

ANNUAL REPORT 2012

Dear Friends,

Spirit of America (SoA) is a privately-funded 501(c)3 nonprofit organization that provides humanitarian, civic, and economic assistance in direct response to needs identified by American military and civilian personnel. SoA adds the agility, innovativeness, and resources of the American private sector to the capabilities of the US government and military in support of US missions abroad. This support makes US troops and diplomats safer and more successful in their missions and helps local people often not reached by large-scale aid programs. Spirit of America also provides the American people a way to understand, connect with, and support the vital work of US personnel serving abroad.

2012 was an exciting year for Spirit of America. In addition to solidifying our on-the-ground conflict mitigation mission in Afghanistan, we also expanded our conflict prevention operations in the rest of the world. In all, Spirit of America completed 95 projects valued at a total of almost \$525,000 in Afghanistan, Africa, and the Middle East. We improved the lives of vulnerable populations in some of the world's most challenging regions by addressing root causes of instability in sustainable, locally-appropriate ways. Project areas included education, agriculture, livestock health, sanitation, local governance, public health and safety, and much more.

Afghanistan

Over the course of 2012, Spirit of America sent five field representatives over three seven-month deployment cycles to support US government military and civilian conflict mitigation efforts in southern Afghanistan. During that period, SoA operations evolved considerably.

All told, we responded to local needs identified by Army, Marine, and Special Operations Forces (SOF) units, as well as US government civilians from the State Department, USAID, and USDA, *SoA supported several water projects* at more than \$465,000 in 20+ districts spread over four provinces in southern and southeastern Afghanistan.



At the beginning of the year, the SoA team worked primarily with conventional US Army units in Kandahar Province, devising and implementing projects based upon local needs identified by elements of the 4th Infantry Division and the 10th Mountain Division. While these were successful collaborations, and we continued to support the efforts of conventional Army and Marine Corps units, SoA's flexible, decentralized approach was an especially good fit with SOF elements.

The majority of SOF elements in Afghanistan are focused on Village Stability Operations (VSO), a ground-level effort to improve security and increase the capacity of the Afghan government in key but often remote areas. Spirit of America supported this work in three critical areas:

- **Governance:** Spirit of America increased the capacity of district-level governance structures by providing computers, printers, cameras, and radio station equipment, funding *shura* meals to incentivize participation and dialogue, and furnishing women’s organization meeting spaces, amongst other support.
- **Development:** Spirit of America also supported small-scale development initiatives to improve the futures of local populations. Examples include vocational and agricultural training programs, model farm support, school refurbishment, sewing machines, educational supplies, water pumps and filtration systems, etc.
- **Security:** We provided Afghan National and Local Police metal detectors, radios, binoculars, motorcycles, tourniquets, and other nonlethal equipment to help protect innocent civilians.

In addition to those three specific areas, Spirit of America also provided humanitarian assistance to those Afghans who needed it most, funding items such as winter clothing, medical supplies, wheelchairs, playground equipment, and transportation for desperately ill children to receive medical treatment.

Project Spotlight – Afghanistan

Vocational training, jobs not guns.



A US Army team in Kandahar Province wanted to get at-risk Afghan males jobs and keep them from being recruited by the insurgents. SoA organized and funded a course in basic concrete skills for twenty unemployed Afghan men. After the training, SoA found jobs for the men on projects improving their community. Result: greater opportunities for vulnerable young males to support themselves, their families, and their communities, reducing their susceptibility to fighting just to make money. Field Rep Isaac Eagan, an Army veteran, led this project.

Clean water, improved governance.



SOF in Kandahar Province identified water problems as a major barrier to stability. Communities lacked access to safe drinking water, which posed a critical health risk and reduced villagers’ confidence in local government. SoA purchased water filtration systems and trained district leaders on their use. The Afghan officials then distributed the devices to the villagers. Result: clean drinking water, improved health, and greater local trust in the Afghan government. Field Rep Jim Misencik, a Marine veteran, led this project.

Worldwide



SoA reps conducting a site assessment in Kenya

As a result of the relationships we forged with US government personnel in Afghanistan, Spirit of America continued to expand its operations elsewhere around the world, working to prevent the next Iraq or Afghanistan. In these more permissive environments, we had the opportunity to dive deeply into underlying problems that lead to violence. In addition to conducting site assessments for future initiatives in Africa and the Middle East, we also completed the following projects.

