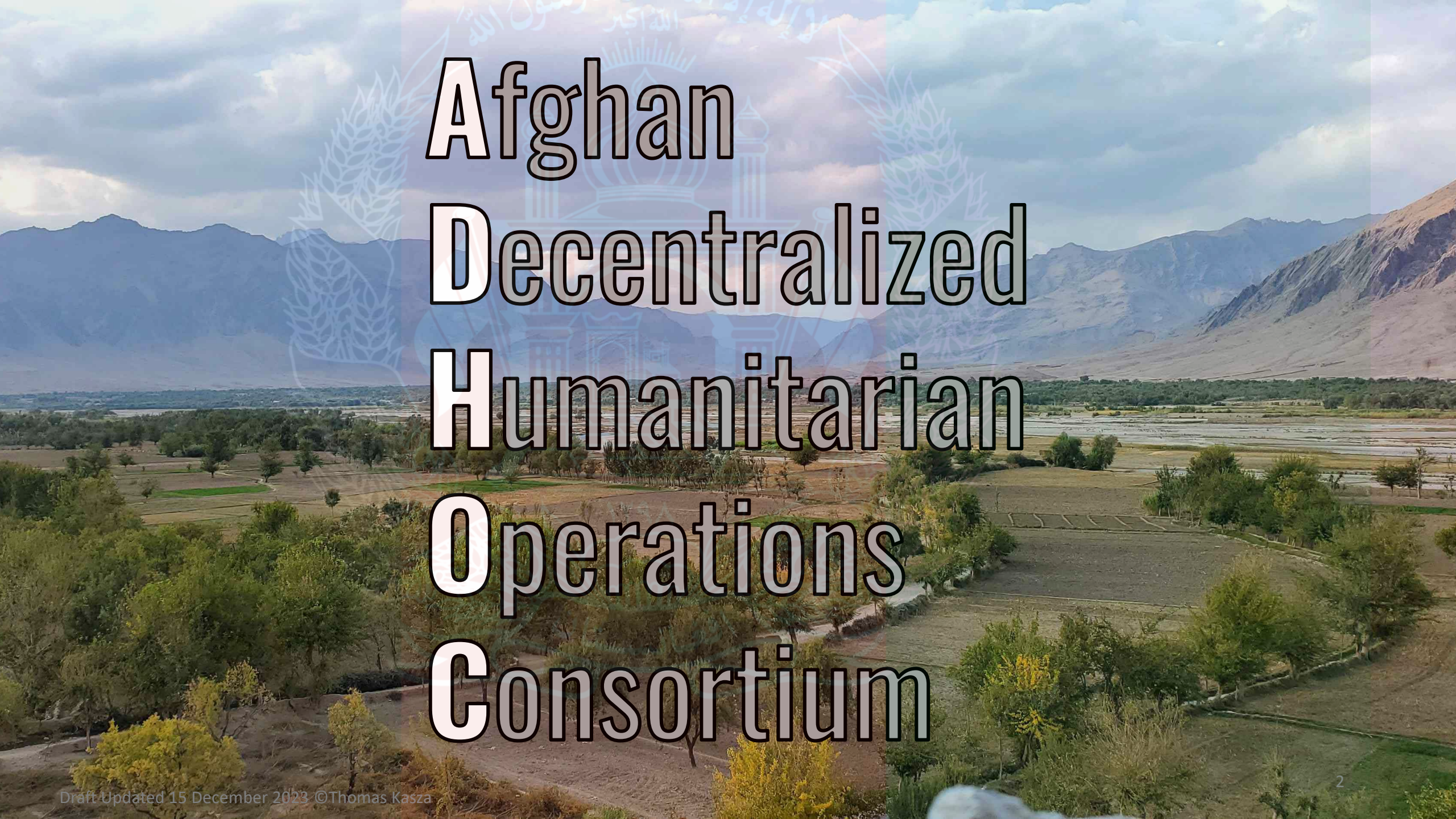




# The ADHOC Initiative

Decentralizing Humanitarian Operations in  
Authoritarian Regimes and Conflict Zones

Proposed by [Thomas Kasza](#), Executive Director, [1208 Foundation](#)

An aerial photograph of a valley in Afghanistan, showing a riverbed, fields, and mountains under a cloudy sky. A large, semi-transparent watermark of the Afghan coat of arms is overlaid on the image. The text 'Afghan Decentralized Humanitarian Operations Consortium' is written in a large, bold, white font with a black outline, centered over the image.

# Afghan Decentralized Humanitarian Operations Consortium

# Ad hoc:

1

a: concerned with a particular end or purpose

b: formed or used for specific or immediate problems or needs

2

a: fashioned from whatever is immediately available

# The Issue: INGO Limitations

## Limited INGO Access to Problem Areas

- Ghor, Daykundi and other Afghan provinces are off-limits to INGOs, especially impacting disenfranchised minorities like the Hazara. [\(Jackson, 2023\)](#).

## Funding Constraints

- Extensive evidence indicates that Taliban intimidation diverts aid towards their own causes. [Kumar | \(O'Donnell, 2023\)](#)
- As of Nov. 30th, only 40% of \$3.2 billion in UN-allocated funding has been received. This is after \$4.6B was requested for 2023 UN programs in Afghanistan. [\(UNSC, 2023\)](#)

## Institutional Inertia & High Overhead

- “...between 30-60% of the total budget of many global health aid projects never even leave the headquarters of the INGO” [Gloyd, 2022](#)

# The Solution: Decentralized NGO Ecosystem

## 100+ “Pop-Up” NGOs Currently Operate in Afghanistan

- An enduring legacy of the “[Digital Dunkirk](#)” is an army of small NGOs formed **ad hoc** during the Kabul Airlift. These organizations currently provide an array of assistance to hundreds of thousands of Afghans.

## Placement and Access is Intact After 20 years of War

- Robust human infrastructure/ logistic networks are still intact, and can be scaled or repurposed as needed.
- This distributed “NGO Ecosystem” has a validated capability to get to the places that the INGOs can’t, and many have [mechanisms in place](#) to confirm that aid is delivered to the intended recipient.

