

Office of Transition Initiatives

COMMUNITY COHESION INITIATIVE

QUARTERLY REPORT, APRIL - JUNE 2014



OTI Mission Statement

To support U.S. foreign policy objectives by helping local partners advance peace and democracy in priority countries in crisis. Seizing critical windows of opportunity, OTI works on the ground to provide fast, flexible, short-term assistance targeted at key political transition and stabilization needs.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

Through the Afghanistan Community Cohesion Initiative (CCI), USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives (OTI) seeks to increase resilience in areas vulnerable to insurgent exploitation by (1) strengthening community capacities to promote a peaceful transition; (2) supporting peaceful electoral processes and outcomes; and (3) countering violent threats to a peaceful transition.

CCI is implemented by Creative Associates International, Inc. (Creative) in the east, south and southwest. This quarterly report covers the period of project performance for CCI's activities from April 1, 2014 to June 30, 2014.

PROGRAM AREAS

Creative-CCI currently focuses on strategically important districts within Kandahar Province in the South, Hilmand in the Southwest and Ghazni, Khost and Kunar in the East. At the end of Quarter 2, March 2014, Creative-CCI concluded programming in Zabul province.

At the heart of Creative-CCI's approach is the focus on community and citizen engagement, and strengthening ties between and among local actors, customary governance structures, and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA). Grounded in the principle that durable resilience and cohesion is a result of local will, initiative, and leadership, Creative-CCI designs and implements small grants through a process-oriented, community driven approach. This approach seeks to strengthen linkages between communities vulnerable to insurgent exploitation and positive influencers - both GIROA and other actors. At a regional level, Creative-CCI utilizes both "soft" (Community Cohesion Jirgas, outreach visits by district government) and "hard" (small-scale infrastructure) activities, to strengthen community resiliencies and linkages between vulnerable communities and customary leadership – increasing community cohesion in the process. At the national level, the Program Development Unit (PDU) supports innovative and proof-of-concept initiatives, together with robust analytics to inform Creative-CCI programming.

To direct and improve programming, Creative-CCI relies on a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system, in addition to a rolling assessment and workplan process. Creative-CCI's M&E system gathers information from multiple levels to include atmospherics and data from third parties (spanning activity outputs to overall stability of an area), to assessing programming success and providing information necessary to improve activities and inform district appraisals. Creative-CCI also conducts ongoing assessments that provide situational awareness and a strategic analysis of Creative-CCI's areas of operations, in order to inform the development of provincial work plans that guide programming.

COUNTRY SITUATION

Security Transition

During Q3, increased security incidents were reported throughout the east and southeast, many indirectly and directly affecting Creative-CCI projects. CCI anticipated increased insurgent activity due to the approaching Presidential and Provincial elections, along with the onset of summer and start of the fighting season.

Anti-Government Elements (AGE) threats and outbreaks of fighting with Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF) in areas near to several Creative-CCI activities, resulted temporary suspension of some activities. To date, most have resumed without any team or contractor casualties. CCI implemented proactive measures to further mitigate potential situations that included closure of provincial offices during heightened risk periods, instigating strict personal and professional staff security protocols, maintaining a low program profile in communities, and reducing staff movement in more remote districts. The overall program continues to maintain unprecedented programmatic achievements.

Insurgent-related violence during the lead in to the April elections continued to build throughout the second round elections period in June, with Kunar and Hilmand recording the highest incident rates. All Serious Incident Reports were completed and logged with USAID/OTI and Creative HQ. In Kabul city, attacks at La Taverna and Serena Hotel earlier in the year have resulted in many venues now being out of bounds for the expat community. A conservative strategy is in place relating to social exposure for international staff, with work related essential movement restrictions applied, and social activity reduced to predominantly in-house. Relatively few external locations have been considered, which are subject to clearance at requisite Alert State Levels. A comprehensive High Value Targets list now exists after an extensive period of threat reporting and risk analysis that heavily focuses upon Kabul, but also reaches to regional locations. It is anticipated the present risk management approach will extend into the foreseeable future, with a great deal of change needing to be evident before easing of the current posture.

The table below details violent incidents recorded during this reporting period in provinces of Creative-CCI implementation, and is not project related. Data is sourced from National Police Control Centre daily reports. "Stand off" refers to no actual gunfire exchange but has potential to escalate, while an example of "Others" is an International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) air strike. These figures indicate that more than half of all Improvised Explosive Device (IED) attacks happened in Kandahar and Hilmand, and 42% of armed clashes in Hilmand.

Province	Armed Clashes	IED	BBIED/VBIED	Stand off	Others
Kabul	1	9	0	3	12
Kandahar	9	21	1	6	22
Kunar	11	4	0	44	8
Ghazni	26	11	1	16	5
Hilmand	35	18	1	2	12
Khost	1	10	1	4	4
Grand Total	83	73	4	75	63

The Afghan Public Protection Force (APPF) changeover was initiated with minimal notice from the Ministry of Interior (MOI) in mid-May. After a series of somewhat ambiguous MOI communications, CCI signed a new contract with APPF following Contracting Officer approval from OTI. It is anticipated that there will be no change to the current level of service provided by APPF, and Creative-CCI and its in-house risk management company continue to enjoy a very positive professional working relationship with the APPF.

Continued vigilance will be required with frequent risk appraisals to substantiate and support the continuation of safe programming. It is anticipated that Q4 will be heavy on programming commitments and likely be one of the busiest periods in the life of the program.

Political Transition

This period was dominated by the Presidential and Provincial Council elections, with eight candidates campaigning for the presidency and 2,591 for the Provincial Council (12% women). Currently, the new President is yet to be announced. Voters determined that the 458-seat Provincial Council will be comprised of 361 males and 97 females, which is in line with the 2013 Election Law that mandates a 20 percent quota for women candidates in the council. However, this remains a step down from the previous electoral framework, which set aside 25% of Provincial Council seats for women. A review of the elections is detailed in the Activities section (page 7).

GIRoA Challenges

South

Hilmand

The April appointment of a new Afghan National Police (ANP) Provincial Chief increased the ANP profile at Creative-CCI project sites. On June 2, two suicide bombers attacked the Nahri Sarraj DG's office, killing 12 ANP and three GIRoA employees. The Hilmand PG, Naeem Baloch, survived an AGE attack upon his convoy in June, after which he and the ANP chief launched a renewed offensive operation against AGEs. In Sangin, Creative-CCI continued working with the DG, developing GIRoA's plans to further consolidate positive involvement and relations with the northern village clusters of Bostanzai, Kotazay and Nokorzay. In the final weeks of June, the northern districts of Kajaki and Sangin experienced a number of large-scale organized attacks. During this assault, ANSF lost control of Sangin and the road leading to the Kajaki Dam. During the massive assault on the northern districts, smaller groups infiltrated villages in southern districts, recently vacated by ISAF.

Kandahar

Security in Kandahar is fragile, with Kandahar City and surrounding districts experiencing increased AGE activity. ANP arrested six suicide bombers in May, with evidence pointing to a planned attack on Aino Mina, home of GIRoA officials, government offices and NGOs. The Taliban claimed responsibility for assassinations on June 19 of the former DG of Panjwayi, Haji Baran, and a high-ranking ANP commander on May 25, Abdul Wahood Sarhadi Jaho.

East

Khost

The Tere Zayi district DG was removed over alleged corruption allegations and replaced by Jamil Shah as acting DG, who in turn was replaced by a new DG, Khali, in late June. Greater instability in Bak district has led to a reduced GIRoA functioning ability, characterized by extensive documentation processing delays and reduced movements for officials and community members.

