



QUARTERLY REPORT

USAID Promote: Women in Government

IDIQ No. AID-306-I-14-00012

Task Order No. AID-306-TO-15-00044

FY2016 Quarter 1: October – December 2015



January 29, 2016

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Chemonics International Inc.

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Acronyms

ACOP	Acting Chief of Party
ACOR	Alternate Contracting Officer's Representative
ACSI	Afghanistan Civil Service Institute
ALBA	Assistance to Legislative Bodies of Afghanistan
ALDO	Afghan Learning and Development Organization
AMEP	Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan
APPF	Afghan Public Protection Force
ATVI	Afghan Technical and Vocational Institute
COP	Chief of Party
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CDC	Career Development Center
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
DoWA	Department of Women's Affairs
EA	Equal Access
EGRC	E-Government Resource Center
EPD	Equality for Peace and Democracy
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
GEP	Gender Equality Project
GIRoA	Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit/ Promotion of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET)
HR	Human Resources
IARCSC	Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission
IDIQ	Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity
IDLG	Independent Directorate for Local Governance
ISLA	Initiative to Strengthen Local Administrations
JSSP	Justice Sector Support Program
LOC	Letter of Collaboration
MAIL	Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock
MoE	Ministry of Education
MoEW	Ministry of Energy and Water
MoCI	Ministry of Commerce and Industries
MoCIT	Ministry of Communications and Information Technology
MoCN	Ministry of Counter Narcotics
MoD	Ministry of Defense
MoF	Ministry of Finance
MoHE	Ministry of Higher Education
MoHRA	Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoIC	Ministry of Information and Culture
MoJ	Ministry of Justice
MoLSAMD	Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled
MoMP	Ministry of Mines and Petroleum
MoPW	Ministry of Public Works
MoTCA	Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
MRRD	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
MUDA	Ministry of Urban Development Affairs

PAC	Promote Advisory Committee
STTA	Short Term Technical Assistance
TVET	Technical Vocational Education and Training
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WCSA	Women's Civil Service Association
WSMEs	Women's Small and Medium Enterprises
ZFD	Zivilier Freidensdienst/Civil Peace Service

1. Project Overview

- Task Order: Promote: Women in Government, AID-306-TO-15-00044
- IDIQ: Promote AID-306-I-14-00012
Period of Performance: April 21, 2015-April 20, 2020
- Name of Prime Implementing Partner: Chemonics International Inc.
- Names of Sub-contractors/Sub-awardees:
 - Equal Access (EA)
 - Afghan Learning and Development Organization (ALDO)
 - Afghan Technical and Vocational Institute (ATVI)
 - Equality for Peace and Democracy (EPD)
 - Tadbeer Consulting
 - Services International, LLC
 - Afghanistan Public Protection Force (APPF)
- Geographic Coverage: Afghanistan

Project Description:

Promote is a joint commitment by the U.S. and Afghan Governments that will work to empower 75,000 women between the ages of 18 and 30, and help ensure these women are included among a new generation of Afghan political, business, and civil society leaders. Promote aims to empower women to become leaders alongside their male counterparts, and ensure they have the skills, experience, knowledge, and networks to succeed.

USAID Promote: Women in Government, a task order under the Promote Indefinite Delivery Indefinite Quantity (IDIQ) contract, was designed to increase and advance the number of women in the Afghan Civil Service. In close coordination with the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), USAID Promote: Women in Government aims to ensure women are always represented at the highest levels of policy and decision-making in Afghan society and government. This component of Promote facilitates women's entry into decision-making roles in government service, encourages policy reform within the Government of Afghanistan at both the national and regional levels, increases support for women in government, and establishes an internship program for high school and college female students interested in working within government ministries.

The USAID Promote: Women in Government program has three objectives:

- Facilitate women's entry into decision-making roles in government service.
- Encourage a hospitable environment for female staff in government.
- Increase local stakeholder support for women in government.

Through the advancement of these objectives, USAID Promote: Women in Government aims to achieve the following results:

- At least 3,000 female university graduates and secondary school graduates complete one-year government internships and transition to full-time employment.
- 70 percent of USAID Promote: Women in Government participants employed by the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) within 24 months of finishing their internship.
- 75 percent of GIROA workplace policy reforms benefit and protect female employees; and
- 50 percent increase in local stakeholder buy-in for support of women working outside the home.

2. Executive Summary

2.1 Summary of results for the reporting period and key achievements

Relationship Building: During the first quarter of 2016, the USAID Promote: Women in Government project team had several meetings with key ministries and potential partners in preparation for embedding interns into the ministries. The project also held a number of in-depth meetings with the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC) and other ministries to discuss their resource needs for training the next cohort of 200 interns, training curriculum updates, and the duration and timing of the internship training in Kabul and the provinces. The USAID Promote: Women in Government Team also discussed the placement of pilot interns who are going graduate end of February 2016. Other meetings were held with EPD, ATVI, ALDO, and Tadbeer Consulting to discuss finalization of their scopes of work to contribute to the project's objectives. The team participated in Promote Advisory Committee (PAC) meetings with the other Promote task orders to discuss opportunities and challenges for the Promote program. Additionally, meetings were held with USAID program partners, Rana Higher Education University, and women's small and medium enterprises (WSMEs).

Women's Internship Program: During this quarter, advertisements for internship applications for the next cohort of 200 interns were broadcasted on Tolo TV and Radio Arman in Kabul, Radio Sulh in Parwan, and Radio Nejraab in Kapisa for one week. In addition to broadcasting at the national and sub-national level, advertisements were posted on the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief and Development (ACBAR) and the Promote website. Flyers were displayed at various public places, such as MoWA, the Afghanistan Civil Service Institute (ACSI), and the Department of Women's Affairs (DoWA) in Parwan and Kapisa. Flyers were also disseminated among civil society organizations (CSOs) and through public and private university networks. As a result of the internship advertisement campaign, the project received 1,017 applications. The project administered written tests for 385 qualified applicants, and then interviewed the 321 candidates who passed these tests. Interviews were conducted by a three-person panel consisting of a USAID Promote: Women in Government representative, a representative from MoWA or the IARCSC gender unit, and a CSO member. The project team verified educational and national identification documents from the 233 selected interns for the next cohort to begin the internship program. In preparation for placing these cohorts within ministries, the team documented three preferred professional interest areas for the interns into the internship database.