## Collaborative Governance: We want to work with INGOs

- We want to enable INGOs to do what they’re best at: Helicopters, cargo ships and surgeons can’t be decentralized.
- Our mission actively supports the UN’s [Sustainable Development Goals](#).



## Enhanced Resilience and Empowered Women

- Bespoke, specialized distribution of assistance can limit the foreign aid dependence seen in prior decades.
- Key to empowering Afghans is developing local entrepreneurship. With education and training, women can be the engine of this change. We have a way to do this without endangering them.

## A Safeguard Against Radicalization

- The Taliban is not a monolith. It is highly factionalized, with radicals like ISIS-K and Al-Qaeda waiting in the wings should it falter. Education and employment can safeguard a population of 40 million from sliding into extremism.

## Enfranchisement of Afghan Youth: A Global Security Imperative

- 21 of the 40 million people in Afghanistan are under 18: it is vital to give them hope for the future. History has shown time and again what happens when a young, disenfranchised population meets religious radicals. [\(UNICEF, 2022\)](#)

## The Obstacles:

### High Barrier to Entry and a Depressing Narrative

- Afghanistan is an extremely complex issue, plagued by nearly non-existent forward thinking.
- The layman needs something accesible and tangible, with codified benchmarks for impact.

## Reframing:

### Innovation

- Ukraine is a proving ground for defense tech; we can make Afghanistan a testbed for humanitarian innovation.

### Freedom and Flexibility

- You can do a lot of interesting things when the world isn't looking.

# Optimizing Decentralization

**Decentralization is here. Now we need to optimize it.**

## PRESS RELEASES

**UNHCR wins award for innovative use of blockchain solutions to provide cash to forcibly displaced in Ukraine**

(UNHCR, 2023)

In partnership with Stellar, UNHCR used blockchain technology to [securely distribute USDC cyrpotcurrency](#) to aid recipients, who could convert it to cash or transfer to a personal bank account.

The Washington Post  
*Democracy Dies in Darkness*

**Where learning is against the law: A secret school for Afghan girls**

[Decentralized Schools are already active in Afghanistan](#)

(Raghovan, 2022)

**Crypto is changing how humanitarian agencies deliver aid and services**

“It’s almost like the whole idea of a decentralized, distributed model is exactly what worked in terms of how we operated and deployed the system.”

In the wake of Cyclone Harold, a [blockchain-based emergency management system](#) enhanced the response of 15 charitable organizations in Vanuatu.

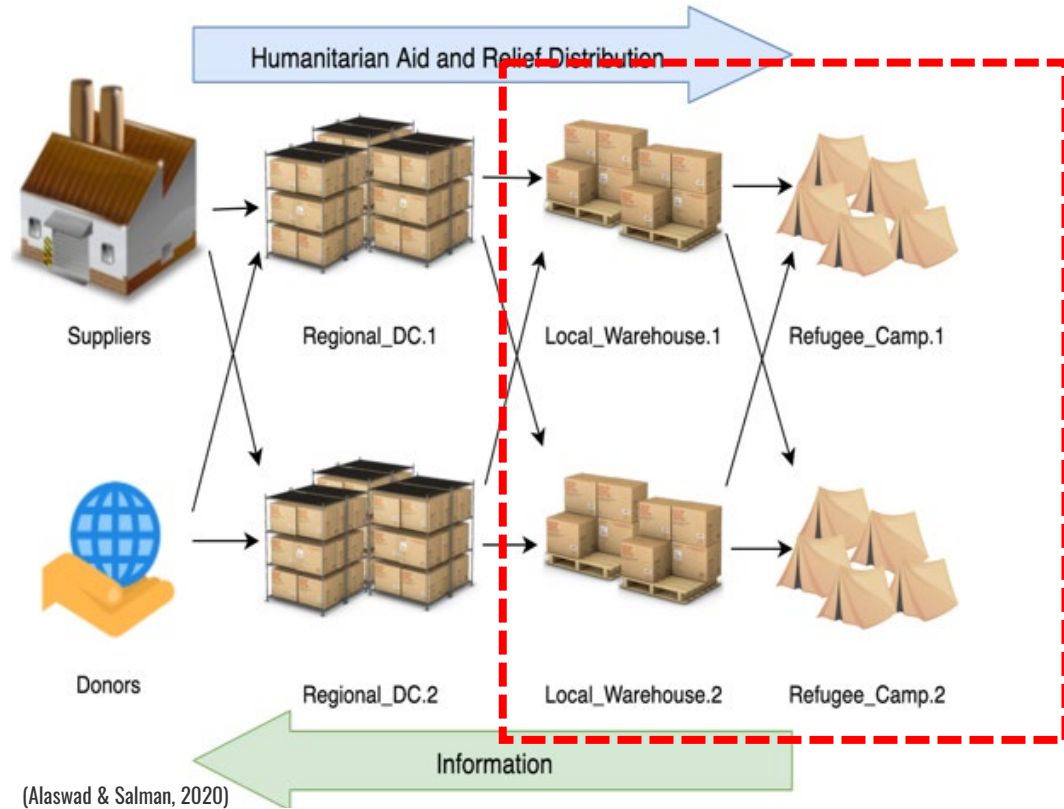
(Ewen, 2022)

While there is academic work concerning decentralized humanitarian operations, literature is limited when it comes providing it in denied areas: we will release a whitepaper in January.