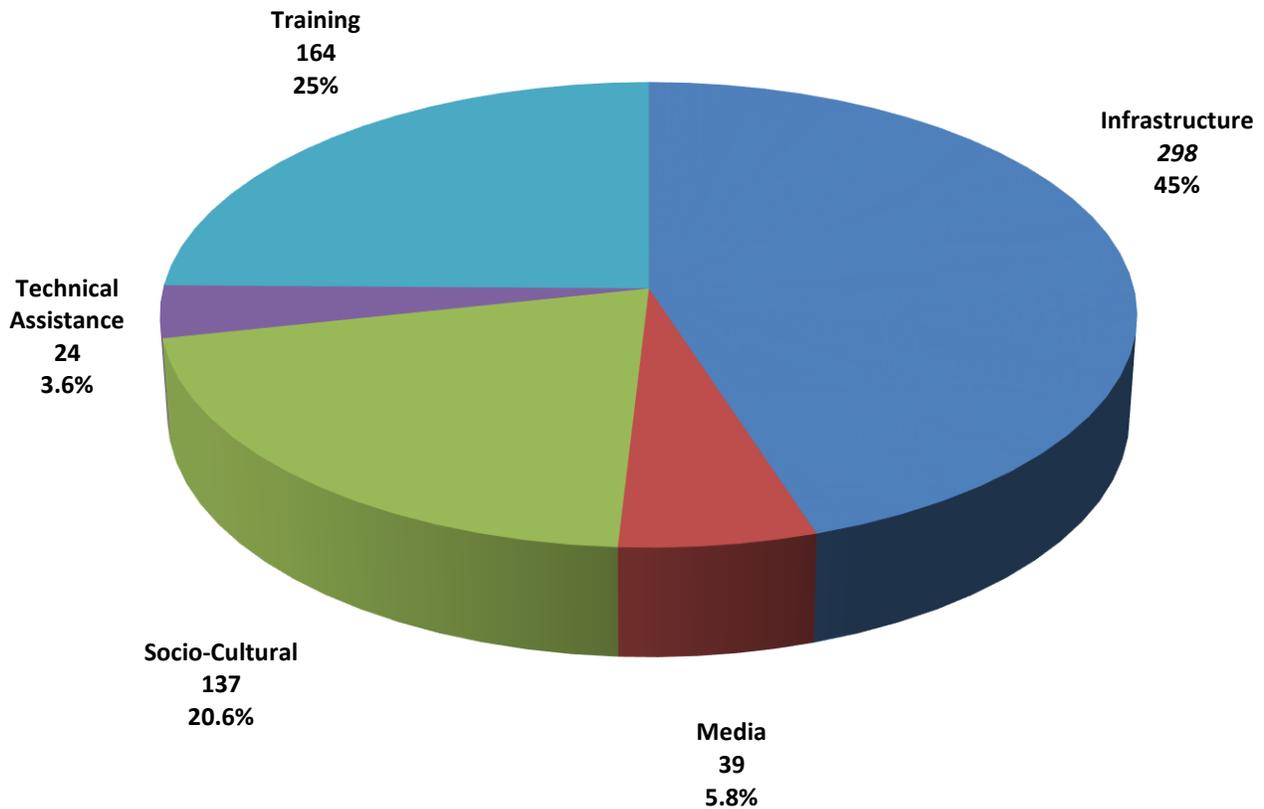
Ghazni

The Qarabagh DG was dismissed from his post without public explanation on May 29, amid circulating rumors of corruption. His replacement, Mohammad Ali Hasrat, was seconded from the district executive office. Across Ghazni, proactive local community support from volunteers, local leaders and youth all organized to provide support to GIRoA and ANSF during the elections runoff.

Kunar

On May 26, the DG called together four Community Development Council (CDC) members and the Implementing Partner (IP) to discuss the lack of transparency in their National Solidarity Program (NSP). The emphasis throughout the meeting was upon transparency and honest work. Such meetings aim to provide better implementation outcomes of developmental activities and raise quality expectations in future. On June 26, PG Shuja-ul-Mulk Jalal Khan, along with ISAF officials, met with elders and school students from Marawara. The officials praised the value of education, distributed school kits to students and committed to providing furniture for the district meeting hall.

OTI Afghanistan - Activities by Sector



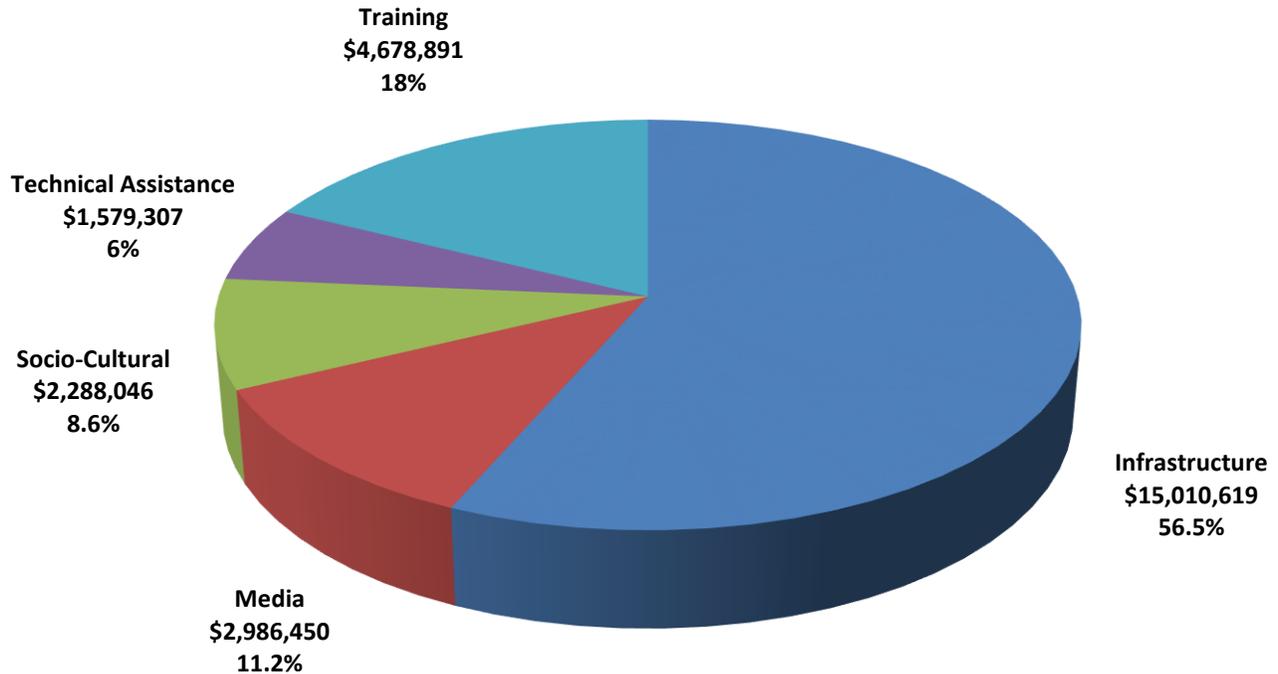
GRANTS SUMMARY BY SECTOR

Since March 2012, OTI, through its implementing partner, Creative-CCI has cleared, completed, closed, or cancelled 662 small grants. The breakdown by sector is as follows: Infrastructure 298 grants (45%), Media 39 grants (5.8%), Socio Cultural 137 grants (20.6%), Technical Assistance 24 grants (3.6%) and Training 164 grants (25%).