In addition, the project team researched alternative training options and other potential partners in the event that USAID Promote: Women in Government and ACSI are unable to coordinate to meet objectives. Given the importance and urgency of investigating alternative training programs, the policy and research team and internship team collaborated to set up joint meetings with relevant ministries. Together, the teams assessed ministries with training institutes to examine opportunities for placing interns. As a result of these assessments, the team submitted a report to USAID on December 12 on alternative training institutes for the internship program as well as potential partner ministries. The aim of this report was to explore other viable training possibilities that would simultaneously place interns in ministry-embedded institutes. The team also followed up with eligible line ministries who were assessed during the GIRoA Partnership Assessment to discuss Letters of Collaboration (LOCs).

Policy and Research: During this quarter, the policy and research team analyzed and provided feedback on the draft anti-harassment regulation. The team then met with the Policy and

Planning Director of MoWA to provide guidance on implementing the anti-harassment regulation. They reviewed anti-harassment policies from national and international organizations to draw upon lessons learned and to assess how best to apply this knowledge to developing implementation guidelines, action plans, and monitoring mechanisms in the Afghan context. The team discussed their findings with the Policy and Planning Director of MoWA and submitted the draft memorandum of understanding (MOU) in Dari and English for their technical review and input. The purpose of the MOU is to reflect the mutual intentions between Chemonics and MoWA to cooperate and coordinate activities to facilitate women's entry into the Afghan civil service. The MOU also affirms mutual collaboration in the advancement of women into decision-making roles in government service through policy reforms and internship programs with government ministries.

The Policy and Research Team continued discussions with the Gender Director at IARCSC to explore the need for short-term technical assistance (STTA) on gender equality policy. The Gender Director requested technical support in developing gender policies and regulations, reporting and evaluation mechanisms, and a database of female candidates for recruitment and placement within the civil service.

Workplace Obstacles: Analysis and Recommendations: During this quarter, the project submitted the Workplace Obstacles Report to USAID, which is currently being revised by the project team for final submission. For this research, the project interviewed and surveyed 178 government employees, including Human Resources (HR) directors, administrative directors, employee relations directors, and female staff from 20 government ministries and universities and one independent agency, the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG). Among the various challenges identified through this research, the report highlighted that although the majority of ministries interviewed followed the IARCSC gender policy, all of them, with the exception of IDLG, lacked implementation procedures. Moreover, respondents identified the lack of opportunities for women in leadership positions and nepotism in recruitment and promotion practices as the two greatest obstacles to women's advancement in the workplace. The analysis of government office infrastructures further revealed that ministries generally lacked the provisions necessary for a safe, healthy, and flexible work environment for women. USAID has shared this report with other USAID Promote Task Orders for their feedback.

Communications and Outreach: During this quarter, the USAID Promote: Women in Government subcontractor, Equal Access (EA), developed and disseminated internship announcement flyers in Dari and Pashto, while also broadcasting advertisements on TV and radio channels. Public Service Announcements (PSAs) were broadcasted through Tolo TV and Arman Radio in Kabul and Radio Nejrab and Sulh in Parwan and Kapisa to announce the second round of the internship program at the national and sub-national levels. The Communications and Outreach Team developed a communications strategy for Component 3 of the project and began mobilizing for the formative research that will be used to address key drivers that prevent women from working in government. A total of 151 respondents (46 from Kandahar, 37 from Herat, 33 from Nangarhar, and 35 from Balkh) participated in the focus group discussion (FGD). Participants represented various groups, including Mula Imams, religious scholars, community leaders, women's rights activists, representatives of ministry directorates, representatives of the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs (MoHRA), students, CSOs, government officials, university graduates, and professors. The final FGDs were held in Kapisa and Parwan at Alberoni University to collect more specific and in-depth responses from an Islamic perspective. The team submitted the draft formative research report to USAID Promote: Women in Government leadership.

Monitoring and Evaluation: During this quarter, the M&E team met with ACSI to discuss the process of collecting data for the internship training program at their institution. The team created a capacity assessment survey for the selected interns to complete prior to beginning the internship program. The same survey will be administered to interns at the end of their ACSI training program to compare changes in their knowledge as a result of the ACSI training. The analysis will help the internship team further refine ACSI's training curriculum and/or develop supplemental training programs. The data collection forms have been translated into local languages for distribution in the provinces. Data collection efforts also include distribution of the bi-weekly evaluation reports during the weekly intern monitoring visits. The purpose of this bi-weekly evaluation is to record interns' feedback on the topics taught during the training to assess whether supplemental trainings are needed to address learning gaps.

Deliverables: Deliverables submitted during the first quarter included the September, October, and November Monthly Progress Reports, the Semi-Annual Report, Workplace Obstacles: Analysis and Recommendations Report, monthly financial reports, and the Success Story for September, October, and November.

2.2 Constraints and critical issues

- Ongoing security concerns limited movement throughout Kabul and delayed meetings with key partners and government officials.
- During the research phase of the Workplace Obstacles Analysis and Recommendations Report, the project team was denied access to two security ministries - the Ministry of Defense (MoD) and the Ministry of the Interior (MoI). The project team sought to assess their infrastructures, such as washrooms, daycare, dining areas, and prayer rooms. However, MoD officials asked for a formal letter and approval from their respective ministers to allow the team to visit these premises.
- Ministries were reluctant to provide information requiring the research team to return a second and potentially third time in order to gather additional information and to distribute/collect questionnaires. In some cases, ministries declined to share their policies, citing them as confidential information.
- Some internship applicants were hesitant to provide their personal contact information. They provided either an incorrect number or the mobile number of a male family member. For these reasons, the project team was unable to contact some of the applicants.
- Ongoing negotiations about resource and staffing provisions with partner ACSI have delayed the start of the next cohort of interns, as well as the monitoring activities for the pilot interns. However, the project team has been proactive in discussing these issues with ACSI and USAID and is optimistic that it will be able to reach a mutually agreeable solution.

3. Activity Implementation

3.1 Indicator/Activity Performance

The project's Activity Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (AMEP) includes reporting on 19 output and outcome indicators measured under the three project components. The project indicators are collected on an annual basis, given the nature of the indicators measured. For example, measuring how the project has facilitated women's access into decision-making roles in government depends on the number of interns who complete the internship program, which is still in progress. Although aggregate data are currently not available, the next quarterly report – marking the project's one-year anniversary – will report data on indicator progress and

activity performance. The M&E team has begun data collection for Component 1 with the implementation of the internship program, specifically by creating the capacity assessment survey. Activities under Component 2 and 3 are still in the discussion phase, and data collection will begin once programmatic activities are finalized.