Yemen

Spirit of America partnered with a US advisory team working out of the Embassy in Sana'a to provide much-needed school supplies so that vulnerable segments of the Yemeni youth population could receive quality educations, thus improving their future opportunities and deterring them from joining extremist organizations.

Mauritania

Spirit of America collaborated with US personnel on a livestock health project focused on stabilizing vulnerable populations along the border with Mali. We also provided eyeglasses for a joint US-Mauritanian initiative to build Mauritanian government capacity and address a pressing health need in remote areas.

Project Spotlight – Mauritania

Improving livestock health, countering al Qaeda.



The US Army team in Mauritania was tasked with improving security in remote areas and countering al Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb. The Army team identified livestock health as the #1 local need. SoA assembled a “brain trust” of veterinary experts to advise us and the Army team. SoA then provided training, equipment and business assistance for locally-selected men to go into business as veterinarians treating cattle and goats. Result:

radically improved livestock health, vulnerable communities have more milk, meat, and money, making it harder for al Qaeda and other extremists to exploit poverty as a recruiting tool.

Thank you for joining us in our mission to help US troops and diplomats help the local people. We are excited to continue this journey with you in the years to come!

All the best,

The Spirit of America Team

Attachment: Spirit of America Fact Sheet

501c3 Nonprofit Status

Spirit of America is a 501c3 nonprofit, tax-exempt public charity founded in 2003. We are a registered USAID Private Voluntary Organization (PVO) and we participate in the US Institute of Peace Civil-Military Working Group.

Mission

Spirit of America's mission is to help Americans serving abroad assist local people in need. Spirit of America is the only nonprofit organization that directly supports the safety and mission success of deployed US personnel.

What We Do

Spirit of America (SoA) provides humanitarian, civic and economic assistance in direct response to needs identified by American military and civilian personnel. SoA adds the agility, innovativeness and resources of the American private sector to the capabilities of the US government and military in support of US missions abroad. This support makes US troops and diplomats safer and more successful in their missions and helps local people often not reached by large-scale aid programs. Spirit of America also provides the American people a way to understand, connect with and support the vital work of US personnel serving abroad.

Donors and Donations

Spirit of America is supported entirely by private contributions from individuals, foundations and businesses. We receive no government funding. We have received over \$20 million in donations from more than 17,000 supporters. Donors may earmark their donations to specific projects and 100% of their gift will be used for the direct project expenses specified by the donor. Our finances are audited.

Management and Military Veteran Field Operations Team

Jim Hake is Spirit of America's Founder and CEO. Jim is a technology and media entrepreneur. He was a founder of Access Media, one of the first Internet media companies, which he sold to a large Internet investor and media company. The World Economic Forum twice recognized Jim as a Technology Pioneer. He is a member of the Council on Foreign Relations and a graduate of Dartmouth College and the Stanford University Graduate School of Business.

Spirit of America's field operations team is comprised solely of veterans, all of whom wished to continue serving their country after leaving the US military.

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Examples of Our Support

Spirit of America helps US personnel assist local people through project funding, expertise and know-how and goods.

Project Funding & Value Added

Working with our network of experts SoA can develop and fund solutions to problems that US civil-military teams seek to solve. These projects build on, and increase the impact of, what civil-military teams can accomplish with government resources. Examples include: employment and job training (Kandahar), education (Helmand), food security and livestock health (W. Africa), and village stability (Tajikistan).

Expertise & Know-How

In partnership with GLG Research, SoA offers US civil-military teams access to private-sector experts who can advise on questions related to stability and development: agriculture, business creation, training, education & much more.

Goods

Blankets
Clothing
Communications Equipment
Dirt Bikes
Humanitarian Assistance
Irrigation Equipment
Mameluke Swords
Medical Supplies & Medicine
Metal Detectors
Playground Equipment
School Supplies & Books
Sewing Machines
Sandals & Shoes
Solar Lanterns & Solar Radios
Tools
Video & Radio Production Gear
Water Purification Gear
Wheelchairs

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