Between April and June 2014, Creative-CCI has cleared, completed, closed, or cancelled 131 small grants:

- Infrastructure: 83 grants
- Media: 7 grants
- Socio-Cultural: 12 grants
- Technical Assistance: 10 grants
- Training: 19 grants

OTI Afghanistan - Activities by Values



GRANTS SUMMARY BY VALUE

Since March 2012, Creative-CCI cleared, completed, closed, or cancelled 662 small grants; totaling \$26,543,314. The breakdown by value is as follows: Infrastructure \$15,010,619 (56.5%), Media \$2,986,450 (11.2%), Socio-Cultural \$2,288,046 (8.6%), Technical Assistance \$1,579,307 (6%) and Training \$4,678,891 (18%).

Between April and June 2014, Creative-CCI:

- Cleared: 131 Grants worth \$7,646,198
- Disbursed (3rd Quarter): \$4,398,357.10
- Disbursed (Life of Program): \$12,673,535.70
- Completed: 69 activities
- Closed: 91 Activities

ACTIVITIES

Peaceful Elections Advocacy Campaign

Technical Assistance

Creative-CCI's electoral capacity was strengthened during this quarter by recruiting three Afghan National Peaceful Election Advocacy Advisors and two international Senior Electoral Conflict Prevention Advisors. The Afghan National Peaceful Election Advocacy Advisors provided first-hand knowledge and understanding of local politics and contributed greatly by traveling to all five provinces to be present at focus groups and training of trainers activities sponsored by Creative-CCI. The international Senior Electoral Conflict Prevention Advisors supported the Chief of Party, Program Development Unit and Media and Strategic Communications Unit on electoral conflict prevention matters. The international Senior Electoral Conflict Prevention Advisors worked closely with the three Afghan National Peaceful Election Advocacy Advisors, preparing strategies that were implemented by local NGO partners, following up on workplans, continuing to supervise focus groups and community dialogue trainings, and developing messages deployed through media campaigns.

Presidential and Provincial Council Elections

Under significant pressure and with high domestic and international expectations, the April 5 Presidential and Provincial Elections and June 14 Presidential Second Round elections showed that the Afghan people could manage and participate proactively in an electoral process. While yet to be concluded, the electoral process saw increased participation and relative calm at a majority of voting centers on Election Day, with voters turning out in large numbers demonstrating a desire for a more democratic Afghanistan.

There were sporadic attacks in some villages during the lead up to Election Day. However, despite a campaign of intimidation and threats, the Taliban was unsuccessful in seriously disrupting the overall process. The Independent Elections Commission (IEC) and the Independent Elections Complaints Commission (IECC) managed to conduct elections in relative calm.

The April 5 and June 14 electoral process marked several important and historical milestones in Afghanistan. For the first time, the country is on course for a transition of power from one democratically elected president to a second democratically elected president. The IEC autonomously managed the elections, and voter turn-out was a historical high, with about eight million voters participating in both the first and second rounds. Attesting to an open and competitive process, 2,591 candidates were nominated for the 458 available Provincial Council seats, while eight men were nominated for the Afghan Presidency. The country's elected representatives are scheduled to assume their new positions the second week of August.

Political Context

Technical irregularities continued throughout the pre- and post-election period due to lack of IEC practical knowledge and interference by external political interests. Still, despite many challenges, the IEC made significant progress in organizing and conducting the election and runoff in April and June. For example, following the first round, inappropriate behavior by thousands of poll workers participating in illegal and undemocratic practices was revealed. The IEC quickly identified those involved, dismissed them, and established stronger training and accountability protocols during the second round.

Following the first round, the country as a whole remained calm, in spite of a slow counting process and lack of frequent information from election authorities. When the IEC missed the April 24 deadline to announce preliminary results, legislators in the Wolesi Jirga of the Parliament publicly expressed concern about the counting process. Disregarding legal due process, members issued a statement expressing lack of confidence in the counting, which some observers saw as an effort to exert pressure on the IEC and IECC, and possibly interfere in the process. Both electoral bodies shrugged off the allegations, and the IEC later releasing first round results to a largely patient population.

While the second round reported a higher number of violent incidents, the overall outcome remained positive in terms of operations and participation. The IEC improved its performance during the runoff through minimizing response times and markedly improving its communication channels. It maintained closer cooperation with elections stakeholders, including election observers, security forces, and media outlets, providing real time

information and updates.

ANSF has been applauded for providing high security standards during the elections period and at the majority of polling stations. However in terms of neutrality, the IEC reported some ANSF personnel interfering in the election process, and allegations of ballot box stuffing and attempts to influence voters to favor a preferred candidate have surfaced.

The recent elections in Afghanistan represent a significant advance in the democratic reconstruction of the country and provided an important opportunity to further progress and modernize its political, democratic and electoral systems. Increased voter participation endorses the call for a more democratic Afghanistan. The significant level of participation in both rounds should be viewed not in isolation, but as a milestone that sets future standards.

Peaceful Elections Advocacy Program

Creative-CCI's elections program activities were grouped as:

1. **Geospatial predictive analysis.** This activity aimed to build statistical analysis to better understand where election related violence would be most likely to occur, based on historic incidents and the surrounding geography. This information was used to identify polling centers likely to experience violence.
2. **Peaceful elections advocacy.** This activity promoted the development and dissemination of locally relevant peaceful elections messaging in Kunar, Khost, Hilmand, Kandahar, and Ghazni.
3. **Technical assistance.** Through programmatic expertise supplied by three short-term national elections advisors, Creative-CCI supported the technical development and implementation of its Peaceful Elections Program.

Prior to the first round elections, Creative-CCI grantees Afghan Amputee Bicyclists for Recreation and Rehabilitation (AABRAR) and AidTrend, conducted a series of general public focus group discussions in Kandahar, Ghazni, Hilmand, Khost and Kunar. The purpose was to develop localized, community-driven messages that would inspire peaceful citizen participation in the electoral process. AABRAR and AidTrends brought together over two hundred messages, which Creative-CCI's election team further refined for dissemination through posters, radio and television.

Creative-CCI proactively engaged with IEC Director of Public Outreach, Ahmadullah Archiwal, providing activity updates and ensuring output aligned with IEC objectives during both rounds. This was welcomed by the IEC, which commended Creative-CCI's Peaceful Elections Program and noted it addressed a communications void the IEC had identified in its own eastern and southern provincial outreach.

Media Outreach: First Round Elections (April 05, 2014)

A total of 32 messages were developed in the lead up to the first round that were disseminated via 57,000 posters, 33 individual produced radio spots, four TV spots and 800 community outreach events. These messages aimed to inform the population that by participating peacefully in the elections, Afghanistan can move forward and have a brighter future. Alongside the peaceful election advocacy messages, Creative-CCI, AidTrends and AABRAR also helped to broaden the reach of the IEC voter and civic education program by distributing election information during their community outreach activities. It is estimated AidTrends and AABRAR distributed 1,700,000 material items during the course of their activities. Provincial and district specific peaceful messages were disseminated through posters, radio advertisements, and television spots (*i.e.*; Kandahar radio was broadcast in Kandahari accent, while Khost radio featured its authentic provincial accent).

Creative-CCI's activities contributed significantly to the peaceful elections process through radio, TV and printed matter voter and civic education principally to the project's strategically important provinces of Kandahar, Hilmand, Ghazni, Khost and Kunar.

Data below represents province specific activities undertaken during the lead up to the first round elections. Outcomes determined the structure of messages utilized through poster, radio and television dissemination.