3.2 Key Activities Accomplished during the Quarter.

Meeting with Independent Administrative Reform Civil Service Commission: On October 3, 2015, the USAID Promote: Women in Government Acting Chief of Party (ACOP) and Alternate Contracting Officer's Representative (ACOR) met with the General Director of the Administrative Reform Secretariat. The purpose of the meeting was to provide a monthly update on the progress of the internship program and to seek clarification on ACSI resource needs. All parties present at the meeting discussed the proposed budget and internship schedule for the training conducted at ACSI in Kabul and the provinces. The final agreement on the issues discussed will depend upon the next meeting with project management, USAID, IARCSC, and the ACSI Director.

Meeting with the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG): On October 11, 2015, USAID Gender Specialist and USAID Promote: Women in Government ACOP, met with IDLG General Director, Policy and Planning Deputy, and the organization's female staff. The purpose of the meeting was to brief IDLG about the USAID Promote program. The Promote IDIQ COR briefly gave an overview of the USAID Promote program. The ACOP presented the three components of the USAID Promote: Women in Government Project. The General Director of IDLG warmly welcomed the group and stated, "IDLG is striving to bring positive changes to a different level, and one of the most important IDLG goals is to eliminate harassment against women, and the overall goal is to provide a better environment free from any kind of violence for women." IDLG is committed to supporting the USAID Promote program throughout the life of the project. IDLG expressed their appreciation for the USAID Promote program for providing opportunities to women to develop their professional capacities for government service.



IDLG General Director commits to supporting the Promote Program.

Meeting with Rana Higher Education University: On October 17, 2015, the project ACOP met with the Vice Councilor and Gender Unit Head of the Rana Higher Education University. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the possibility of building cooperation between both parties. During the meeting, the project ACOP presented a brief overview of the USAID Promote: Women in Government project. The Vice Counselor showed keen interest in the USAID Promote: Women in Government project and stated that "Rana University has different projects that will appreciate if USAID Promote: Women in Government provides them with training on sexual harassment in the workplace." In addition, Rana University offered use of its space for project activities, such as a conference hall with a capacity for more than 1,000 people. Moreover, Rana University can serve as a bridge to support project outreach activities and will share its alumni information with the USAID Promote: Women in Government project.



Project Interim COP meets with President of Tadbeer Consultancy

Meeting with Tadbeer Consulting: On October 19, 2015, the project management team met with the President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Tadbeer Consulting, a project subcontractor. Tadbeer Consulting provides research and capacity building training to civil servants in different provinces of Afghanistan. To date, Tadbeer has worked in Aurozgan, Badkshan, Baghlan, and Kabul. The purpose of the meeting was to confirm existing facilities to train interns in the provinces and to discuss their training curriculum. According to the CEO,

Tadbeer has a training curriculum that includes government finance and procurement modules. The Tadbeer training program is followed by coaching sessions in the relevant ministry directorates in the provinces. Although Tadbeer trainers are based in Kabul, they will travel to provinces for training purposes. The project requested Tadbeer Consulting to develop a detailed scope of work for future collaboration.

Meeting with the Afghanistan Technical Vocational Institute (ATVI):

On October 19, 2015, the project met with the head of the Career Center at ATVI. The project team learned that ATVI has a training campus in Kabul, Helmand and Langham provinces, with 900 students in Kabul and 600 in Laghman. ATVI offers a two-year program for those who graduated from grade 12 of school. Students who successfully complete the two-year program are awarded an Associate's degree. The institute teaches multiple subjects, such as construction, business management, information technology, horticulture, automotive mechanics, English, mathematics, and physics. ATVI also has technical trainers who can assist in reviewing, revising, and updating ACSI curriculum. These trainers can deliver training to interns based on ACSI's curriculum when required.



The Project Team meets with the Head of Career Center of ATVI

Meeting with Women Small and Medium Enterprises Sixth Working Group: On October 28, 2015, USAID Promote: Women in Government representatives participated in the Women's Small and Medium Enterprises Sixth Working Group meeting at the Ministry of Commerce and Industries (MoCI). The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the USAID Promote task order activities and objectives to 50 participants, including women entrepreneurs and MoCI SME department staff. Three Promote task order representatives provided an overview of their project's objectives and goals. The meeting ended with an open discussion about each Promote component activities.

Call Log Tracker: The project maintains a call log to track the phone calls received from the interested applicants from Kabul and the provinces. The USAID Promote: Women in Government internship program staff began receiving calls immediately after the program announcement on October 27, 2015. To date, the team received 405 calls from people who were interested in the internship program from different provinces. Most of them were graduates with Associate degrees living outside of Kabul. According to the call log, around 50 percent of callers asked for general information, such as the internship duration, location, training topics, and coverage area. Additional questions pertained to application procedures, program criteria, eligibility, and the recruitment process. Callers also expressed their concerns that the current program does not apply to Associate degree holders and some questioned why it was not offered in the Khost province. This tracker helps the project team understand applicants' concerns and questions about the internship program, improving the project's responses for the next round of announcements.



Internship written test session

Internship Announcement: The USAID Promote: Women in Government team, in consultation with subcontractor EA, announced the internship program through TOLO TV, Arman Radio in Kabul, Radio Najrab in Kapisa, and Radio Sulh in Parwan. The distribution of flyers reached students at public and private universities, DoWA, provincial governors' offices in Parwan and Kapisa, ACSI, and MoWA, as well as other non-academic public areas. The "request for applications" for 200 interns was posted for two weeks on the Promote and ACBAR websites. The link for the internship application advertisement was also emailed to four universities, HR directors of 25 ministries, 22 independent agencies, 10 CSOs, and three youth associations. As part of the announcement, printed copies of the internship application forms were sent to MoWA and DoWA in Kabul, Parwan, and Kapisa and distributed to interested applicants.



The project team posting the internship announcement on ACSI bulletin boards.

Recruitment of 200 Interns for the Second Round of the Internship Program: As a result of the two-week mass public outreach effort for internship applications, the project received a total of 1,017 applications, of which 752 were submitted online and 265 in hard copy form (five hard copy applications were received from Kapisa, 29 from Parwan, and the remaining from Kabul). Five hundred seventy applicants were shortlisted for the written test after the initial pre-screening, of which, 490 confirmed their participation in the written test. Due to the high number of applications, the written test was



Internship writing test session

scheduled for three rounds. On October 13, the first round of the written exam was administered. Of the 330 confirmed applicants for the first round of tests, 271 were present to take the test. The second round of written tests was conducted on October 18. From the 133 confirmed applicants in this round, 94 applicants attended. On October 28, 20 applicants took the written test of the 27 confirmed applicants. Prior to the written test, all applicants were briefed about the USAID Promote: Women in Government internship program and received a 10-minute introductory PowerPoint presentation about the internship program process, the selection criteria, the stipend provision that covers the cost of transportation, and job placement opportunities. The USAID Promote: Women in Government project staff and ACSI team both observed and scored the written test. Throughout the three-day testing period, a total of 385 applicants completed the tests, of which, 321 qualified for interviews. These applicants were interviewed by a panel composed of project staff, a representative of MoWA, a representative from the Gender Directorate of IARCSC, and CSO representatives.