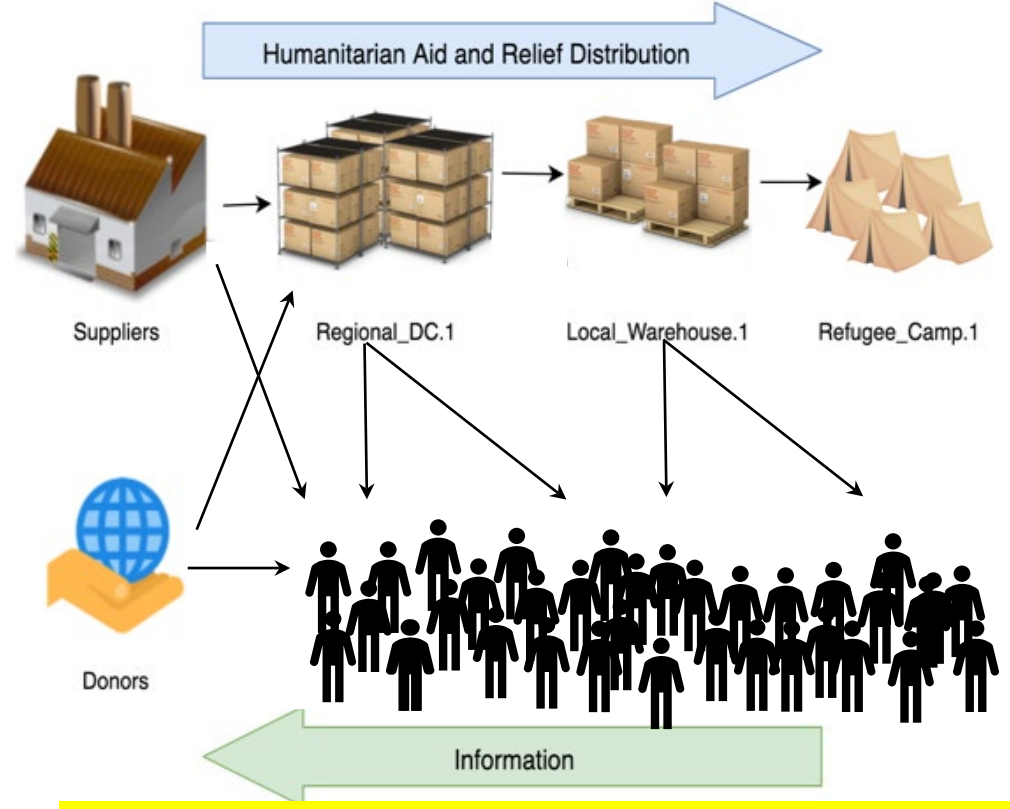
# Flows of Humanitarian Aid

## Conventional Aid Distribution



Subject to Taliban  
Control Measures

## Decentralized Aid Distribution



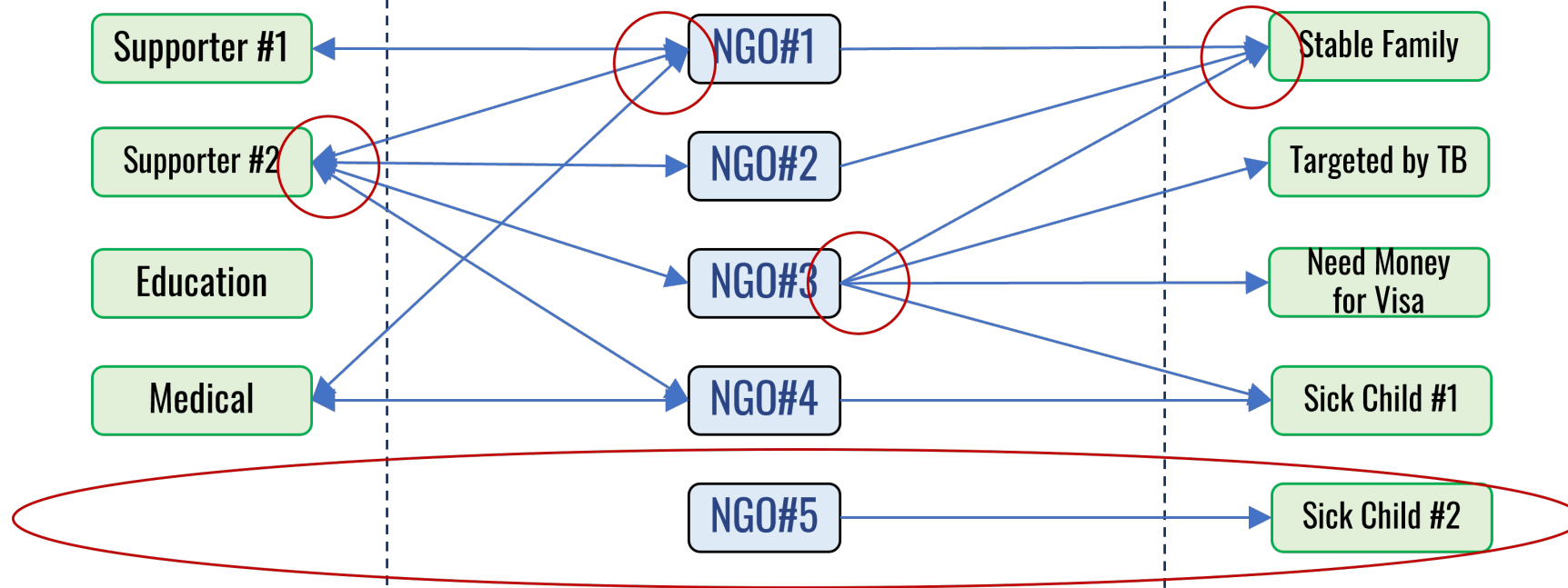
- **Reduced Risk of Taliban Aid Interdiction**
- Less Required Overhead
- Empowers Individuals' Agency