Hilmand	Number of Events	Number of Participants	Male	Female
Training of Trainers	1	5	5	0
Focus Groups	3	24	16	8
Face to Face Sessions	9	360	320	40
Provincial Dialogues	1	79	57	22
Poster Distribution		CCI Produced	IEC Produced	Total
		15550	11000	26550
Khost	Events	Participants	Male	Female
Training of Trainers	1	6	6	0
Focus Groups	3	26	16	10
Face to Face Sessions	9	315	280	35
Provincial Dialogues	1	130	100	30
Poster Distribution		CCI Produced	IEC Produced	Total
		16048	3407	19455
Kandahar	Events	Participants	Male	Female
Training of Trainers	0	0	0	0
Focus Groups	1	24	24	0
Face to Face Sessions	1374	34350	948	426
Provincial Dialogues	1	90	90	0
Poster Distribution		CCI Produced	IEC Produced	Total
		17900	7950	25850
Kunar	Events	Participants	Male	Female
Training of Trainers	0	0	0	0
Focus Groups	1	24	24	0
Face to Face Sessions	1296	32400	891	405
Provincial Dialogues	1	80	75	5
Poster Distribution		CCI Produced	IEC Produced	Total
		17900	5500	23400
Ghazni	Events	Participants	Male	Female
Training of Trainers	0	0	0	0
Focus Groups	1	24	15	9
Face to Face Sessions	1400	35000	1046	354
Provincial Dialogues	1	120	82	38
Poster Distribution		CCI Produced	IEC Produced	Total
		30000	5000	35000

NB: AidTrends conducted large *Face to Face Sessions* in Kandahar, Kunar and Ghazni, with the gender analysis factored upon segregated M/F events, whereas AABRAR conducted combined gender events in Hilmand and Khost, with the gender analysis factored upon the M/F participation number.

Leading into the first round elections AABRAR and AidTrends launched a media campaign comprising peaceful elections messaging in Khost, Kunar, Kandahar, Ghazni and Hilmand, supplemented by TV spots in Khost and Hilmand. Creative-CCI supported this with comprehensive radio campaigns across 11 provinces, reaching target provinces of Kunar, Kandahar, Ghazni, Khost and Hilmand, along with Laghman, Nangarhar, Logar, Paktia, Paktika and Zabul.



Above: First Round posters translation (Left to Right)

- *Your participation in a peaceful election ensures a bright future.*
- *By using your vote, you will fulfill an Islamic decree.*
- *Peaceful elections mirror a peaceful life.*



Above: Second Round posters translation (Left to Right)

- *Supporting peaceful election is each Afghan's responsibility.*
- *Supporting peaceful election is every Afghan's responsibility let's vote peacefully for our bright future.*
- *1993 Afghanistan Elections*

Media Outreach: Second Round Elections (June 14, 2014)

As no candidate attained the 50% plus one vote required to be elected president by the constitution, the leading two candidates participated in a second round runoff election on June 14. Creative-CCI reviewed its strategy and, collaborating further with AABRAR and AidTrends, refined first round messaging and analyzed lessons learned in preparation for the second.

The messages developed with extensive preliminary community consultation for the first round later formed the cornerstone for the second round message strategy, which again incorporated print, community dialogue, and electronic activations. Adopting recommendations from CCI's Peaceful Elections Advisors, there were three strategic messaging themes:

1. Explaining its purpose and highlighting the importance of the runoff
2. Encouraging females to vote
3. Promoting the importance of peaceful participation in the election process

The first round print materials were redesigned featuring messages encouraging people to vote again and highlighting female involvement in the process, all extending the overarching theme of peaceful elections participation. These materials were also resized to feature fold-down versions and convenient pocket size information sheets for better distribution.

Creative-CCI also supported additional provincial-level dialogue sessions in Kandahar, Kunar, Khost, Hilmand and Ghazni to reiterate central themes, conduct civil education, and enable Q&A sessions, while continuing to advocate for public acceptance and community leaders' support of the peaceful elections process. In all, 440 males and 80 females participated in the second dialogue sessions, which also received local media coverage extending the communication of primary messages. CCI's peaceful elections strategy expanded the television reach in the lead up to the election runoff, complimenting the provincial dialogues, poster distribution, and radio campaign.



Television

CCI commissioned two TV concepts in conjunction with the Roshan Afghanistan Premiere League (RAPL), an annual televised Afghan football tournament that enjoys wide-ranging popularity across the country. The first TV spot featured a number of young children approaching adults, presenting them with a rose and simply saying "Thank you." Finally, an old man asks "Thank you for what?" The small girl replies, "Thank you for voting for my future." The final sequence sees the appearance of a football hero appealing to his "brothers and sisters" to vote in the upcoming election and to participate peacefully.

The second TV message was more focused upon the RAPL stars, with the concept of the runoff being compared to the second half of a football game. The players emphasized how important this part of the game was and how it was vital for everyone to return to the field and participate. The players also reminded women it was important for them to take part in the election. The final sequence featured footballers endorsing a peaceful process. Each was recorded in Pashto and Dari and run across five TV channels.



The full versions of these messages are available on YouTube:

<http://youtu.be/g9o-Jopfn5g>

<http://youtu.be/2ZNYvn0ah4Q>

Additional to the above messages, CCI also selected other spots to run across five TV channels (including two produced by implementing partner AidTrends) featuring separate female and male Pashto voices over aspirational images, suggesting what a stable and democratic Afghanistan can achieve, and encouraging people to vote peacefully. The final spot selection featured a recent competition entry funded by the United States Institute of Peace (USIP) involving creative animation promoting the peaceful elections process.

Television

- Television spot broadcasts totaled 809 over two weeks, concluding 13 June.
- There were 7 individual spots incorporated into the Pashto/Dari TV campaign.

	TV Channel	Language	Versions	Coverage	Placements
1	Tolo TV	Dari only	5 versions	13 Provinces	95 spots
2	Ariana TV	Pashto + Dari	5 versions	34 Provinces	120 spots
3	Khurshid TV	Pashto + Dari	5 versions	19 Provinces	154 spots
4	Shamshad TV	Pashto only	3 versions	23 Provinces	159 spots
5	Lemar TV	Pashto only	3 versions	15 Provinces	119 spots
Implementing Partners					
6	Ghar Ghasht TV	Pashto	2 versions	Khost	81 spots
7	Bakhtar TV	Pashto	2 versions	Hilmand	81 spots

Radio

- Radio spot broadcasts totaled 8,149 between 28 May and 30 June.
- There were 6 individual spots incorporated into the Pashto/Dari radio campaign.

	Radio	Language	Duration	Coverage	Placements
1	Killid	Pashto (male/female voice)	28 May-14 Jun	Khost	324 spots
2	Killid	Pashto (male/female voice)	28 May-14 Jun	Kandahar	324 spots
3	Arakozia	Pashto (male/female voice)	2 Jun-14 Jun	11 Provinces	330 spots
4	Killid	Pashto + Dari (male/female)	28 May-14 Jun	Ghazni	324 spots
5	Arman	Pashto + Dari (male/female)	30 May- 30 Jun	13 Provinces	368 spots
Local / Community Radio					
6	Ghaznaviyan	Pashto + Dari (male/female)	1 Jun-28 Jun	Ghazni	552 spots
7	Zala	Pashto (male/female voice)	1 Jun-28 Jun	Kunar	1,076 spots
8	Milli	Pashto (male/female voice)	1 Jun-28 Jun	Kunar	876 spots
9	DeHeelo Karwan	Pashto (male/female voice)	1 Jun-28 Jun	Khost	637 spots
10	Boost	Pashto (male/female voice)	1 Jun-28 Jun	Hilmand	562 spots
11	Sabawoon	Pashto (male/female voice)	1 Jun-28 Jun	Hilmand	581 spots
12	Sanga	Pashto (male/female voice)	1 Jun-28 Jun	Kandahar	508 spots
13	Hewad	Pashto (male/female voice)	1 Jun-28 Jun	Kandahar	727 spots
Implementing Partners					
14	AidTrends Yoon Independent	Pashto (male/female voice)	6 Jun-30 Jun	Khost	192 spots
15	AidTrends Nan	Pashto (male/female voice)	6 Jun-30 Jun	Khost	192 spots
16	AidTrends Walas Ghag	Pashto (male/female voice)	6 Jun-30 Jun	Khost	192 spots
17	AidTrends Samoon	Pashto (male/female voice)	6 Jun-30 Jun	Hilmand	192 spots
18	AidTrends Muska	Pashto (male/female voice)	6 Jun-30 Jun	Hilmand	192 spots

Radio: June 14 Pre-Election Activity

The radio campaign spanned a range of radio stations, with various themes developed by CCI Peaceful Elections Advisors after conducting provincial-based focus groups. Exclusive Pashto versions (usually recorded in alternate male/female voice to provide broader appeal) were broadcast in CCI provinces of strategic importance: Kunar, Khost, Kandahar and Hilmand. Ghazni scripts were recorded in Dari and Pashto, again with alternating female/male voices. On average, 20 peak time broadcasts occurred daily on each radio station in the period ahead of the second-round, building to 30 spots played on Election Day.