On December 7, 2015, the ACOP and Internship Coordinator Team Lead met with the Chairman of IARCSC, General Director of ACSI, and Director General of the Administrative Reform Secretariat. In this meeting, they discussed the possibility of starting the training program of the 200 newly-selected interns, daycare facilities for interns with children, and possibilities of providing English and computer classes. IARCSC representatives agreed to the exclusion of coaches; however, insisted on the extension of the training program to nine months to accommodate English and computer classes. At the conclusion of the meeting, all parties agreed to finalize the operational manual, recruiting terms for the trainers, and sharing the list of the selected 200 interns. Another meeting with ACSI was held on December 27, 2015 to discuss how to move implementation of the expanded internship program forward. Following this meeting, the Chairman of IARCSC agreed to begin training the interns at ACSI as well as to discuss delays in the internship program. The team and the Chairman of IARCSC met again on December 30 to finalize the operational manual for which both teams have reached a draft agreement. The parties further planned to meet on January 2 to finalize the operational manual for USAID review and approval.

Educational and National Identification Documents:

The team collected and verified educational and national identification documents from the 230 selected interns for the next cohort. This information was then entered into the internship program database, which includes each intern's field of study, internship location, professional interests, and contact information. The purpose of the database is to record information on the number of interns recruited and hired for full-time positions to provide to HR directors in their quarterly meetings. This database will make it easier to contact alumni when new job and networking opportunities are announced.



The project technical team verifying selected interns' documents

Demographic Analysis of Selected Interns' Educational Background: Based on data collected on the interns' professional areas of interests and fields of study, the recruitment and placement team completed the demographic analysis of interns' educational background and their three preferred professional areas of interest for the recently selected 200 interns. The analysis shows that the top three educational background of interns are law, literature, and psychology, followed by economics, social science, and computer science.

Operational Manual: The project team prepared an operational manual to guide the USAID Promote: Women in Government team and ACSI in implementing the internship program smoothly throughout the life of the project. The operational manual outlines responsibilities, implementation support, and performance monitoring needs in order to successfully implement the internship training program at ACSI. Follow-up meetings were held with ACSI on December 7, 2015 to clarify the scopes of work of proposed positions within ACSI's budget, and the objectives of the computer and English classes. The project leadership agreed to set up a meeting with USAID to further these discussions. On December 10, 2015, the ACOP and Deputy Chief of Party (DCOP) attended a meeting at USAID at the request of the Director of ACSI. During this meeting, ACSI's resource needs for the next cohort of interns were discussed in detail. Additionally, ACSI discussed miscommunications with the project and expressed disagreement about revised resource requests suggested by the USAID Promote: Women in Government team. ACSI agreed to share a modified budget with the USAID Promote: Women in Government team reflecting revised resource requests solely for the training in Kabul. Following the meeting, ACSI shared the revised budget and resource requests with the project team for review. While the budget is similar to the previous version, the revised budget includes security personnel, additional trainers, and material resources to create two new computer labs.

Coaching and Mentoring Manual: The Coaching and Mentoring Training Manual was created to build the capacity of grade two and three employees at receiving ministries so that the selected individuals would be prepared to serve as effective mentors for the USAID Promote: Women in Government interns. The manual discusses the basic concepts of coaching and mentoring, providing an overview of the importance, benefits, and principles of the mentor-intern relationship. The manual also describes several series of soft skills training for mentors. This manual will also enable mentors to understand key concepts and skills of coaching and mentoring, in order to provide comprehensive coaching and mentoring services to interns. The training team developed the Coaching and Mentoring Manual inclusive of a specific module on effective methods for providing feedback for mentors, supervisors, and interns. As a part of the training plan, this module aims to increase the knowledge of mentors and supervisors to provide constructive feedback on the performance of interns during their practical work at ministries. The team also translated the coaching and mentoring training package into Dari.

Weekly Visits of Interns at the ACSI: The USAID Promote: Women in Government Internship Coordinator conducts weekly visits at ACSI to evaluate the progress of interns' training and learning. During this quarter, the USAID Promote: Women in Government interns completed various training courses on time management, planning and management, human resources, and communications skills and leadership. Through this course, interns developed deeper knowledge of planning and learned about the importance of effective management skills. By the end of the course, interns also learned about different types of planning activities, such as how to prepare a plan and important elements to consider for planning activities. The second course covered organizations and organizational management. Interns became familiar with various types of organizations based on legislation, the differences between formal and informal organizations, and factors of organizational establishment and management. The ACSI trainers used different



Interns actively participate in the training sessions

types of training methodologies, such as participatory learning, PowerPoint presentations, lectures, question and answer sessions, and group work activities to instill these concepts.

Through HR management courses, interns developed a deeper knowledge of HR concepts and cumulative impact factors of HR management. Specifically, they learned about factors influencing hiring practices, standard employment criteria for grades of the civil service, recruitment procedures, and performance assessments. To complete this learning module, interns developed presentations that focused on particular HR topics. By attending the time management course, interns learned about the importance of time management – namely, its advantages and how to prioritizing activities effectively.



Interns are taking an active role in the training class

The interns also attended computer classes and learned about Microsoft Office package programs. In addition to the classroom lectures, interns used the ACSI library and computer lab as part of their course curriculum and to complete their assignments.

On December 27, 2015, the USAID Promote: Women in Government ACOP also visited the interns during their computer program training at ACSI. The interns were engaged in the computer lesson and expressed their appreciation to USAID and ACSI. Interns praised the program and said that they have learned and grown considerably in the past four months. They are looking forward to finishing their internship term so they can start the USAID Promote: Women’s Leadership Development program followed by practical work at government ministries.

