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AFGHANISTAN WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (AWDP) In-Depth Implementation Assessment (Option Period 2)



December 9, 2015

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Cover Page Credit: On May 21, 2015 a total of 23 employers or human resource management staff representing 17 private sector entities participated in a focus group to discuss their experiences with the AWDP training programs on their staff's performance. The focus group broke into four smaller groups to answer specific questions considered to be useful for program improvement. Kabul—Afghanistan.

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1. Summary

In the first quarter of Option Period 2 (OP-2) (April 5 – June 30, 2015), Afghanistan Workforce Development Program (AWDP) began a qualitative assessment over a two-week time period in May of 2015 on the implementation of the AWDP model through face to face interviews with private sector entity (PSE) employers that had benefited from AWDP’s trainings, placements and promotions. This was followed up with focus groups with private sector employers on May 20 - 21, 2015 for greater feedback to maximize on lessons learned in light of the economic and security-related issues that the Afghanistan private sector is facing as a result of the draw down of international NATO forces and the reduction in international and domestic investment and donor aid.

Concurrent with its work with private sector employers, AWDP began working with its grantees/implementing partners to immediately bring this information to them and further get their recommendations on improving the rollout of the program. On May 21, 2015 and again on June 15, 2015 AWDP held focus groups with its off-budget grantees.

The AWDP four pillar model is designed to be adaptable while being Afghan-led, allowing for changes based on the needs expressed by the Afghan private sector. The Afghan training providers funded through the AWDP program are provided technical support to better meet those needs while meeting the obligations of their grant agreements. Their implementation and technical support is conducted within four pillars to adapt business skills and vocational training to a market-driven model, as outlined below:

- 1) AWDP training providers/grantees conduct a demand assessment through direct contact with private sector employers to determine their labor market needs within a given sector;
- 2) The AWDP training provider/grantee develops or adapts its training curricula fit to the results of the demand assessment, so its training matches the needs of PSE employers with curricula validated by the employer¹ before the training design stage;
- 3) The training design and delivery is facilitated using modern adult education learning methodologies; and
- 4) The training also incorporates employment-related services (ERS) to orient employees on the professional work environments, while job seekers are trained to conduct themselves professionally for a successful job search.

The information from these focus groups and interviews, conducted in the first quarter of OP-2, are detailed in section 3: “Assessment on AWDP Implementation.” The results of that assessment were largely put into practice within the second quarter of OP-2 (July 1 – September 31, 2015) as outlined in section 5: “Results.”

¹ AWDP training providers/implementing partners sign Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) with PSEs that are able to commit to raising the salaries of successfully trained employees by at least 3 percent or hire job seekers trained specifically to the competency-based skills in demand by employers.

It is important to note that AWDP introduced the Master Training of Trainers (MToT) workshops in April 2015 at the beginning of the OP-2 first quarter as the first tranche of OP-2 grants began their training programs. This initiative had been based on previous lessons learned and its impact was apparent in PSE focus group feedback in May and June 2015. The successful MToT workshops continued through August 2015 as the 14 new off-budget grants began training program implementation.

Additional focus groups and roundtable meetings with PSE employers were held in the third quarter of OP-2 (October 1 – December 31, 2015) to further develop the AWDP model in light of its considerable successes throughout a difficult economic period in Afghanistan's history and the exodus of young Afghans from the country. The results of that are detailed in section 6: "AWDP Review of OP-2 and Areas for Expansion."

While the focus group initiative has allowed for faster impact due to its interactive nature, the assessment was also conducted as a form of qualitative research and organized into themes to further inform the program down the line, which are outlined in this report. This report documents the results of these meetings and initiatives.

2. Qualitative Assessment Methodology

While focus groups and interviews with PSE employers and training providers/grantees have an interactive nature which is dynamic for quickly implementing lessons learned, they are also a form of qualitative research which, when organized into themes and disseminated through internal reports, can be used to inform the program during the grants implementation.