Radio: June 14 Post-Election Activity

Following the high rotation of election spots in advance of and on June 14, Creative-CCI's strategy was to rest many stations for about one week before fully launching the post-election spots. The exception was Arman, Afghanistan's leading radio station, which commenced broadcasting post-election messages in both Dari and Pashto (alternating male/female voice versions) the day following Election Day.

Radio: June 14 Election Scripts

Creative-CCI's Peaceful Elections Advisors developed three Pre-Elections scripts to air in the lead up to the runoff, two for election day, and two for the post-election period. A broad English interpretation of the scripts is below:

Period	Script Content
Pre-Election Concluded 13 June	Dear Compatriots! As you participated in the first round of elections and proved to the world Afghans will peacefully choose their government via election, let's vote peacefully again.
Pre-Election Concluded 13 June	Dear Compatriots! As you know, women represent half of the population. For our society to develop, peaceful participation in the second round of the election is important.
Pre-Election Concluded 13 June	Dear Compatriots! On April 5, Afghans voted in large numbers for 8 presidential candidates. On June 14, the two candidates that received the most votes will participate in a second round of elections. Let's participate again and vote in peaceful elections. Let's build upon our dream of a stronger and democratic Afghanistan!
Election Day 14 June only	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Supporting and participating in peaceful elections is every Afghan's responsibility. - Let's vote peacefully for our bright future!
Post- Election 15 June – 5 July	Dear Compatriots! The Independent Election Commission is working on counting and processing the results. Let's wait peacefully for the result.
15 June – 5 July	Dear Compatriots! You have voted peacefully in the second round of the elections. Let's wait peacefully for the results.



Masood Sanjar, one of Afghanistan's most popular breakfast radio personalities consistently lobbied his nation-wide Arman listeners to vote, while Mansour Faqiryar voted early and was happy to use his football fame to influence the youth vote.



Advancing Female Leadership in Conflict-Prone Communities

In conflict and post-conflict environments, women often play important roles in maintaining the unity of their communities through discouraging violence and laying the groundwork for social cohesion. Women's roles in fostering unity in conflict zones are often very different to those of men from similar communities.

In early 2014, Creative-CCI launched *Action Research: Women in Conflict-Prone Communities*, a project that examines women's roles in relation to community cohesion. Supported by the governors of Ghazni, Khost and Kunar, this activity focuses on these eastern provinces and aims to bring together influential female politicians, civil servants, elders, health workers, educators and farmers, to articulate respective community development priorities from the women's perspective. This activity is helping to strengthen communication ties between rural and urban women leaders, those working in government, and those fostering change through community-based initiatives.

Creative-CCI supported female leadership and development workshops in the three provincial capitals and two outlying districts. While this project is still ongoing, these collaborative workshops have produced a number of exciting ideas, including creation of women-only Internet hubs, animal husbandry training for women living on farms, and academic competitions among girls' high schools that engage and motivate young emerging female scholars. Support has emanated from provincial and community development councils along with village shuras, where women have volunteered to help manage activities and promote community support, while the Directorate of Women's Affairs plays a central organizational role. With these stakeholders committed and receiving ongoing support and leadership, CCI is advancing with four activities proposed by workshop participants: academic competitions in all three provinces, and animal husbandry training for women farmers in Kunar's rural Marawara district. A final Women in Conflict-Prone Communities project report will be delivered in August. (EAST0003)



Women from three provinces met to develop strategies to strengthen and unify communities.



The workshops built communication ties between rural and urban women leaders.

Bazaar Upgrade Instills Confidence for More Rehabilitation

The highly insecure Gelan district in Ghazni province has consistently been one of the most challenging districts for CCI programming. Local insurgents wield considerable influence in villages close to the District Center and the frequency of violence in the area has severely restricted government reach and the ability of development organizations to conduct operations. CCI has enabled the Gelan District Governor's Office to implement a much needed rehabilitation project surrounding the Gelan Bazaar, a busy and important commercial hub. The in-kind grant funded much-needed pathway and drainage infrastructure work, which significantly upgraded accessibility.

Gelan Bazaar rehabilitation project was the first infrastructure upgrade by the district government in over five years. An inclusive approach between government officials, local residents and key stakeholders, marked a turning point in what had previously been a strained and difficult relationship, particularly between government and the wider business community. "Because of the security situation throughout the district, it is amazing that this project was finished by the government," one shopkeeper



Successful rehabilitation of the Gelan Bazaar is a positive sign for business and future development.

said during the Closing Ceremony at the District Center. “The rehabilitation of the bazaar made me realize that government can support business activities, which I never imagined possible before.” A positive outcome for the broader community is that since the bazaar rehabilitation was completed in late April, district government has seen a substantial increase in the number of project requests received from communities in Gelan, accompanied by a significantly increased willingness on the part of local residents to work with government to improve public spaces. The Gelan Bazaar project was reassurance for district GIRoA officials, that they could safely work with local residents and business to regenerate infrastructure in the District Center. Based upon this successful outcome, the District Government is now leading several other CCI-funded projects in Gelan. (Ghazni: GLN0006)

Annual Chinar Festival

Khost offers many resiliencies at provincial and local level, including a highly regarded and respected provincial university, well-educated middle class, civic minded youth, and longstanding traditional arts community. Khost City has hosted a number of CCI funded socio-cultural activities, enabling the provincial government to demonstrate its dedication to preserving and celebrating Khost’s artistic and cultural history. One such event is the Chinar Festival, a two-day poetry, music, and traditional dance festival sponsored by the Directorate of Information and Culture. Held in April, it attracted 1,500 attendees and provided a forum for hundreds of young poets from villages throughout the province to interact socially, and also with provincial officials. Notably, several of the young people performing were women, a first for the Chinar Festival and also for the public recitals of poetry in Khost. Live radio and television broadcasts extended public reach across the province and beyond to hundreds of thousands nationally.

The Provincial Governor personally supported this event, who together with other officials took considerable time during the festival period to meet with the young performers and discuss their concerns relating to security, jobs and future development. In his closing remarks, he thanked performers for delivering messages of peace through their artistic expression, and praised local security forces for ensuring festival safety. Local performers and many community elders attending appreciated this outlet for cultural expression, describing the festival as evidence the provincial government valued diverse artistic talents and that events like this demonstrated a commitment to preserving the region’s peaceful traditions. (Khost: KST0005)



Chinar Festival attracted extensive media support.



The poetry, music and traditional dance festival showcased Khost’s cultural diversity.