Submission of Success Stories: During this quarter, USAID Promote: Women in Government submitted its fourth, fifth and sixth success story to USAID. The October success story was titled “Overcoming Anxiety, Improving Communication Skills,” and focused on how one intern developed professionally and personally as a result of the ACSI training methodology and the USAID Promote: Women in Government internship opportunity. The November Success Story, “Strong Professional Relationships for Lifelong Networks” was submitted to USAID on December 31. The report focused on how the internship program is developing interns’ professional networks. Particularly through collaborative group work and in-class discussions, the interns have built strong relationships that will be useful for their future careers in the Afghan civil service. The December Success story is currently in progress and will be submitted once finalized.

USAID Promote: Women in Government Workplace Obstacles: Analysis and Recommendations:

On October 27, the Workplace Obstacles Analysis and Recommendation report was submitted to USAID. The analysis was conducted to identify policy, cultural, and infrastructure changes that need to be made within national and subnational government offices to support women in government. The research further provides recommendations for safe workspaces for young women, specifically by identifying harassment, discrimination, and policy gaps that affect women. The ultimate goal of the report is to encourage a hospitable environment for female staff working in Afghan government ministries.



The project policy and research officer is conducting a Focus Group Discussion with civil society activists for the Workplace Obstacles Analysis and Recommendations report

During the data collection period, the research and policy team interviewed and surveyed 178 government employees and university students from 19 ministries – the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation, and Livestock (MAIL); the Ministry of Education (MoE), MoI; the Ministry of Finance (MoF); the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE); the Ministry of Justice (MoJ); the Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MoCN); the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MoCIT); the Ministry of Energy and Water (MoEW); the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD); the Ministry of Information and Culture (MoIC); the Ministry of Urban Development Affairs (MUDA); the MoD, MoCI, the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD); MoWA; the Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation (MoTCA); the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum (MoMP); the Ministry of Public Works (MoPW) – and one independent agency (IDLG). The research found that although the majority of ministries interviewed followed the IARCSC gender policy, all of them, with the exception of IDLG, lacked implementation procedures and enforcement mechanisms. Moreover, respondents identified the lack of opportunities for women in leadership positions and nepotism in recruitment and promotion practices as the two greatest obstacles to women’s advancement in the workplace. Although respondents indicated that reports of harassment at the workplace were rarely reported, on a broader level, many women stated that the prevalence of harassment against women in Afghan society could deter women from pursuing government work. The analysis of government office infrastructures further revealed that ministries generally lacked the provisions necessary for a safe, healthy, and flexible work environment for women. Based on these findings, the research and policy team broadly recommended more robust enforcement and monitoring procedures, annual scholarship programs for women’s training and development within ministries, and multi-sectoral communications strategies to encourage positive attitudes towards women.

Meeting with the Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA): On October 31, the USAID Promote: Women in Government policy and research team met with the Legal Director of MoWA. The purpose of the meeting was to follow up on an implementation plan for the Anti-harassment Regulation, create a technical working group, and receive updates on the status of the regulation. During the meeting, the Legal Director stated that the Anti-harassment Regulation was recently approved and published in the official Gazette of the MoJ, with substantial changes in the content compared to MoWA’s submission. As there are currently two technical working groups already working with MoWA, the need for a third working group is being

assessed. The project briefed the Legal Director on the MOU to be signed between the project and MoWA to further clarify roles and responsibilities for future engagement. On December 19, the policy and research team and the Policy and Planning Director, Legal Director, and External Relation Officer of MoWA met to discuss the status of the MOU to be signed between Chemonics and MoWA. The final version was shared with MoWA on November 9 and is still under a technical review with MoWA.

Anti-harassment Regulation: The policy and research team continued conversations with the Legal Director of MoWA to discuss the establishment of a technical working group for developing implementation guidelines for the Anti-harassment Regulation. While MoWA previously attempted to gather the relevant ministries and independent agencies to establish a committee to address the cases of harassment within MoWA's existing structure, the Legal Directorate of MoWA was hesitant to proceed in establishing the proposed working group as there is another technical working group supported by the USAID Justice Sector Support Program (JSSP) already in place at MoWA. The policy and research team has maintained ongoing communication with MoWA to highlight the importance of the implementation guidelines, monitoring mechanisms, and action plans for the regulation. In addition, our team has planned to arrange a series of meetings to discuss the formation of the technical working group in more detail.

Desk Review of the Anti-Harassment Policies of National and International Organizations: In preparation to support the new MoWA Anti-Harassment Regulation, the team conducted a desk review of the anti-harassment policies of national and international organizations. Policies and procedures of different organizations, including those of IDLG, were collected and reviewed to draw upon lessons learned and how best to apply them for the development of implementation guidelines, an action plan, and monitoring mechanisms for the new MoWA anti-harassment regulation. The team followed up with MoWA regarding the anti-harassment technical working group about engaging a technical consultant to support these implementation strategies.

Technical Assistance to Support Policy Reform Measures: On November 2, 2015, the policy and research team met with the Gender Director of IARCSC and discussed their STTA needs to provide technical support in developing gender policies and regulations and mainstreaming gender into their programmatic work. The Gender Director was asked to prepare a draft terms of reference (TOR) to be shared with project management for further discussion and consideration. On November 24, 2015, another follow-up meeting was held to discuss the growing need for an STTA. A draft TOR was shared with the USAID Promote: Women in Government team for review. The draft TOR highlights the responsibilities of the STTA. The TOR specifies that the STTA will be responsible for developing gender plans and policies; mainstreaming gender into policies, regulations and programs; establishing a work station for gender support; providing advisory services for the enrichment and development of the civil service; implementing a gender strategy, anti-harassment policy, and gender equality policy; advising the leadership of the WCSA; developing a gender database; and creating a mechanism for improving gender units' roles. The anticipated advisor is expected to communicate and network with civil servants. The Gender Director will provide additional justification regarding their needs in the next follow-up meeting.

Meeting with Women Civil Service Association: On November 24, 2015, the project's Alumni and Scholarship team met with the board members of the Women's Civil Service Association (WCSA). The purpose of the meeting was to provide technical assistance to IARCSC for supporting policy reform measures, to assess the status of the association, and to explore opportunities to provide technical assistance to the association. The board members requested technical assistance in the areas of networking, outreach, advocacy campaigns, and specialized trainings for members. The association also requested office space and dedicated association staff to carry out administrative tasks of the association.



The project team met with board members of the Women's Civil Service Association

Meeting with Afghan Learning and Development Organization (ALDO): On November 1, 2015, the project management team met with the Executive Director of the approved subcontractor, ALDO. ALDO is a non-governmental organization that operates in the Kandahar Institute of Modern Studies, a training facility with a demonstrated commitment to empowering women. ALDO has delivered customized capacity building training for Kandahar government employees with the Office of the Governor, the Police Department, the Department of Women's Affairs, the National Department of Security, and the Kandahar municipal government. Furthermore, ALDO has maintained strong, strategic relationships with the Afghan government. The purpose of this meeting was to begin discussions on a finalized scope of work for ALDO and to determine how best ALDO can contribute to USAID Promote: Women in Government's internship program in Kandahar.