Private Sector Interviews (May 2015): An AWDP Technical Program Manager met one-on-one with a number of PSEs receiving training for their employees over a two-week period for interviews in the month of May 2015 to elicit feedback on both the quality and effectiveness of the training and to evaluate the work of AWDP grantees. Seven (7) PSE Interviews were conducted in person and face to face with the following companies: Bank Millie, AIB, AWCC, Moby Group, Mashal University, Tabesh University, Gawharshad University, in May 2015. The meetings were conducted with HR management staff to address private companies' needs related to the demand assessment process, curriculum development and validation, training design and delivery and Employment Related Services (ERS) follow up.

PSE Focus Groups (May 2015): Two focus groups were then held with PSEs on May 20 and 21, 2015 with AWDP's Program Director, who visited the program site from Washington, D.C. The meetings explored PSE recommendations and to determine their needs in order to improve the overall AWDP grants management and execution process. First, on May 20 a women's group with 12 representatives of female-owned PSEs and civil society voiced their concerns in a roundtable setting, while on the following day, May 21, 23 individuals representing 17 PSEs participated, which were split into 4 groups to answer specific questions that would be useful for program improvement.

AWDP Grantee Focus Group meetings (May 21 and June 15, 2015): Based on the information from and analysis of PSE feedback, AWDP recognized a need to hold meetings with

its current grantees to start a dialogue to address these concerns. In the May 21, 2015 meeting, 19 AWDP grant implementation managers from 15 organizations, attended directly after the PSE focus groups, while on June 15, 2015 the relevant grantee management staff attended. AWDP grantees shared their experiences and lessons learned, reviewed the model, and discussed the ways to improve various aspects of the program.

3. Assessment on AWDP Model Implementation (April 4 – June 30, 2015 Quarter):

The assessment analyzed the four pillars of the AWDP model, addressing areas for possible improvement within the model. This is outlined below according to each pillar:

3.1. Labor Market Demand Assessment Phase

The one-on-one meetings with PSEs found that there were gaps during AWDP grantees' demand assessment phase, which needed greater follow up with its grantees. For example, some grantees had presented a pre-selected set of curricula topics to PSEs during the demand-assessment phase rather than soliciting specific PSE recommendations. However, grantees during subsequent focus group meetings relayed that PSE employers do not often know how to express their needs. For instance, one grantee Pearl Horizon Consulting, stated that often PSEs are not able to articulate their needs during the demand assessment. The grantee said presenting a list of topics for training, according to the grantee, better helps them to decide.

As this is seen as one of the most crucial phases in the four pillar model, AWDP spent a great deal of time with the grantees discussing ways to improve its execution in order to save time in the other pillars, which rely on an accurate and complete demand assessment.

Grantees, during their focus group meetings, brainstormed ways to improve this pillar. These suggestions were:

- Develop a standardized and generalized demand assessment process, including tools and techniques. Or, have grantees hire demand assessment experts to perform professional demand assessments.
- Plan for more time during the demand assessment phase, which also requires more time in the grantees' work plans. Approach both employers and employees at to PSEs better identify and meet the needs of the employees.
- Involve the curricula developer in demand assessment process as well. The skills should be categorize in the curricula and shared with trainees' direct supervisor(s) and trainees ahead of validation and training delivery.
- Consider changing the milestone schedule to allow grantees more time to address demand assessment and curricula adaption needs.

3.2. Curricula Development or Adaption Phase

Feedback from PSEs on the curriculum adaption phase was more positive. The main point expressed by PSEs was the need for more time to review the curricula with related departments within their companies in order to provide the necessary corrective feedback on the curricula. The one-on-one meetings with PSEs found that while the curricula development, there are gaps in the curricula validation phase with employers, which needs better follow up on the grantees' part. For instance, grantees are required to develop new curricula or adapt it based on the needs presented by PSEs. However during the adaption phase, grantees were not taking as much time as intended by the AWDP model. When this topic was raised by AWDP, grantees' for their part expressed that it took time for PSE employers to respond to their inquiries. AWDP grantees suggested that building in more time into the Schedule of Milestones could relieve some this stress.