Flood Preparedness in Shamal River Valley

When the banks of the Shamal River burst, as they have every spring and fall in recent years, floodwaters destroyed crops, and damaged clinics, schools, shops and homes. This has a devastating effect upon livelihoods and the tenuous infrastructure that supports these riverside rural communities. CCI awarded the Shamal District Governor’s Office to build the capacity of Shamal River Valley’s community leadership, to in turn help vulnerable villages prepare for and respond to the threat of flooding. The grant facilitated district government to instigate a flood preparedness and response training course for 40 elders and 20 youth, from Khalwati, Doya Khail, Anar Bagh, Laki Khail, Domando, and Zakara villages. District officials regularly visited these training sessions to monitor the instruction quality and progress. It was the first activity of this



Sixty participants attended training on how to prepare and manage flood response techniques.

kind ever implemented in Shamal, and resulted after long term community calls for government response to chronic flood vulnerability in the district.

At a community event marking the launch of the course, the District Governor emphasized the value this training can bring to affected villages and encouraged participants to learn as much as possible from the training, for the sake of their families and neighbors. “Unfortunately deforestation has caused the flooding in our district to worsen over the past few years,” he said. “It is important for our communities that you attend every session.” A result of the training is the 60 participants formed the Shamal Flood Prevention Shura, and developed a comprehensive, cooperative flood preparedness and response plan, to be implemented ahead of the next wet season. (Hilmind: SHM00011)



Crops, buildings and lives are saved when communities are prepared for the wet season.

Mobile Phone Technician Training in Marawara

Mobile phone usage in Afghanistan exceeds 20 million, with mobile coverage around 88% of the country's population of 30 million. This sector is a major driver of the Afghan economy and the biggest non-government employer, aside from subsistence agriculture. Marawara is located in a remote district bordering Pakistan, in the eastern province of Kunar. Mobile phone usage is prevalent; however youth unemployment is also widespread and remains a major challenge to local communities and government.

Identifying an area of growing skills demand, the District Governor's Office is sponsoring mobile phone technician training that will enable 50 unemployed males to acquire skills that can lead to sustainable income generation. Through an in-kind grant, CCI is funding the 8-week intensive training program, followed by a month long apprenticeship period, under the oversight of a project monitoring shura that also keeps the wider community informed. Qualified technicians from existing mobile phone shops in Marawara and nearby Asadabad are conducting the training sessions, and are able to provide practical knowledge, together with possible links to future employment. “This is a golden opportunity for our youth to acquire marketable sector insight and learn what is required to start a small business, with very little investment.” the District Governor explained to local shura elders. Trainees are equally enthusiastic about their prospects. “Being part of this training is very exciting for me,” one trainee said. “I can see my future more clearly now.” Another added, “Many youth are uneducated in our community, but they still need to support their families. This training is a chance for us to fulfill this.” At this stage, the trainees are preparing to begin their apprenticeships. (MRW0024)



Marawara youth training to become mobile phone technicians.



The training course is followed by a short-term apprenticeship period.

Villagers defy Insurgents to Improve Irrigation Capability

Alokozi Village is located north of Hilmand’s provincial capital, in Nahri Sarraj District. It has a complex history of instability, a struggling economy and is prone to persistent insurgent activity. Predominantly comprising farming communities, there is intense competition for the inadequate available water resources. Villagers had for years called upon government to correct what many viewed as an unfair distribution of irrigation to local crops. When it was announced that the District Community Council was going to rehabilitate 20 water gates in Alokozi Village, it flagged a significant turnaround, with improved production yields and financial benefits for many families.



Before there were frequent disputes over unfair water distribution and regular seasonal flooding.

Defying multiple threats of violence by AGEs if the new infrastructure plans proceeded, people from the village worked alongside the 30 local laborers employed on the project, over a thirty day implementation period. The new irrigation system was designed to capture and control water overflows during the rainy season, while being able to equally distribute water. While the project was completed on May 11, a devastating event occurred in March when a young laborer stepped on an IED, planted earlier by insurgents, losing a leg and an eye. Although work was immediately suspended, again in defiance of more insurgent threats, community members turned out beside project laborers the following day, to recommence work. Six weeks later, the rehabilitated Alokozi water gates were in operation, with the united effort reaffirming district allegiances and commitments to protect the new waterways. (NRS0021)



Now the new water gates deliver efficient water distribution for crop irrigation, and better flood mitigation.

Sarkani Markazi Clinic Renovation

CCI is playing an important role towards helping district governments address constituents’ calls for improved medical facilities. In Kunar’s Sarkani district, CCI was able to support the Sarkani Public Health Department to upgrade the Sarkani Markazi Clinic, from Basic Health Center status to a Comprehensive Health Center. For years Sarkani residents had highlighted the need for government to provide better public healthcare, therefore the announcement that the clinic’s interior rooms would be substantially renovated, along with the site’s surrounding wall, was met with wide-spread approval.



Director of Public Health officially opening the new clinic.

As with many rural clinics in eastern Afghanistan, the Sarkani Markazi Clinic is the first point of interaction between residents of remote villages and the state. So while this activity was overdue, it demonstrates acknowledgement and intent on the part of the government to work towards providing better public services. In the early stages of the rehabilitation project, the Kunar Director of Public Health reiterated this with a public statement announcing that, when the facility reopened, clinic staff would include a female nurse to increase accessibility for women and girls. Before an audience of community elders and government officials, the public health official also acknowledged how significant CCI funding was in transforming an important public facility, in order to offer such a vital community service. A prominent religious cleric and member of the Ulema Shura formally thanked the district government for taking an important step toward enhancing healthcare for so many residents. He continued by saying community-driven rehabilitation projects not only improve public services but also “reconcile broken hearts and minds in communities weakened by poverty and violence.” (SAR0037)

Reviving Kandahar Classical Music

Afghanistan's rich cultural history is steeped in a love of classical music. For centuries Kandahar was no exception. However, between the mid-1990s through 2001 the Taliban's outright ban and strict punishment of those listening to music forced local artists into exile or to disregard musical instruments. After the regime's fall, communities starting listening to music again, first on radio, as musicians gradually started returning home and live performances once more featured at social gatherings. A decade on, the devastating effect from this period imposed in terms of impeding the generational passing of traditional music skills is evident by the reduced number of Kandahari musicians.

Beyond the personal enrichment of listening to and playing traditional music, Kandahar's Directorate of Information and Culture (DoIC) recognized a growing demand at weddings, birthdays and concerts, offered musicians lucrative incomes to support their families. Partnering with Creative-CCI to advance these income opportunities and promote traditional music appreciation, DoIC facilitated a 3-month classical music course for 30 young men, from different communities. Instruments like the harmonium, tabla, and rabab, taught during the course, have prompted communities to request additional training to further foster musical talent. This project attracted considerable media attention and highlighted GIRoA as leading a resurgent appreciation for this form of entertainment, while also providing avenues for young musicians to earn an income. The course concluded mid-May, with a musical instrument presented to each of the 24 graduates. The Closing Ceremony was attended by many community elders, participants' families and GIRoA officials who enjoyed performances by the trainees, accompanied by more experienced musicians. The DoIC Director praised the talented young musicians and encouraged them to continue, and acknowledging the success of the course, said he hoped to soon announce a follow up course. (KAN0073)



Kandahar government seeks to nurture the province's love of traditional music.



The training will help meet a growing demand for musicians at private and public events.