DCOP discussing possible scope of work for ALDO's contribution to the internship program

RSI Consultancy Fingerprint Survey: On November 10, 2015, the project invited 30 selected interns from the next cohort to participate in the pilot Promote intake survey. An independent monitoring unit, RSI Consultancy, facilitated this fingerprint-based beneficiary intake survey. This is the pilot phase of the assessment process to determine the length of time it takes to register beneficiaries, answer questions, and gather feedback on the functionality of the survey application. In addition, this survey platform is being used as a monitoring and evaluation form that aims to avoid duplicate recordings and ghost beneficiaries between Promote TOs.



Selected intern during responding to survey to RSI representative

On December 30, 2015, the leadership of USAID Promote: Women in Government project held a meeting with the Deputy Minister of MoLSAMD to discuss the issuance of a one-year work experience certificate for all the interns upon successful completion of the internship program. The Deputy Minister committed his full

support and agreed to provide the required certification. He further agreed to provide the internship program with a strategic direction linked with the ministry's Human Capital Employment and Women's Economic Empowerment Plan of the President. This strategic linkage will further encourage ministries to absorb interns and will increase graduates' chances of getting a full-time job in the civil service.

Concept Note for Joint Promote Anti-Harassment Street Campaign: The team developed a one-page concept note for the joint Anti-Harassment Street Campaign, which will be shared with the other components of Promote in a Promote TO meeting. Here, the TOs will collaborate to reach a decision about the final campaign. Street harassment is a common challenge for women's empowerment, as indicated in the recent assessments conducted under the Promote TOs. All TOs will work together to design and implement a joint Anti-Harassment Street Campaign and will develop concrete ideas for the campaign to present at the next Promote TO meeting.

Letter of Collaboration: The project team prepared a letter of collaboration (LOC) in English and Dari that will be signed with ministries identified in the partnership assessment. The purpose of the LOC is to reiterate commitments of ministries' support in accepting, placing, training (coaching and mentoring), and recruiting interns into their respective ministries. The LOC is finalized and will be shared with USAID for review. On December 9, 2015, the policy and research team met with the HR Director and Deputy Minister of the MoF and MoLSAMD. During this meeting, the team briefed ministry stakeholders on the findings of the Partnership Assessment, discussed the LOC, and verified their commitment to the internship program. The team will follow up with these ministries to sign the final version of the LOC.

On December 12, 2015, the team also met with the MoJ's Deputy Minister for Administration to confirm the ministry's commitment to the internship program and to inquire about training interns at the MoJ. The Deputy Minister agreed to accept 20 interns and committed their support to the program. The MoJ will accept interns from law and business administration departments, and is eager to sign a LOC as soon as possible to formalize this partnership.

Memorandum of Understanding: The team prepared a draft English and Dari version of the MOU to be signed with the Ministry of Women's Affairs. The purpose of the MOU is to reflect the mutual intentions between Chemonics and MoWA to cooperate and coordinate activities to facilitate women's entry into the Afghan civil service. The MOU also affirms the advancement of women into decision-making roles in government service through policy reforms and internship programs with government ministries. The final version of the MOU was shared with MoWA on November 16 for their technical input and finalization for signing.

Assessment and Report of Ministries' Training Institutes: The team conducted an assessment of ministries with training institutes with the intent to explore opportunities for placing interns with their training institutes. The assessment was conducted at MoEW, MRRD, MoCIT, MoE, MoF, MAIL, MoIC, MoMP, MoPW, MoF, MoLSAMD, and MoWA. The assessment specifically focuses on reaffirming commitments to place, train, and recruit interns previously made under the partnership assessment. The assessment also focuses on identifying existing capacities, resources, and the applicability for the interns' training. On December 12, the policy and research team submitted a report on alternative training institutes for the internship program to USAID. The aim of this report was to: 1) explore the opportunity of training and simultaneously placing interns in the ministries' embedded institutes and 2) seek alternative options and other potential partners for training in the event that ACSI is not able to meet USAID Promote: Women in Government objectives.

The report was carried out in two phases. The first phase of the report was conducted in seven ministries (MoE, MoEW, MRRD, MoCIT, MoF, MAIL, and MoWA). The research specifically focused on the existing capacity of technical institutes within ministries in terms of training curriculum, trainers, classroom space, physical infrastructure, current and future enrollment capacity, accessibility of location, funding sources, and partnerships. Furthermore, the team researched alternative internship curriculum offered by the various ministry institutes.

The second phase of the report took place in six ministries (MoCI, MoCIT, MoMP, MoPW, MoF, and MoLSAMD) over a period of one week to secure the commitments made under the GIRoA Partnership Assessment and assess the feasibility of these potential partnerships. Additionally, the team came to an agreement on the number of interns directly placed in the ministries per the numbers cited in the GIRoA Partnership Assessment.

On December 14, 2015, the ACOP, Internship Coordinator Team Lead, and Policy Reform Team Lead met with the MRRD leadership to provide a brief overview of the USAID Promote: Women in Government project. They discussed the possibility of using the Afghanistan Institute of Rural Development (AIRD) as an alternative training institute for the internship program. They also committed to sign an LOC between MRRD and Chemonics to formalize the partnership for the internship program. Based on this meeting, the project team determined that MRRD would be a viable alternative for the internship training program, given their commitment to providing resources and training certificate equivalent to one year of work experience. MRRD will give a detailed presentation on their institute's existing capacity to host the internship training program as well as their resource needs in the coming week. Two follow-up meetings were held on December 22 and 29, 2015 with the Director of the training institute at MRRD to:

- Discuss resources that would be needed for the internship program, the draft budget, training curriculum, and other aspects of the internship implementation.
- Finalize the alternate internship package, budget, and a draft MOU.

Both parties reached an agreement to meet on a technical level to finalize the curriculum, budget, and contents of the MOU within the next few weeks.

Formative Research: The USAID Promote: Women in Government formative research lays the foundation for developing effective strategies and facilitates the design of communication and outreach content that is age-appropriate, culturally-relevant and applicable. The research also addresses key socio-cultural drivers of persistent gender inequities and existing norms that prevent young women from working in government. The project's research also focuses on identifying effective communication channels for influencing social behavior change in regards to women's participation in government.