# Current State of Decentralized Aid

## Support

## Pop-Up NGOs

## Deployment



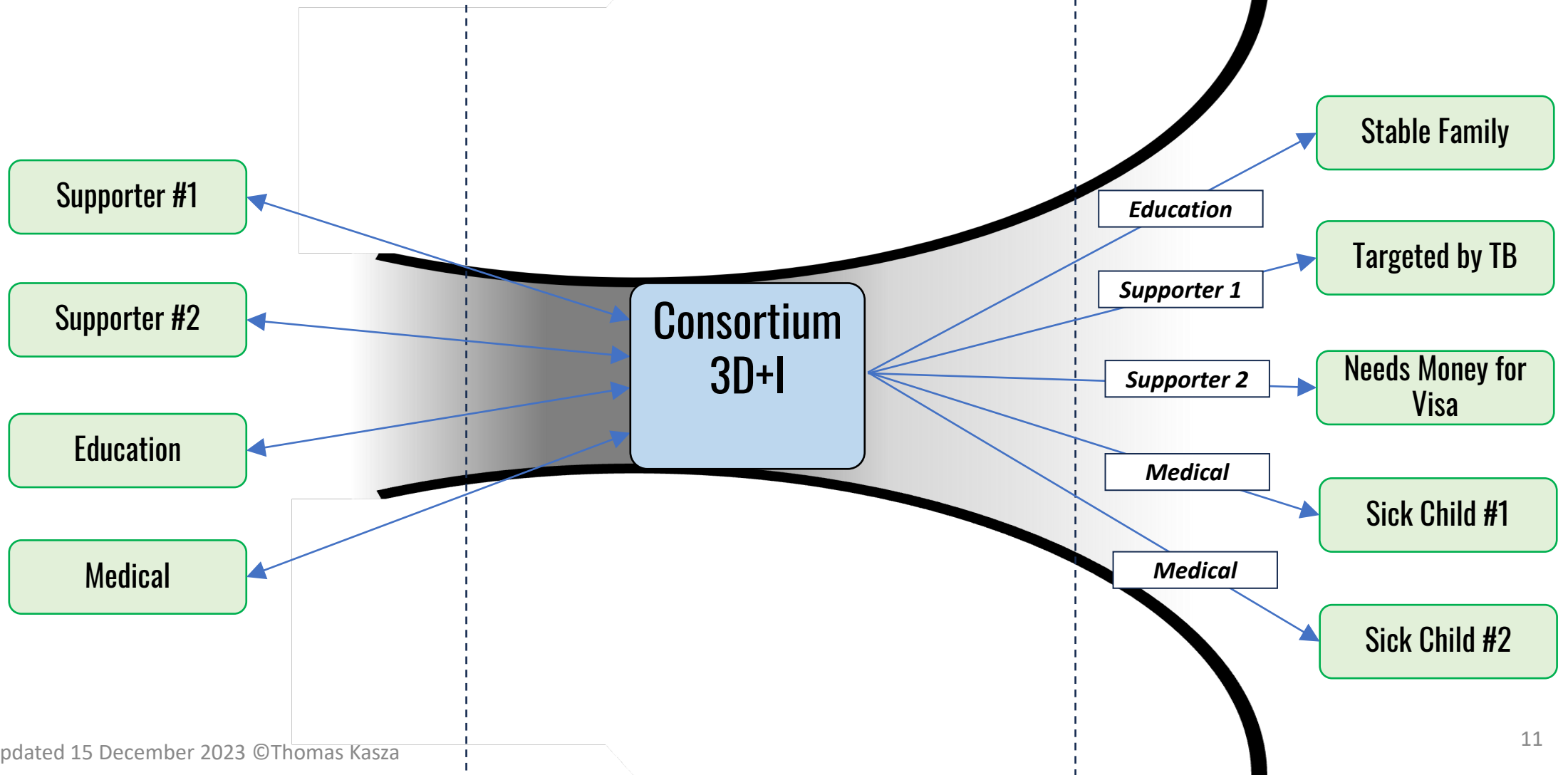
- NGO #1 receives a share of resources disproportionate to their activities
- The Stable Family gets more than their share
- Supporter #2 wants to help everyone, but is stretched too thin
- NGO #3 tries to help everyone, but doesn't have the resources
- NGO #5 isn't plugged into the larger ecosystem

# ADHOC Framework

## Support

## Coordination

## Deployment



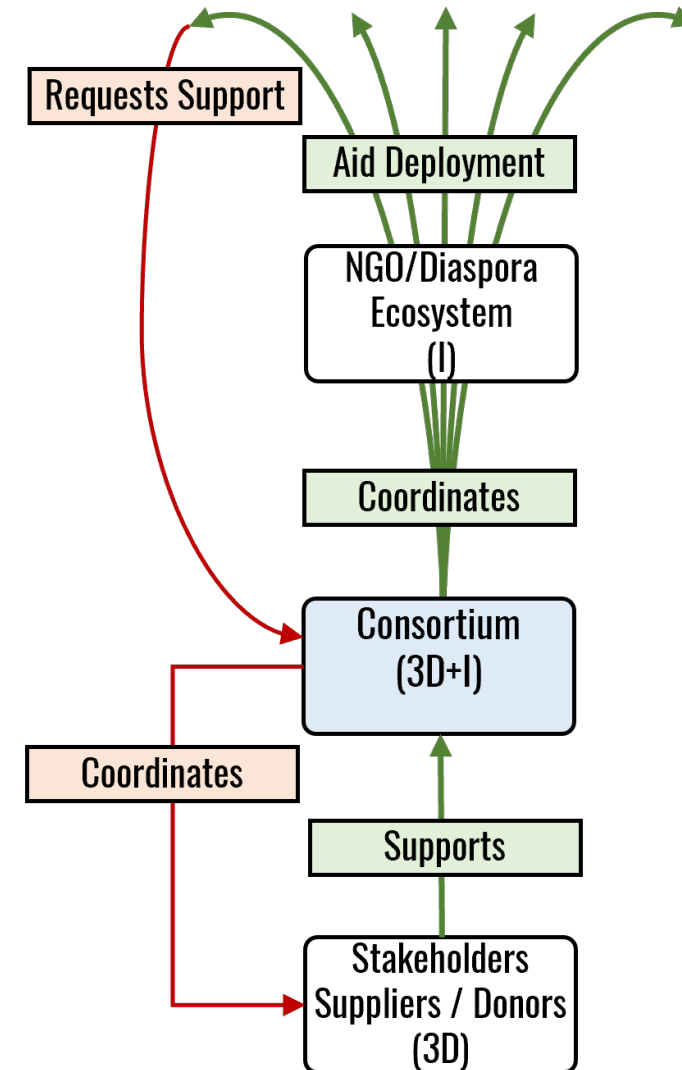
# The Revamped Model

## Locally Driven

- Technology permits realtime input and feedback from our allies in Afghanistan, enabling properly scaled and fit-for-purpose services.

## 3D+I (Collaborative Governance)

- Traditionally, defense, diplomatic and developmental (3D) lines of efforts form the backbone of humanitarian crisis response. [\(Cole, Kopell 2016\)](#)
- However, as shown repeatedly in Afghanistan and elsewhere, a frequent failure is the inability to integrate indigenous persons (I).
- We propose that 3D+I more adequately reframes the necessary structure needed to respond to the crisis in Afghanistan.