AWDP began to work more with off-budget grantees and on-budget contractors during the technical orientation workshop to strengthen the demand-assessment process, which was expected in turn to strengthen the curricula adaption phase.

3.3. Competency-Based Training Design and Delivery Phase

As far as the training design and delivery phase of the AWDP model, interviewees from PSEs seemed overall very satisfied and happy with the training provided by the AWDP grantees, which reflects the introduction of Master Training of Trainers (MTotT) workshops in April 2015 to improve training design and delivery. PSEs evaluated the training programs to ensure their staff were taught competency-based skills to perform well in their jobs.

AWDP grantees work with a number of private higher education institutes (PHEIs). Employers from these institutes have expressed a keen interest in adopting and using the AWDP model in their own short term TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) and Business Education and Skills Training (BEST) training workshops as their own clients and donors often request that a participatory training approach is used. As AWDP provides the MTotT training to its grantees' key staff, these representatives were interested in approaching other private higher education association members to further ascertain the demand for this and requested that AWDP provide this training to their staff as well. This has represented an excellent opportunity for private higher education adaption of the AWDP model, in line with USAID's stated goal to build the capacity of training and PSEs.

Another prominent suggestion PSEs had was allowing AWDP trainees to take more than one training session through the program, which would further build the skill set of PSE employees and thus the workforce. In terms of PSEs' employees selected for training, companies explained AWDP's policy against the duplication created barriers. For instance, if a mid-career staff was trained under one program, this employees cannot participate in another one. PSEs strongly suggested AWDP changes this policy to make it more flexible. For instance, a trainee receiving basic financial management training cannot participate in an advanced training of the same field, even if it is urgently needed. PSEs felt this policy adversely affected the AWDP impact.

Female PSE employers suggested offering training sessions in complimentary courses, such as business communications and organizational development, rather than an emphasis on just one. In this sense, the suggestion was on expansion of the program. The general PSE focus group discussed expanding the program as well, that AWDP increase the scope of the training program to be longer and more compressive.

PSEs also suggested that all training materials should be translated into either Dari or Pasho (a local language) to allow trainees to better absorb the main concept of the training materials as most trainees' English is at a low level. Another suggestion was for AWDP to bring more flexibility on the training length of the training. If a curriculum required 25 hours, but AWDP grantees are required to design a training for 35 hours – the additional 10 hours is “wasted time.” PSE also suggested the reverse: if a company requires 70 hours of training, it would be useful for the program to allow for that.

3.4. Employment-Related Services Phase

An assessment of the last part of the AWDP model, the Employment Related Services (ERS) phase, yielded a number of suggestions from PSEs. PSE interviewees expressed that at this stage of the AWDP model, the grantees needed to improve their follow up with trainees to see how effective skills acquisition was. One suggestion from PSEs was that by strengthening follow up services, it would strengthen the relationship between training providers and employers and both sides will benefit from this kind of relationship, which would enhance sustainability. The women's PSE group also suggested, as with the one-on-one PSE interviews, that more ERS follow up after hiring/training be built into the AWDP model, as few training programs in Afghanistan do that.

For job promotions of employees, as per the Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) signed for trained PSE employees, the salary increase policy represented some challenges. Almost all private companies have individual policies and procedures on salary increases/promotions, wherein a staff performance appraisal must be completed and documented. PSEs suggested a performance evaluation be built in to measure the effectiveness of training prior to granting salary increases or to determine if more support is needed.

PSEs noted the limited online job search tools for both PSEs and job seekers and recommended building a database for recruitment. Other suggestion were to ease employer access to skilled and trained job seekers, PSEs recommended building a database of skilled job seekers containing all the recruitment information that a PSE would need.