Women's focus group for formative research

The data and information used in this research includes collective discussions and surveys in Nangarhar, Kandahar, Herat, Balkh, Parwan and Kapisa. Questions were asked through group discussions and open-ended individual questionnaires from 151 individuals, 90 of whom were

male and 61 female. Furthermore, to find out if there were differences in media habits based on gender and age, a media habits survey was conducted.

Results from survey and focus group discussions reveal that security problems, obsolete traditions, low literacy rates, low levels of education, and gender discrimination are considered some of the major factors that prevent women's participation in government. From among 151 respondents in Balkh, Kandahar, Nangarhar and Herat, the most frequently mentioned factor was lack of security. Fifty eight respondents (38%) cited lack of security as a major factor preventing women from working, followed by inappropriate customs and traditions (30%), gender discrimination/patriarchy (26%), and low levels of literacy (21%). Lack of awareness about women's rights (12%), lack of proper working environment for women (11%), no rule of law (7%), and corruption (3%) were also identified as major obstacles. These challenges have been threatening women's career prospects over the last few decades and have influenced people's attitudes towards women working in government. Informed by these findings, the themes of the project's programs and campaigns will include awareness raising about women's right to work and anti-harassment regulations.

The media habits survey aimed to find out whether people were more interested in watching TV or listening to the radio, the time of day they listened to the radio, whether or not they were interested in watching/listening to women-focused programs, the kinds of women's programs they were interested in, and finally, whether or not these habits differed based on age and gender. The category of women's programs that participants were asked about included: women in the economy, women in leadership, women in government, women in agriculture, and women in cultural and religious programs. However, the results showed no difference in media habits based on age and gender. To obtain multiple perspectives on women's presence in government, the research team has continued discussions with religious scholars in Parwan and Kapisa provinces. From discussions with religious scholars, there were different perspectives on "women's right to work," that need to be clarified by working closely with the Ministry of Haj and Religious Affairs and Shurae Ulema (Islamic religious counsel).

The research also revealed that although the project used multiple tools and channels for outreach and communication activities, linguistic and cultural differences made some channels more relevant and popular than others. Therefore, the project has learned that these differences require special attention to develop effective programs and campaigns in different provinces.

The research has provided communication and media methods and tools that can be effective in transforming negative mindsets towards women via dialogue and campaigns targeted towards influential groups who play vital roles in women's lives and career decisions. Furthermore, the research has identified popular media in national and local level in each province in order to deliver messages about USAID Promote: Women in Government to various audiences.

The research began with a desk review of the GIRoA Partnership Assessment, the Gender Analysis, and external research documents recently conducted by the Asia Foundation to identify problems for women working within government. Based on the desk research and discussions with project staff, EA developed an action plan and survey questionnaire for the formative research and identified three target group categories for the focus group discussion. On October 27, 2015, the EA team traveled to Kandahar, Balkh, Nangarhar, and Herat to conduct the focus group discussions and to complete the survey forms.

The Outreach and Communications team continued the formative research of stakeholders in Nangarhar and Herat. Three different stakeholder groups were engaged in each province – CSO representatives, government officials, academics, and religious scholars/Imams. A separate FGD of religious scholars was held in Kapisa province for collecting more in-depth Islamic perspectives related to women’s economic, political, and social participation.



Religious scholars participated in focus group discussion in Kandahar

The team completed the data entry and translations of the Kapisa and Parwan focus group discussion into Dari, including the individual response forms. The purpose of the focus group discussions was to collect more in-depth responses from an Islamic perspective on women’s work outside the home and in the Afghan government. The focus group discussion was held at Albirouni University in Kapisa province, where 15 Islamic scholars and Imams participated. The project team drafted summary highlights of the formative research, which have now been shared with the project ACOP and DCOP for feedback. The team plans to conduct interviews with the MoWA and DoWA in the provinces of Nangarhar, Parwan, and Kapisa. As part of stakeholder interviews, on December 22, the team contacted USAID Promote TOs, Promote: Women’s Leadership Development, Promote: Women in the Economy, and Musharikat to request meetings with their respective communications teams. The objective of this meeting was to strengthen communication among the Promote TOs, as well as to incorporate their outreach and communications experiences and lessons in the USAID Promote: Women in Government formative research report. As an initial result, the team received a response from the DCOP of the Promote: Women in the Economy project requesting to share the questionnaire. The questionnaire was shared with all of the Promote TOs (WLD, WIE, and Musharikat), which are in the process of responding. Additionally, the team prepared an outline for the formative research report and has worked on developing a presentation on the research findings to be presented at the upcoming stakeholders’ workshop.

Focus Group Discussions (FGD):

In total, 12 FGDs were conducted in the provinces of Kandahar, Nangarhar, Belkh, and Herat. The following three questions were explored during all focus group discussions:

1. Please name the three main socio-cultural factors that you think impede women’s presence in government positions
2. What three significant measures do you think should be taken to successfully change negative attitudes towards women’s presence in government positions?
3. What types of media and communication activities do you think should be used to affect positive change in the attitudes of groups and individuals that influence women’s decisions to pursue positions in government?

Participants discussed their views regarding the mentioned questions and suggested various methods to change negative attitude towards women’s presence in government and specific media and communication activities to improve these perceptions. Furthermore, they emphasized the role of religious communities in influencing people’s perceptions.

Kandahar Province: FGD participants included: Mula Imams, religious scholars (Sunni and Shiite), the Directorate of Hajj and Awqaf (Directorate of Religious Affairs), community

influencers/elders, provincial council members, and parents. Women’s rights activists from the following organizations also presented their perspectives at the Kandahar FGDs: Movement of Afghan Sisters, the Afghan Women’s Council, the Afghanistan Women’s Association, the Education Center for Afghan Women, the Youth Culture Committee of Parwan, the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Information and Culture, the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology, directorates of women’s affairs, the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission’s Gender Unit, the Afghan Women’s Network, and active women in government. High school stakeholders, university lecturers, college and university graduates were also among the participants.

Nangarhar Province:

On November 1 and 2, the second and third FGDs were held at the White House Hotel and Restaurant in Nangarhar province, with a total of 33 participants from diverse groups, including professors, male graduates from Nangarhar university, female high school graduates, women’s rights activists, and women from the IARCSC and DoWA.

Balkh Province:

On November 29-31, separate FGD sessions took place at Ustad Abdul Qader Tawana Shaheed Scientific and Cultural Center. A total of 35 participants attended the FGD, including Mula Imams, scholars, parents, local leaders, university lecturers, students, university graduates, CSOs, representatives from the MoHRA, and other government officials.

