruvian government, which destabilizes the region. These violent groups impose their will on subsistence farmers who don't have an alternative way to provide for their families. Working with the US Army team in Peru, Spirit of America provided seeds and tools to help farmers in a key remote valley profitably cultivate viable alternatives such as corn. Result: a decrease in the drug trade,

Thank you for joining us in our mission to support the safety and success of Americans serving abroad and the local people and partners they seek to help. We are excited to continue this journey with you in the years to come!

All the best,
The Spirit of America Team