# Mechanism of Deployment

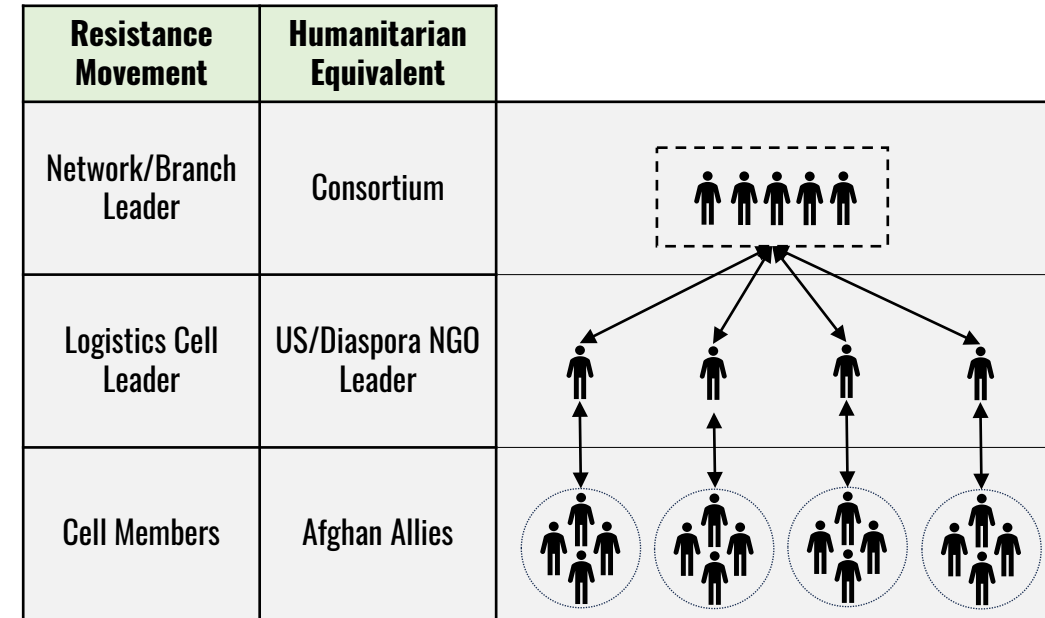
## Team of Teams....

(McChrystal et al., 2015)

- Structured like a resistance network...Except that we are the “insurgents”.
- Fast, agile, fit-for-purpose and reliant on leveraging the knowledge and expertise of local populations.

## Risk Management & Ethical Concerns

- Nearly every mission can be achieved by adhering to established patterns of life.
- People are our most valuable asset: we will not jeopardize their welfare by needlessly breaking Taliban restrictions.



# Assets

## Core Missions

- Decentralized Finance
- Aid Distribution
- Small Business Entrepreneurship
- Education

### Assets Legend

Validated and operationally scaled
Validated but not scaled
Asset available, but minimal validation
Asset is not fully implemented
Unassessed and not yet implemented