Other PSE recommendations for placing job seekers were to:

- Develop career counseling centers for job seekers as part of the services offered to them.
- Present job seekers that have university experience, familiarity with Afghanistan's job market, and reasonable expectations for compensation to employers. Employers want job seekers to have basic education qualifications, relevant training on machines (as needed) and communication skills.

- Ensure job seekers are actively engaged in the job search process – not leaving it all the service provider.
- Consider funding transportation for training participants, which could be a critical factor for job seekers with no financial resources.
- Develop a process and protocol to ensure job seekers are a good match to the placements. The private sector wants professional workers
- Create a job vacancy bank for employers to list their jobs, as participants noted there are no current job search engines.

An interesting and important observation PSEs and grantees had was Afghanistan's lack of Human Resources professionals and the potential to build skills in the country's workforce by supporting the growth in the field.

4. PSE and Grantee Recommendations for Marginalized Groups (April 4 – June 30, 2015 Quarter):

Both PSE employers and grantees had a number of recommendations for marginalized groups. AWDP has a goal to place or promote 25 percent women. Within OP-2, the program has averaged a 36 percent placement and promotion rate with salary increases for women. Much of this can be attributed to the program's active involvement of women in the project. On the other hand, the program's largest beneficiary is youth as 68 percent of all placements and promotion are between the ages of 21 – 30, according to the second quarter of OP-2.

Recommendations for Women:

- Female-owned PSE representatives noted there is a big need for leadership, marketing and management skills for rural women working in handicrafts. One women's organization was trying to launch an institution for handicraft makers to provide this training but needed both capacity-building support and some resources.
- Grantees and AWDP technical program managers working with women noted there is a demand for women to be trained in private school settings.
- Female representatives of women-owned PSEs noted that private universities do not have short-term micro-trainings.

Recommendations for Youth:

- PSEs are regularly in need of staff in telecommunications and private sector educational institutes, noted by Youth sector grantee.
- There is a large population of youth job seekers who have not gotten into university--with a high school education and 2 years of work experience. Most PSEs use personal networks to hire or agencies, not the internet. It takes time to demonstrate the effectiveness of having pre-screened and trained youth trainees.
- High expectations for graduates but no opportunities – this is a time bomb. Contributes to insecurity.
- Afghanistan is becoming a remittance economy because many young people leave the country to find opportunities and they remit money back home.
- Technology is important tool for addressing youth unemployment and unmet labor demands.

- Employment trend, trajectory depends on security. There is a huge density of skills in urban areas but not in rural. Depends on foreign assistance. Unemployment doubled with the removal of foreign assistance.
- Most youth lack access to the internet, limiting their access to the job market. PSEs recommended developing another model for the large group of job seeker youth who do not have access to the internet to find jobs. How do you reach them?

5. Results (July 1 – September 30, 2015 Quarter):

While the focus groups and face to face interviews cited in this report were conducted in the first quarter of OP-2 (April 4 – June 30, 2015) the implementation of these recommendation were mostly initiated in the following quarter during the launching of the second tranche of off-budget grantees' and first tranche of on-budget contractors' training programs. After analyzing the data from these focus groups and interviews, AWDP immediately began working with its grantees and contractors in the second reporting quarter of OP-2 to adapt a number of PSE and grantee recommendations to further standardize and improve training program quality under the AWDP model². If the program is extended there will be additional opportunities to address concerns which cannot realistically be considered at this time. However, many recommendations were ideal to implement in the second reporting quarter of OP-2 as the 14 new grants and 11 contracts prepared for their training programs. These are listed as follows, directly relating to the four pillar model:

Standardize the Demand Assessment: AWDP recognized a need to standardize the demand assessment phase of the AWDP model based on PSE and grantee recommendations. Grantees, for their part reported that PSEs did not understand their own needs well enough while several PSEs reported that grantees were not eliciting their labor market demands as much as determining them. Therefore AWDP created an educational briefer which clearly explained the four pillar model, including the demand assessment, to better inform PSE employers of what a successful demand assessment entailed. This briefer was comprised of 8 pages and sent out in soft copy to all the PSEs by email. The briefer has also been printed for PSE use. There was a suggestion to plan for more time within the structure of the grantee work plans, which is in-process. AWDP also built in additional time during the contractor and grantee Technical Orientation Workshop to assist and inform grantees and contractors on what constituted a successful demand assessment. During the subsequent technical orientation workshops, grantees and contractors agreed to:

- Categorize potential PSEs;
- Establish an assessment team;
- Develop assessment methodologies;
- Develop assessment tools and materials;
- Coordinate with government sector departments;
- Prepare an official letter (Maktoob) for private sector companies;
- Find working sectors thorough coordination with AISA and ACCI offices;

² See April 4 – June 30, 2015 Quarterly Progress Report

- Finalize tools and methodologies;
- Attain AWDP's approval;
- Conduct the demand assessment with these guidelines in mind; and
- Develop a demand assessment report.

Improve Curricula Adaption or Development: For this pillar overall, PSE and grantee feedback had been positive. Targeted work on this pillar was already underway during the previous quarters and the focus group feedback reflected that. However, AWDP Technical Program Managers continued working closely with grantees implementing under the second tranche on their curricula adaption and development phase. In addition to this, during orientation workshops, AWDP conducted role plays with new contractors and grantees to strengthen the curricula review rollout regarding ways to contact PSEs and which department of PSEs to contact.

Expand Training Design and Delivery: This pillar of the model was upgraded in the previous quarters with the addition of Master Training to its grantees to improve grantee training design and delivery and focus group feedback reflected that. This initiative continued. In addition to this, AWDP is currently working with private higher education institutes (PHEIs) on ways of incorporating the AWDP model into their program to increase their revenue by facilitating the potential delivery of short-term competency based training directly to PSEs, with technical support from AWDP. At the request of PHEIs, AWDP will also offer MToT to PHEI trainers through its technical program managers certified in the course. PSEs and grantees had also requested that USAID allow PSE employees to take more than one training session. In response, those trained before December 31, 2013 are now eligible for a second training and, as with the initial training, raising successfully trained employees' salary by at least 3 percent is also expected.

Strengthen Employment Related Services (ERS) Follow Up: PSE employers had requested that AWDP grantees spend more time evaluating their recently hired job seekers and promoted employees after training to help evaluate and support their work. AWDP has required that grantees insure trainees complete three months of employment in order for their placements to be counted as part of their milestone deliverables. However, as this change impacts the milestone schedule, the issue is still being worked on in conjunction with management and the program team. For instance, if a job seeker leaves their job after the grantee has placed them, should the grantee be penalized? The AWDP team has also initiated face to face interviews with trainees who are placed or promoted as an additional backstop to assess program impact, the percentage of which varies based on recommendations from the M&E department (starting at 30%).

Address Youth/ Marginalized Group Needs: As indicated by both PSE and grantee feedback, there remains a "fresh graduate" placement challenge for youth. The Youth Training for Employment sector was designed to address this need. PSEs for their part noted the "high expectations of youth" for employment, yet this is an ongoing problem in Afghanistan rather than a grant implementation problem. Grantee Pearl Horizon Consulting (PHC), the only grantee under the Youth Training for Employment sector, has faced challenges meeting its grant obligations but has noted PSEs are regularly in need of staff in the education and telecommunications industry, and AWDP grantees are already pursuing these sectors.

However, the specific Youth grant is designed for less experienced youth, presenting obstacles. A key part of the AWDP's model is it specifically aims to address the needs of the private sector in order to replace foreign-sourced labor with Afghans at the semi-professional/mid-career level, therefore more educated and experienced Afghans remain in-demand presenting a problem for placing fresh graduates. However, during the second quarter of OP-2 the vast majority (68%) of placed and promoted trainees in the program were between 21 and 30 years of age.