لاره چاره **FIX-IT** چاره جویی دولس او دولت نېلورنکی وصل کوننده مردم با دولت connecting people with government

Fix-It is a CCI-sponsored 12-week radio series broadcasting over 60 independent stations and reaching all 34 Afghan provinces via the Salam Watandar (SW) radio network. Acting as a bridge between civil society and government, this public affairs radio format demonstrates how local media plays a constructive role in assisting communities to hold government accountable, and serves as a catalyst for change. Broadcasting weekly in Pashto and Dari, programs feature community grievances that are reported,

and then followed up on-air as the program seeks to fix the problem, and keep listeners informed. Some community concerns require considerable time to remedy, while government budget constraints can mean delays, or in some cases result in a satisfactory solution being not feasible. While a positive outcome satisfying all stakeholders is most desirable, the primary purpose of *Fix-It* is to advocate to communities that they have rights, and the various levels of government have responsibilities to respond.

Infrastructure arises as a regular radio talkback issue, with SW picking up the topic of a busy roadway in Khas Kunar, so badly damaged by flooding that pedestrians can barely traverse, and is a major challenge for animal-drawn carts and motor vehicles. One local caller named Najibullah phoned SW to complain, "Because these culverts have been destroyed, it causes huge problems for farmers bringing produce to the District Center, makes travel difficult for families and is distressing for people trying to reach the medical clinic." The SW reporter raised this with Abdul Rahim, Director of Public Works, who promised to look into the matter. After one month the SW reporter visited the citizens of Khas Kunar, to be told there was no evidence of progress. Returning to the director's office, he broadcast an interview where Mr. Rahim stated, "The province had only enough budget to look into this issue of building three culvert bridges, and the survey work had been successfully completed." He continued: "We have included this in our budget application to the Ministry of Public Works, which upon approval, rehabilitation on these destroyed culverts will commence." He apologized that he was unable to announce a start date but agreed to provide more updates soon. The interview provoked local comment, with most residents critical of delays. Four weeks later, the reporter again contacted the Public Works office, and was advised preliminary approval had been granted and as the survey was completed, work on the road would commence within 4-6 weeks. SW reported this on air, urging Khas Kunar residents to keep in contact with the local *Fix-It* reporter regarding progress. The story continues to be monitored by SW.

SW reporters make regular on-air announcements inviting listeners across the nation to register problems in their communities needing to be fixed. One highlight was the lack of public waste bins in Kandahar's District 9. Interviewed by *Fix-It* on location, resident Abdul Rahman explained, "People get sick because of a lack of public solid-waste bins, and as you can see, health clinics are full of sick people because of this." According to another local citizen, "People carry their garbage [away from where they live] and try to dump it on streets or by other people's houses." *Fix-It* reported how the issue concerned the entire district and called on government to respond before the situation worsened. On-air SW stated the program would monitor the outcome and lobbied listeners to spread the word, in order to further emphasize the need for a public health cleanup. An ensuing interview with the Head of Media and Public Relations for the Directorate of Public Works in Kandahar ended with the commitment: "Within the next few days the problem of garbage would be resolved in District 9." The government spokesman added, "Plans are in place not only to get the issue of public-waste bins resolved, but also fix culvert bridges and pave streets." One month later a frustrated District 9 resident, Zia-ul-Haq, phoned the *Fix-It* program saying, "In all of District 9, not one public waste bin can be seen and we really are having problems with pollution and smell." Again SW requested an interview with the Directorate of Public Works, while on-air calling for the public to be more vocal, because government could no longer ignore the threat to health. When SW sat again with Directorate of Public Works Head of Media, Zemarai Sarkand, listeners were informed the Director of Public works had been forced to resign, due to his inability to address people's grievances effectively. Sarkand promised, "A new director is in place, who will make every effort to resolve this issue."

While it was an unfortunate outcome for the former Director of Public Works, this was a visible illustration of how the media was able to mobilize public sentiment and force government to change. Three weeks after the new director was installed, SW returned to speak with Sarkand and was advised the Municipal Council had determined that "placing public waste bins within District 9 was unfeasible, given the level of difficulty to maintain". Instead the council decided, "that solid waste in and around District 9 would be collected on a daily basis, effective immediately." The Head of Media also took the opportunity to announce to *Fix-It* listeners, the long term issue of

city public parking would be eased by a new parking lot near Shahidan Square, with construction due to start within three months. The waste collection is under way and Fix-It will monitor the proposed car park development.

This trouble-shooting public affairs program continues to serve a valuable role. During Q3 it tackled a range of listener-driven issues, ranging from confronting the Education Directorate in Hilmand over the lack of textbooks at a Nawah district school, a longtime promised – and delayed – public building boundary wall in Ghazni, to successfully intervening to have loud music emanating from music stores near a hospital turned down, and extending the Kandahar Museum weekday opening hours for more convenient access by school students. No public interest concern is out of bounds for the *Fix-It* team, with many government offices in all provinces having received a call at some time from its reporters.

Dream and Achieve

This 12-part television reality series aims to bring together communities by identifying small civic-run projects in the south and southeast of the country. A special focus is upon Kandahar, Kunar, Helmand and Khost, where *Dream and Achieve*, or *Fikrawa Talash* in Pashto, seeks to recognize local heroes within regular communities who have ideas that evolved into valuable community assets.

Dream and Achieve identifies contestants leading community initiatives with potential to grow, such as a person running a school supply drive, someone who oversees a sports team that unites and motivates youth, or midwifery training. The contestants are expected further refine and articulate their goals over the course of the series. There is a panel of judges who set different tasks where contestants may be required to meet with field experts, government officials or other individuals, to achieve pre-determined outcomes. Contestants will be regularly appraised, with the winner taking away a cash prize to further develop their project.

During Q3, the Creative-CCI sponsored series has been on location in various provinces, profiling and choosing participants. Three judges have been selected, with Sayed Agha Sadat, a respected and widely recognized academic, one of the first recruited. “I am honored to be a judge, and believe this TV program is very good for inspiring youth to think of ways to develop new opportunities that will benefit themselves and their communities,” Sayed said. “We have discovered so many ideas during filming, and I am very excited to see which will win.”

The program strives to affirmatively influence the value of building stability, by highlighting positive interactions between provincial and district governments, and explaining government’s role in assisting young entrepreneurs. A central theme is countering negative perceptions.

Dream and Achieve screens on both Lemar and Tolo television channels in October, 2014. Recorded in the Pashto language, it will broadcast to Kunar, Nangarhar, Laghman, Logar, Paktia, Khost, Paktika, Ghazni, Zabul, Kandahar, Hilmand, Nimroz, Heart, Kunduz, Balkh and Kabul.



Potential contestants line up to audition their concepts when *Dream and Achieve* visited Kunar.



Above: The judging panel.

Below: Recording the program on location in Kunar.



PROGRAM EVALUATION

Creative-CCI built on the successful momentum of the previous quarter and continued to deliver increasing disbursements, more rapid procurement of goods and services through enhanced procurement mechanisms, and a strengthening of systems by way of staff training. After exceeding disbursement targets at the end of Q3 by nearly 8%, Creative-CCI continued to expand programmatic targets month after month, with an increasing disbursement rate of \$1.2M in April. This was followed by sustained disbursement rates of more than \$1.5M in both May and June, exceeding target disbursement rates set for both months. The result was a total disbursement of \$4,398,357.10 in FY14 Q3, representing an overall increase of more than 35% from the previous quarter. At the January 2014 SRS, an activity development pipeline for new programming through April 2014 was agreed upon based on the recent disbursement rate.