NGO/Diaspora Ecosystem

Requests for Assistance

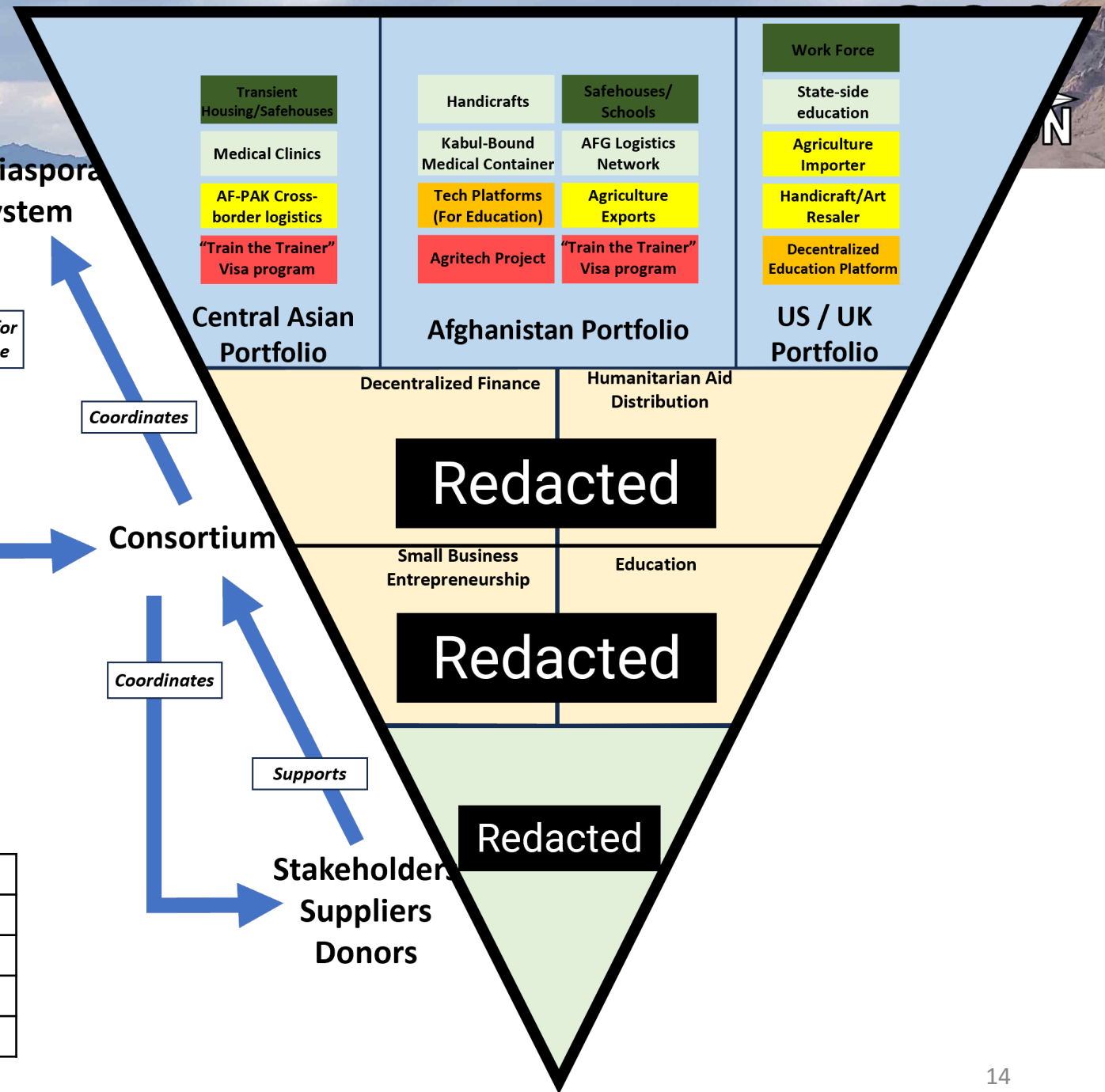
Coordinates

Consortium

Coordinates

Supports

Stakeholders  
Suppliers  
Donors

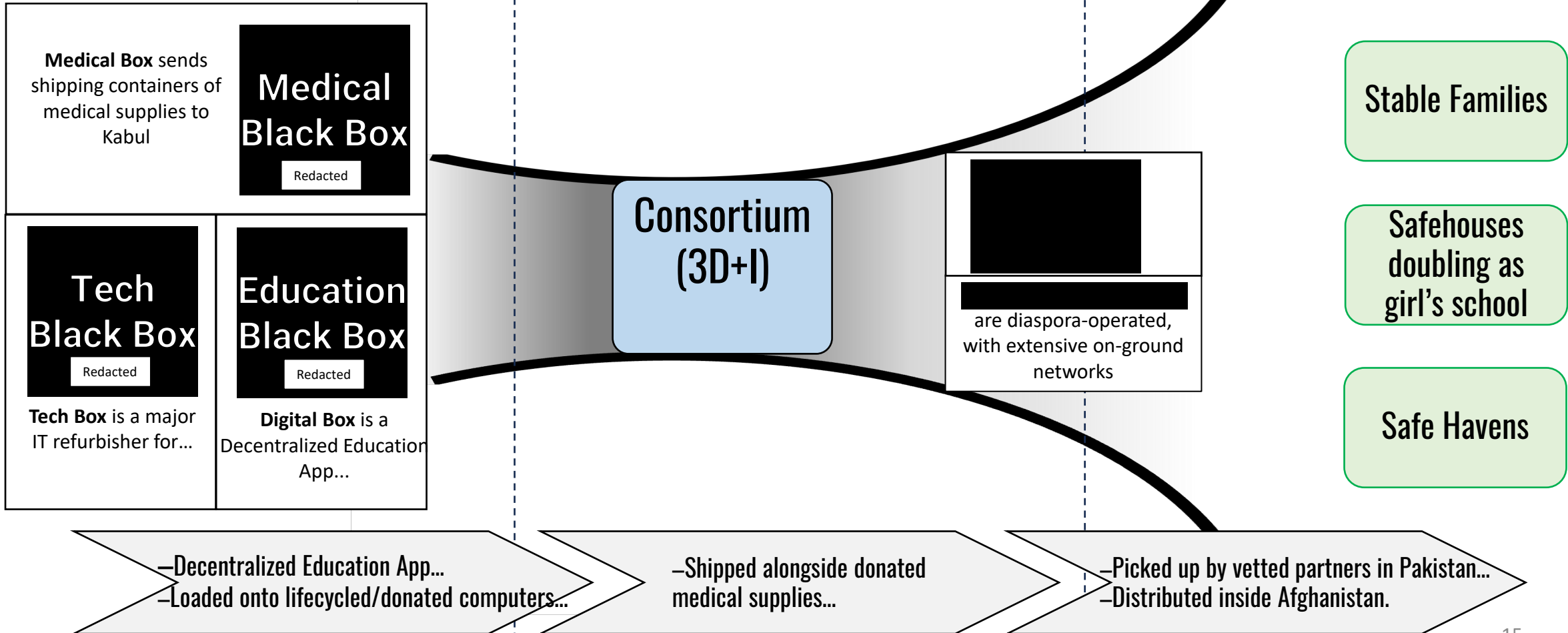


# Pilot Program: Underground Education

## Support

## Coordination

## Deployment



# Future Scaling to a Major Program

1208  
FOUNDATION

## Support

**Money Transfer Co.**  
(Already Partnered)

**Blockchain Company**  
(Prospective Partner)

## Coordination

**Consortium (3D+I)**



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency



## Deployment

**Target population for scaling:**

**150,000 Special Immigrant Visa Applicants (850,000+ total people)**

- Educated and vetted due to US/NATO affiliation
- In REAL-TIME contact with US NGOs

20 years ago, nobody was thinking about EVs or going to Mars. Our objectives are more modest and the time-horizon shorter, but there is no reason to not explore future-oriented innovation and collaborative efforts.

Mesh networks, integrating AI with cash distribution vectors, implementing medical resupply via the sort of [drones offered by Zipline](#) are all on the table.



# Substituent Effects

**A Thought Experiment:  
What is the USS Ford?**

**YES,** it is warship.

**AND...**

(Quattrone, Williams, 2023)

- **...it spurs technological innovation.**
- **...it is a mechanism for strengthening alliances.**
- **...it creates jobs.**



# Substituent Effects

**What are the benefits of “underground education”?**

**YES,** it gives Afghan women and girls a chance at a better future.

**AND...**

(Quattrone, Williams 2023)

- **...it subverts the authority of the Taliban.**
- **...it grows the scale and resiliency of the Afghan workforce.**
- **...it repairs America’s diminished moral standing.**
- **...it is a means to counteract radicalization.**
- **...it is the right thing to do.**

“These people fought alongside us, they bled with us, they died alongside us. To leave them out there is just unacceptable.”