6. AWDP Review of OP-2 and Areas for Expansion (October 1 – December 31, 2015 Quarter):

At the beginning of the third quarter of OP-2 (October 1 – December 31, 2015), AWDP proactively researched potential points for program expansion based on employer and market demand. The program also reviewed the preceding quarters of program implementation for its effectiveness. This is detailed in the following points within this section.

6.1. Private Higher Education Institutes' Demand for the AWDP Model:

There is considerable potential areas where the AWDP model could be incorporated into Private Higher Education Institutes (PHEI's) while contributing to their commercial sustainability as PHEIs already are based on a commercial model and charge fees for their tuition. To explore this further, on October 21, 2015 AWDP met with the chancellors of PHEIs to discuss ways in which the program could benefit them. There are over 60 PHEIs in Kabul and overall over 100 within all of Afghanistan (in the major regional cities). In a consultation meeting initiated by AWDP, which was attended by more than 50 private university and PHEI chancellors and leaders, participants discussed ways to build the skills that private and public employers have shown a demand for. The Kabul-based private universities and PHEIs brainstormed potential ways to meet the labor market demands of private sector employers in Afghanistan. The Head of Afghanistan Private Universities and PHEI Union, Dr. Shafiullah Naimi pointed out that their resources consist of 125 institutes, 400 cadre, and around 5,000 administration managers across Afghanistan, and are ready to take part in meeting the private sector demand for specific skills.

Chancellors gave a number of suggestions which are detailed as follows:

- 1) **ERS/Career Center Support:** Some private universities have established employment related career counseling centers or are in the process of establishing them. These career centers need technical support, tools, and resources in employment-related services to respond to labor market needs and graduating students' needs. These universities do not have data/information nor have the tools to collect such data/information to show how many graduates found work after graduation.
- 2) **Professional Work Behavior Training:** Chancellors expressed the need for training on work environment and culture (organizational behavior, personality and soft skills, public speaking and professional email communication) and asked AWDP to focus on these areas specifically for career counselling and ERS support.

- 3) **AWDP Model Appropriateness:** Private universities and PHEIs see their relevance as partners to implement the AWDP model of training and placement/promotion as they already have in place the required infrastructure and resources available.
- 4) **Support Expansion of Afghan Workforce to Regional Neighbors:** Chancellors suggest AWDP help analyze the labor market demand for technical workforce in the region, including United Arab Emirates and other Middle Eastern countries. This will not only build the Afghanistan workforce, but will also open up more job opportunities for Afghan workforce abroad.
- 5) **PHEIs Health Sector Demand:** Chancellors also indicated significant demand for skills training in the health sector, especially in medical technology. There are a number of PHEIs training in the health sector.
- 6) **Competency-Based Training for PHEI Administration Staff:** Private universities and higher education institutions are still new to Afghanistan and in need of competency-based training themselves. The chancellors indicated a large demand for skills administrators and other staff need, such as marketing, financial management and accounting to project management and ICT.
- 7) **Share Labor Market Demand Research:** The chancellors requested AWDP share its findings on labor market information for the skills that are in high demand to help universities get a better understanding of the labor market studies.
- 8) **Stem the Migration Flow of Afghan Youth:** PHEIs share the nationwide concern for young Afghans leaving the country and migrating in thousands to Europe and elsewhere. These institutions see the AWDP model as a key instrument in fighting the mass migration of Afghan youth.
- 9) **Facilitate Alliances with International PHEIs:** PHEIs are keenly interested in forming partnerships and alliances with other universities in the region, Europe and the U.S. This will help them gain the resources, support and recognition they lack at the moment.
- 10) **Professional Development for PHEI Staff:** PHEIs need support with ongoing professional development of their academic and administrative staff.
- 11) **Facilitate Quality Internship Programs:** PHEIs are interested in internship programs that will enable them to better introduce interns to private sector entities after graduation.
- 12) **Facilitate Competency-Based Training for Medical Technology:** PHEIs are interested in AWDP training programs for those PHEIs providing health/medical degrees on Medical Technology.