South

The election period demonstrated the effectiveness of Creative-CCI activities in some of the most fragile communities on the insurgency frontline. KAN0025 Talukan Bazaar Community Center Shade Structure: Increasing Community Cohesion and PAN0017 Kalacha Talukan Culvert Rehabilitation: Connecting Local Communities in Kandahar's Panjwayi district, saw its Talukan community besieged by armed conflict August - December 2013. During the elections, a festival ambience permeated the area with large public gatherings, impromptu musical performances and food sellers. Similar exuberance occurred in Mushan, site of PAN0016 Mushan Culvert Rehabilitation: Increasing Connectivity Between Communities. HMD0019 Hilmand Poetry Event: Disseminating GIRoA's Peace Messages, was staged during the lead-in to the second round elections and was an opportunity for Hilmandis to congratulate themselves for reaching A class provincial status, as designated by President Karzai. More than 1,400 people attended the poetry event, praising Hilmand's development and quest for peace and education. As of June, over 600 people have attended six separate weekend sport competitions.

East

A total of 39 activities were added to the existing portfolio, and evenly spread across Kunar, Khost and Ghazni. Each Creative-CCI operational district received three additional activities, while the provincial capitals received two or three that involved participation with provincial districts. East project teams have pushed out to more volatile areas like Sarkani district's Ganjgal Valley in Kunar, and Qarabagah district in Ghazni, through QBG0030 Outreach Event Series: Reaching Remote and Neglected Communities. All cleared activities incorporate an operational timeline of 10 weeks maximum, and most are directly implemented, with the exception of those where security conditions necessitate the use of service providers. CCI's strategy is to continue strengthening community capacities and promoting a peaceful transition, while supporting the legitimacy of local government and community leaders. Insurgent activities increased during both election rounds, resulting in a deceleration of the implementation process. Districts in Khost province were especially vulnerable due to the porous border with Pakistan, allowing Haqani Network insurgents to move freely and cause disturbance among the local population. There was only one activity, BAK0015 Jagranok Sports Field Rehabilitation: Increasing Youth Community Participation, which was directly affected by insurgent operations and consequently cancelled. A number of female participative activities have been instigated, with a focus upon reinforcing community support for girl's education like, GHZ0003 and KST0009 Celebrating Girls' Talents: Khost City High School Academic Tournament, and reaching into remote rural communities with MQR0028 and QBG0031 Animal Husbandry Training: Boosting the Skills of Women Farmers.

Program Development Unit (PDU)

Q3 activities included comprehensive elections related programming component, incorporating 15 activities that included the clearance of six new activities covering extended media messaging (3 activities), action research (2 activities), and post-action review (1 activity). In tandem with the continued development and implementation of the elections program, the PDU catalyzed the rollout of the PDU strategy, with 18 new activity clearances covering the Kabul Urban Transitions portfolio (6 activities), Traditional Dispute Resolution (7 activities) and Media (2 activities cleared; 3 pending clearance).

Underpinning the Kabul Urban Transitions portfolio is an emphasis upon supporting small nimble activities that foster community cohesion and strengthen specific community resiliencies in the four target geographical locations of the Dasht-e Barchi slum in western Kabul City, and the districts of Deh Sabz, Bagrami, and Qarabagh. Activities will work with youth associations and youth networks, identifying and effecting community improvement initiatives that enable young people to develop and foster positive self-images, and promote inter-cultural understanding between ethnic groups.

Building on and leveraging Creative-CCI's regional footprint, the PDU is supporting a series of pilot traditional dispute resolution activities focusing on intractable and/or recurrent disputes, whilst building stronger linkages with provincial-level dispute resolution mechanisms. Targeting dispute resolution bodies from the village through to the provincial-level, these proof-of-concept activities share a common theme of providing tangible and practical support that prioritizes stimulating exchange between different actors, establishing formal-informal referral systems and working through existing cases in the areas of implementation.

Finally, the PDU is exploiting media channels to promote dialogue and understanding between communities and GIRoA, through a collection of media-centric activities. These include working with youth in Kandahar to set-up an integrated online and mobile phone platform to collect, curate and disseminate stories of community efforts to promote peace, together with a women's radio talk show in Kandahar encouraging dialogue on the rights and roles of women in society. The last piece of the media portfolio underscores Creative-CCI's work to date, and will involve the production and broadcast of both a television and radio drama series, utilizing a docu-drama format that draws from Creative-CCI's core themes and promotes models of positive behavioral change.

Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

M&E dispatched a total of 75 FERs for OTI approval during this reporting quarter, and continues to frequently visit sites across the project to monitor grant progress and processes. Weekly activity notes, major findings, lessons learned and outputs generated through CCI funded grants are reported and incorporated into the OTI database on a weekly basis. Provincial and district M&E teams conducted on average one site visit per week, per activity.

The team worked with OTI's Internal Monitoring Unit (IMU) findings, taking that data into consideration while drafting FERs, corrective actions, and follow-ups to address reporting discrepancies. For instance, KHK0009 (School Rehabilitation Project in Kunar) was reported to have concluded, however IMU visited the site and reported the water well had not been repaired and site not cleaned. The Creative-CCI Provincial Team then visited the site and concurred that the specified tasks had not been completed. As the unfinished work required additional time, a time extension was obtained, while a cost extension was unnecessary to finalize the project.

In May, M&E conducted a survey to evaluate Creative-CCI's Peaceful Elections Advocacy Program, which had been implemented in Khost, Ghazni, Kandahar and Hilmand. The survey included a sample of 300 people in each province except for Khost, where additional resources facilitated a sampling of 600 people, for a total of 1,500 individual data entry survey results. M&E additionally supplied internal support to the other departments through the provision of specialized data requests, advice and feedback as required.

Operations

Creative-CCI Kandahar relocated offices in April to accommodate a team that has grown considerably over the past year in response to an increased program portfolio. The relocation to the new secure area of Aino Men occurred over one weekend, with minimal interruption to program activities.

The Human Resources department successfully recruited all primary vacant positions, with a few minor support staff turnover placements remaining. Time taken to recruit new staff has further reduced to an average period of 23 days in the current quarter. Operational/security response to the elections and run-off elections resulted in provincial offices closing for three days, with no movement in the provinces and only minimal impact on project implementation.

The APPF contract has been renewed and the Schedule of Authorities was finalized, allowing for greater signing authority in the field for both payments and contracts, and subsequently reducing contract/grant approval timelines.

Vetting remains a significant challenge to the procurement and contracting process. With the last tranche of programming underway, Creative-CCI has submitted 47 VSU requests for Grantees and Service Providers, worth \$2,660,574. Forty of these requests were specifically for Service Providers. Forty-four vetting approvals were received during this period. This quarter has seen a significant upturn in the rate of Vetting Support Unit (VSU) approvals. By the end of the quarter, \$1,921,400 worth of programming was awaiting VSU approval (spread over 30 pending requests).

Procurement Department (PD)

During Q3, the PD signed more than \$3.3 million in new Purchase Orders and Purchase Order Agreements for program related goods and services for the East, South and at national level. The Procurement Manual was also finalized and rolled out to staff. All members of the PD have received training relating to the manual, including 25 provincial procurement staff and 13 Kabul based staff. Eleven Provincial Managers, Regional Program Managers and Deputy Regional Program Managers also received training to correctly interpret and implement the new manual. The PD is currently conducting rolling training sessions for 22 non-procurement staff to ensure a standardized bid evaluation process remains in place, regardless of staffing fluctuations.

Procurement Department contributions during Q3:

Total vetting requests for service providers submitted to VSU from 1st April to 30th of June	40	Total Value	AFN 122,289,065.15	\$2,134,655.51
Total vetting cleared from 1st April to 30th of June	44	Total Value	AFN 134,174,392.04	\$2,351,190.33
Total POAs issued	33	Total Value	AFN 87,477,400	\$ 1,524,271.24
Total POs issued	371	Total Value	AFN 101,843,779.15	\$ 1,771,196
Total Procurement Staff trained	38	N/A	N/A	N/A
Total Non-Procurement staff trained	33	N/A	N/A	N/A