“Dave”, Deputy Director  
*NY Sun* Interview



Taji; Arrived  
Nov. 2021

Bostan; Arrived  
Aug. 2022

Safiullah;  
Immigrated  
2015

Mohsin; Arrived  
Oct.2022

Abdullah; Missing  
since spring 2022

# Annex

# About the 1208 Foundation

- **Green Beret Operated NGO**
- **Formed to Safeguard NMRG**
  - National Mine Reduction Group: Afghan Counter-IED Specialists (Minesweepers) who did the most dangerous job in Afghanistan exclusively for US Special Forces.
  - Army Special Forces is an organization predicated on its reliance local relationships: from 2015-2021, 47 NMRG died compared to 22 Green Berets. We aim to repay those who saved so many of us.
- **“Insurgent NGO”**
  - Because “disruptor” is a platitude, and **not pushing the limits goes nowhere.**



An NMRG member at work

# About Tom

1208  
FOUNDATION

- **Green Beret turned Humanitarian**
- **ED/Founder of the 1208 Foundation**
- **Georgetown University**
  - MA, International Business and Policy
- **University of Oxford**
  - MSc Candidate, Major Programme Management
- **AUF “Advisor”**

Neither Tom, nor 1208 have any manner of official affiliation with the Afghan United Front or its leadership.



*Why the military picture, and not something polished like typical slide-decks?*

A paradigm shift is needed to help Afghanistan, as evidenced by the 70% shortfall in aid. Aggressive, dynamic moves are necessary to shake away apathy: something that Green Berets and SOF are made for.

# 1208's Ongoing Operations

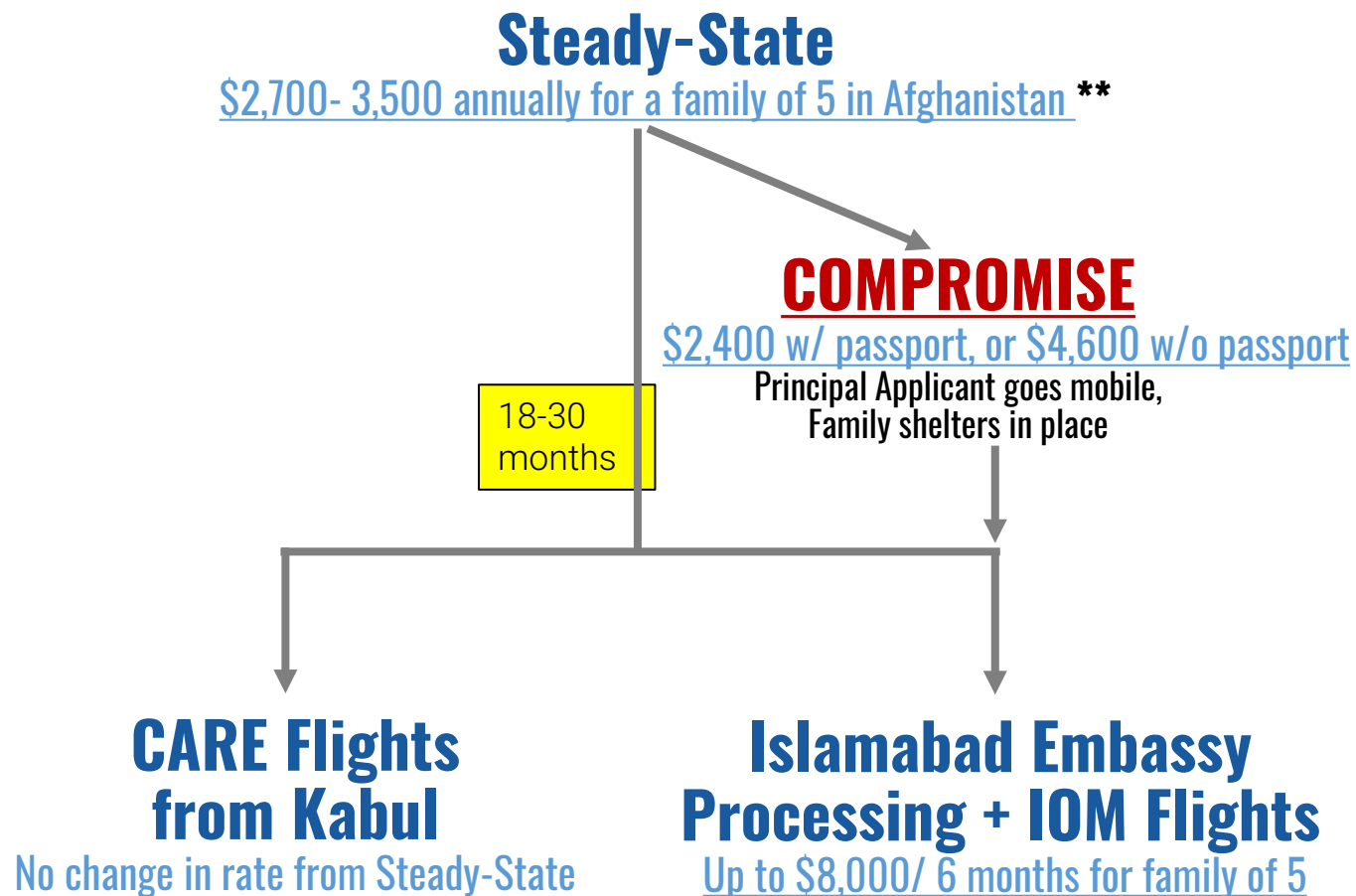
**Humanitarian Assistance:** Ensure our families have the bare essentials for survival, such as food, shelter, medicine and winter clothing. **\$150 will feed a family of 5 for a month**

## Safehouse Operations:

When those under our care are compromised, we have the means to ensure their survival by getting them into secure locations

## Cross-border Movement:

In especially extreme situations, we have the capacity to get our people out of immediate harm, and into Pakistan.



# 15 Month Timeline



NY Times Op-Ed  
Winter 2022/23



HFAC Chair Meeting  
Spring



Summer

125 people evacuated



Afghan United Front Launch

Fall



FOREIGN AFFAIRS  
COMMITTEE

REPUBLICANS

Roundtable/Hearing  
Winter '23 and Onwards



Nation-wide tour promoting next-gen Afghan leaders. Engagements with the US Congress, and stakeholders at the World Affairs Council, Harvard Kennedy School, Stanford, Johns Hopkins, Georgetown, NY Union League and more.



Company name redacted due to NDA.