AWDP began to devise an action plan for potential ways to work with PHEIs and will add detail to this with face-to-face interviews in the provinces in December 2015 as well. The action plan can be implemented if the program gets an extension.

6.2. State-Owned Enterprises' Demand for Competency-Based Training:

In mid-October 2015 employers for state-owned enterprises expressed a keen interest in AWDP training for their employees and asked USAID in formal written requests to allow them to raise their AWDP-trained employees' salaries at the end of their fiscal year in accordance with government rules and regulations by 3 percent instead of immediately as required by the model,

which had been problematic for them. AWDP also held a focus group with employers of state-owned enterprises November 1, 2015 that underscored previous written requests to USAID (to be detailed further down in this section).

USAID responded positively to the state-owned entity market demand for AWDP-modeled trainings, and since mid-November AWDP has been implementing short-term training programs in four sectors under Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Construction, Financial Management (FM) and Project Management (PM) for the employees of state-owned enterprises such as banks, Ariana airlines and DABS electrical power system with USAID approval. Five high performing grantees (SEO, AMRAN, ACHRO, ALMC and NICE) vetted through an AWDP off-budget committee scoring system were short-listed for “scale up” applications to conduct these short-term training programs. USAID approved the scale up initiative October 21 and the deadline for the ICT, PM, FM and Construction grant application were set for October 28, 2015. Three companies’ applied within the deadline and were approved by USAID mid-November 2015: SEO (PM and ICT), AMRAN (ICT and Construction) and ACHRO (FM and PM). These three grantees are implementing 6 training programs for 1,450 mid-career/semi-professional employees in Kabul, Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif, Kandahar and Jalalabad in the months of November and December 2015. These training programs conclude December 31, 2015.

6.3. Final AWDP PSE and State-Owned Enterprise Roundtable:

A total of seven heads of private sector and state-owned entities met with AWDP’s CoP Salem Helali, DCoP Nick Stevens, Creative Associates President Leland Krivant, Technical Program Advisor Ruben Abisoghomyan, Technical Program Senior Manager Farid Ahmad Samadi and technical program managers (Saber Daneshjoo, Wahidullah Raziqi and Ghulam Ansari) to discuss challenges for lessons learned in the private and public sector and opportunities for future directions for AWDP in the event of a possible extension. The meeting took place on November 1, 2015 from 5 – 7 pm in a roundtable setting and concluded with dinner.

The participants are listed as follows:

- 1) Pashtany Bank, Chief Finance Officer Abdul Wahab Taub
- 2) Afghanistan International Bank, Head of Human Resources Ahmad Feroz Youfzai
- 3) New Kabul Bank, Deputy CEO Ahmad Zia Zia
- 4) Afghan Swiss Medical Institute of Higher Education, Director, Dr. Nangialay Ghows Alami
- 5) Afghan Wireless Communication Company, ADP Manager Mohammad Jamshid Nadiri
- 6) GEO-CHEM Middle East, Human Resources Officer Mohammad Anas EDRIS
- 7) Sarwar Kainat Group of Schools and Universities, President Mohammad Yar

State-owned entries employers (reported previously in this section) and PSE employers offered a number of suggestions:

Afghan State-Owned Banking Industry:

New Kabul Bank, Deputy CEO Ahmad Zia Zia:

- The salary increase “doesn’t make sense” as he thinks it is better to pay a fee for training than increase the salary. Salary increment should be granted after the performance evaluation of trainees by PSEs
- There should be more emphasis on the quality of training rather than quantity. For example, if more professional types of courses were to be provided (which of course needs to have a longer duration), for example audit certified courses. “We don’t want to put many people in a class just for 10 days—we want longer trainings with less people.”
- Hires from outside for credit and risk as they don’t have that in Afghanistan.
- In order to find out the effectiveness of AWDP training, it is important to conduct a pre-training delivery test to find if the nominated trainees have the capacity to learn from the training and if they really are suitable for the type of training supposed to be delivered even through there is a demand assessment prior to the training.

