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Community Cohesion Initiative (CCI)

SUCCESS STORY

Kandahar Municipality Opens Its Doors

CCI partnered with municipal government to host a Municipal Open House, open to all sub-district residents.



Kandahar Deputy Mayor discusses the positive impact of the event with the local media.

The Municipal Open House provided a venue for positive interactions between the community and the local government, laying the foundation for improved communication between communities and their local government.

January 2013 - Kandahar City is home to nearly 1,000,000 Afghans, making it the second largest city and municipal government in Afghanistan. During the last few years, a significant number of new residents have moved to the city in search of economic opportunities and greater access to government services. Although the municipal government has made great strides in service delivery, the outlying sub-districts, made up of a significant number of the new city residents and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), struggle to receive the attention of the municipal government. Sub-Districts Seven and Eight of Kandahar City exemplify this, where services are struggling to match community growth. In order to increase public awareness of the services provided by Municipal Sub-Districts Seven and Eight, USAID's Office of Transition Initiatives' (OTI) Community Cohesion Initiative (CCI) funded a one-day Municipal Open House.

Held on January 1, 2013, the event was attended by 130 community representatives and 25 GIRoA representatives, including the Deputy Mayor of Kandahar City, Sub-District Managers, tribal leaders and community members. In addition to the community members in attendance, local media also provided coverage of the event, spreading its impact throughout the city.

At the Municipal Sub-District Open House, one community leader stated, "We are excited to come together under one roof to discuss our issues. Now, how can we benefit from municipal resources?" The event also provided a venue for community members and their representatives to discuss the government's roles and responsibilities and where there was room for improvement.

During the event, the Deputy Mayor proclaimed, "The local government is committed to providing services to its constituents but we need your cooperation for better service provision." As an immediate impact of the event, the Kandahar City Mayor announced a decision to hold weekly meetings with community representatives and Sub-District Managers to ensure timely responses to community priorities. This CCI-facilitated event provided an ideal opportunity for community members to engage with their representatives, increasing public awareness of municipal services and providing a mechanism for future engagements.