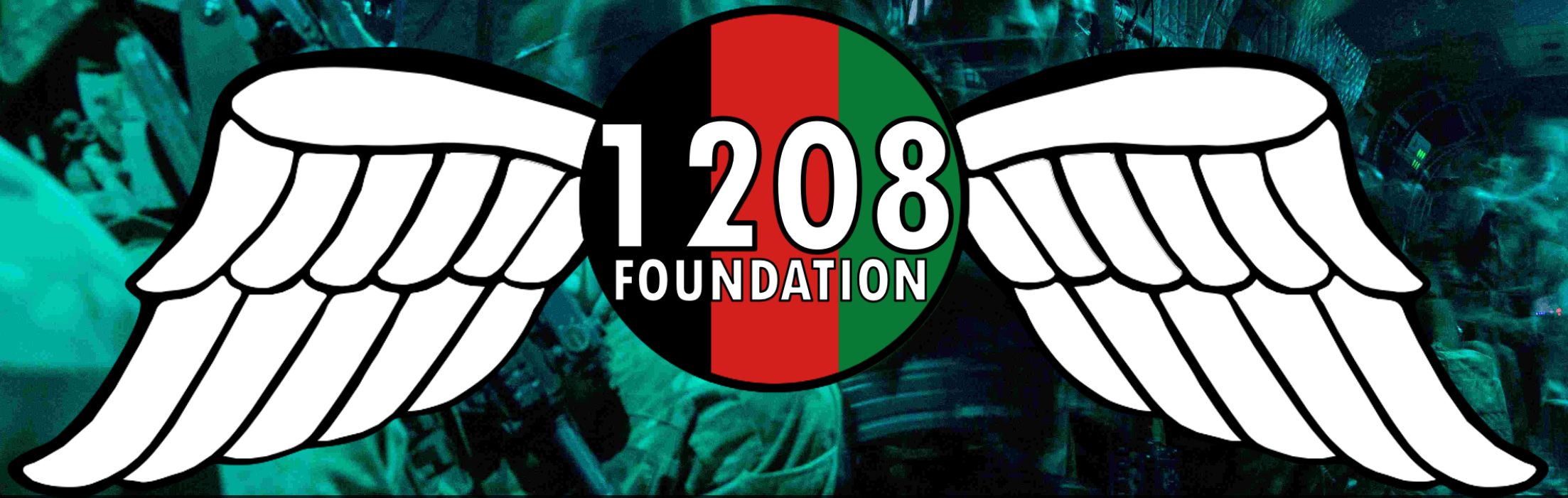


Pilot Program Launch



# References

- Alaswad, S. & Salman, S. (2020). *Humanitarian Aid and Relief Distribution (HARD) Game*. Advances in Engineering Education. Volume 8, Issue 2. <https://advances.asee.org/wp-content/uploads/vol08/issue02/Papers/AEE-27-Alaswad.pdf>
- Cole, B. & Koppel, C. (2017, December 6). *Fostering Diplomatic-Defense-Development (3D) Cooperation in Responding to Complex Crises*. Peace Brief Issue 240. United States Institute of Peace <https://www.usip.org/publications/2017/12/fostering-diplomatic-defense-development-3d-cooperation-responding-complex>
- Eiven, M (2022, May 25). *Crypto is changing how humanitarian agencies deliver aid and services*. Magazine by Coin Telegraph. <https://cointelegraph.com/magazine/crypto-blockchain-changing-humanitarian-agencies-deliver-aid/>
- Gloyd, S. (2022, January 25). *Phantom Aid: Money allocated to countries that ends up funding INGOs*. University of Washington, Department of Global Health. <https://depts.washington.edu/globalhealthjustice/what-is-the-problem-with-international-aid/>
- Jackson, A. (2023, October 1). *AID DIVERSION IN AFGHANISTAN: Is it time for a candid conversation?* Afghan Analysts Network, <https://www.afghanistan-analysts.org/en/reports/economy-development-environment/aid-diversion-in-afghanistan-is-it-time-for-a-candid-conversation/>
- Kumar, R. (2023, June 23). *Charities say Taliban intimidation diverts aid to Taliban members and causes*. NPR, <https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2023/06/23/1180464339/charities-say-taliban-intimidation-diverts-aid-to-taliban-members-and-causes>
- McChrystal, S., Collins, T., Silverman, D., & Fussell, C. (2015). *Team of Teams: New Rules of Engagement for a Complex World*.
- O'Donnel, L. (2023, July 24). *The Taliban Have 'Infiltrated' U.N. Deliveries of Aid*, Foreign Policy, <https://foreignpolicy.com/2023/07/24/afghanistan-taliban-un-foreign-aid-assistance-development/>
- Quattrone, P. (2023, November 30). *"USS Ford"*. Lecture at University of Oxford's Said Business School, <https://www.sbs.ox.ac.uk/about-us/people/paolo-quattrone>
- Raghavan, S (2022, November 9). *Where learning is against the law: A secret school for Afghan girls*. Washington Post. <https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/11/02/afghanistan-girls-school-education-taliban/>
- UNHCR (2023, March 23). *UNHCR wins award for innovative use of blockchain solutions to provide cash to forcibly displaced in Ukraine* [Press Release] <https://www.unhcr.org/us/news/press-releases/unhcr-wins-award-innovative-use-blockchain-solutions-provide-cash-forcibly>
- UNICEF (2022). *"Children under 18 in Afghanistan"* <https://data.unicef.org/how-many/how-many-children-under-18-are-there-in-afghanistan/>
- UN Security Council (November, 30 2023) *December 2023 Monthly Forecast*, Security Council Report, <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2023-12/afghanistan-23.php>
- Williams, I., [Wilson Strategic Enterprises](https://www.wilsonstrategicenterprises.com/). (2023, November 27) *"Yes, And..."*, "3D+C". Personal Communication



*(U) “Section 1208 enables support to foreign government-affiliated and non-government-affiliated forces that support USSOF operations to combat terrorism. This allows USSOF to leverage the unique attributes of those foreign forces, such as language and ethnicity, to achieve specific effects on the battlefield in support of the overall USSOF mission.”*

**(Declassified April 7, 2016)**