Pashtany Bank, Chief Finance Officer Abdul Wahab Taub:

- Need practical examples for our staff, as academic lessons don’t help as much as real life work examples. Theory doesn’t help. Risk/Audit/Credit—need courses in these.
- Two types of capacity building trainings are required by his bank: one for old staff who are not flexible and are not updated and one for newly graduated employees and job seekers who have theoretical background but needs skills.

Private Higher Education Institutes:

Sarwar Kainat Group of Schools and Universities, President Mohammad Yar: The AWDP training is useful. He sees the value from donors for these trainings and has raised all his employees’ salaries by 3 percent if they take the AWDP training. Notes there are 600 employees and 400 students in teacher training.

AWDP COP Salem Helali: Shared that chancellors’ from the PHEI meeting experienced their students had a lot of trouble getting certified as the government system is outdated and this is resulting in students needing to go back to school to get certified.

Afghan Swiss Medical Institute of Higher Education (established 3 years), Director Dr. Nangialay Ghows Alami: Found the AWDP trainings are very useful. He gave the example of one of his employees who previously had problems with everything, especially financial analysis, and would always come to the president confused. But one day, after receiving the training, the trainee drew a Gantt chart and showed him how he can do his work in a better way. He increased his salary by 30 percent immediately.

Participants further noted teacher salaries are too low so quality people don’t want to work for that pay as it is not enough to live on. Another participant looks at Afghanistan’s focus on teachers and compares the teacher focus to Singapore—that worked in Singapore so it is thought to work in Afghanistan as well.

Telecommunications Industry:

Afghan Wireless Communication Company, ADP Manager Mohammad Jamshid Nadiri:

- Not every PSE entity has a training department to build the capacity of its staff. Therefore, there is a demand for training and capacity building for PSEs. When we look at the public sector, the lack of capacity is even more problematic.
- AWCC always refers to AWDP when it finds out a gap in the skills of its staff. Thinks the salary increment aspect is a good idea from AWDP because it is a contribution on the part of training recipients and adds value to the training because providing free services is taken for granted unfortunately.
- Understands they must share the business revenue returns with employees to develop their skills and motivate them. If the training improves their productivity, then they deserve the pay raise because they attended the trainings.
- Training Afghan workers in technical skills will help replace foreign technical workforce from the Philippines, Pakistan, and India with Afghans, which is needed. Also need to have expats train Afghans to their level.

Participants further note that Afghanistan used to have 172,000 illegal workers in the country as they have the skills. For instance to design homes, Pakistani workers are invaluable. This is the reality. There was a large protest of young Afghans wanting work, but they don't have work because they don't have the skills.

6.4. Employment Related Services Study Tour in India:

AWDP is developing a standardized Employment Related Services (ERS) for Afghanistan. ERS services remain limited and are considered critical to addressing unemployment issues in the country. Participants in the proposed program will take lessons-learned from economies in which services are systematized and functional. Initial research identified India to provide the required training, tools, standards and resources necessary for standardizing these services in Afghanistan. AWDP is implementing a study tour in India from December 3 – 13, 2015, which will focus on best practices in ERS to improve the fourth pillar of the model. Approximately 15 AWDP off-budget program and management staff, on-budget program and management staff, USAID's COR and ACOR, and high performing grantee staff are attending to incorporate the training into their programming. The grantees/contractors, on and off-budget technical program managers who benefit from the training will develop and deliver training of trainers programs to a larger number of grantees and contractors that will be able to take the lead in further developing ERS services in Afghanistan. The feedback will also be incorporated into an AWDP's possible future work with PHEIs in the event of a program extension.