Herat Province:

On November 1, 2 and 3, three FGDs were held at the Civil and Legal and Association for Empowering of Thought Conference room. A total of 37 participants attended from the Herat province. Participants were female civil society members, representatives from the MoIC, Directorate of Women’s Affairs, Provincial Council, Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, Afghan Women’s Network, interns’ parents, Mula Imams, religious scholars, directors from the Hajj and Awqaf community, and influential community elders.

Kapisa and Parwan Provinces:

Religious leaders play an influential role in Afghan society and remain a key stakeholder group. For collecting more specific and in-depth answers with an Islamic perspective, a new set of questions were developed and a separate FGD was held for participants from Kapisa and Parwan at Alberoni University in Kapisa province. Fifteen Islamic scholars/Imams participated. The data, such as FGD discussion flip charts and individual response forms, are being compiled and after translation into English, will be incorporated into the formative research findings.



Religious scholar participation in FGD at Alberoni University in Kapisa

Outreach and Communications Strategy: USAID Promote: Women in Government subcontractor, EA, developed a robust outreach and communications strategy for Component 3 of the project. The purpose of the outreach and communications strategy is to clearly define various activities and outputs to accomplish the outreach and communications goals of the

project. The strategy outlines a number of activities and outputs to change the attitudes and behaviors of the primary and secondary target groups and other project stakeholders, as identified in the gender analysis. Additionally, the strategy includes relevant outreach templates for recurring outreach and communications activities. The final outreach and communications strategy will align with the overall Promote outreach and communications plan.

Multi-Media Campaign: EA disseminated the second round of the internship program announcements in Dari and Pashto. Five thousand flyers were posted at public and private universities, DoWA, MoWA, government offices and public places in Kabul, Parwan, and Kapisa. The announcement for the second round of the internship program was also broadcasted via Tolo TV, and Radio Arman in Kabul, Radio Najrab in Kapisa, and Radio Sulh in Parwan.



Internship flyers were posted in private universities in Kabul

Stakeholders' Workshop: The team is planning to conduct a stakeholders' workshop in late January 2016. This workshop will be held to:

- Bring together the USAID Promote: Women in Government project stakeholders - the Afghan government, CSOs, technical experts, religious leaders, university professors, and other institutional actors, to enlist their commitment to the project, as well as to establish a content advisory group based on participants' suggestions.
- To discuss the findings of the formative research and to arrive at a consensus for proper project messaging.

On November 29, the team discussed plans for conducting the workshop, including venue information, prospective participants, and agenda items. A preliminary list of participants for the stakeholders' workshop was completed, and the detailed work plan, stage banner text, and scenario were developed. The participants for the stakeholder workshop were selected from various stakeholder groups, such as the Afghan government, CSOs, academia, and religious leaders.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

Meeting with Checchi Data Quality Assessment (DQA) Team: On November 28, 2015, the M&E team, along with the ACOP, met with the DQA Team Leader and DQA M&E Specialist. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the overall Promote baseline data assessment. To develop an accurate baseline assessment for Promote, the M&E specialists learned more about the monitoring and evaluation needs of the USAID Promote: Women in Government project. This information will be incorporated into designing the Promote baseline assessment.

Data Collection Forms: The project's M&E team finalized data collection forms for the USAID Promote: Women in Government internship program. The data collection forms were completed in order to measure the indicators for Component 1, as this program is fully operational.

AFGHAN INFO: During this quarter, the M&E team successfully uploaded data on aid effectiveness metrics, district spending, and project reports for Quarters 3 and 4 of Fiscal Year 2015 into the Afghan Info database of USAID Info.

Activity Calendar: On December 29, the M&E team finalized the USAID Promote: Women in Government activity calendar for January through March 2016 for submission to USAID. The activity calendar will be used to inform USAID's M&E Team, so that they conduct their own monitoring oversight of the program implementation.

3.3 Planned for Next Reporting Period

Component 1: Internship Program:

- Introduce 17 pilot interns to partner ministries for practical work. These interns will graduate on February 22, 2016.
- Based on the findings of the Career Development Center Assessment, the team will develop recommendations for support, which will be shared with senior management and USAID.
- Continue the review of the needs assessment of target ministries to determine the overall training needs of interns.
- Complete the selection process of 200 interns from 321 eligible applicants who passed the written test and interviews.
- Introduce 200 selected interns to attend the WLD training on January 24, 2016 in eight groups (25 interns per group).
- Prepare all internship documents (commitment letters, acknowledgment letters, and internship agreements) for the selected interns.
- Arrange an orientation session for 200 interns to learn about the program in detail, distribute the internship manual, and formally start the training program at ACSI.
- Prepare and conduct a needs assessment of women civil service association to understand gaps and recommend relevant interventions to address these gaps.
- Finalize the internship operational manual between USAID Promote: Women in Government and ACSI.
- Continue weekly project visits at ACSI to monitor the effectiveness of the internship training program and begin remote monitoring collaboration with USAID.
- Develop coaching and mentoring training materials.
- Continue to coordinate with other donor programs for the desk research on available internship programs from government, local, and international organizations.
- Based on the MOU with IARCSC, conduct weekly project visits at ACSI to monitor the effectiveness of the internship training program.
- Complete the feedback training manual as part of the Coaching and Mentoring Manual, which will be used to increase the knowledge level of mentors and supervisors to provide constructive feedback on interns' performance during practical work at ministries. The next step will be the translation to local languages.
- Assist the policy and research team in meeting with ministries to discuss the possibility of using technical institutes to conduct classroom-based trainings for interns as part of the LOC.
- Finalize and translate the Coaching and Mentoring Manual into Dari.
- Complete the first draft report of the desk research on viable internship programs available through international, national, and local organizations.
- Complete the translation of the Internship Manual into Dari in order to make it available for the use of the new cohort of interns.
- Meet with the training unit of the Promote: Women's Leadership Development to discuss its trainings package and duration to be provided to our pilot phase interns. The pilot phase trainings at ACSI will finish at the end of February 2016.

- Assist the policy and research team in meeting with ministries to discuss the possibility of using technical institutes to conduct classroom-based trainings for interns as part of the LOC.

Component 2: Policy and Research:

- Conduct desk reviews of national and international anti-harassment policies and implementation guidelines.
- Conduct follow-up meetings with MoWA and the IARCSC Gender Unit on requested assistance with implementing the Anti-harassment Regulations and gender policy, the Career Development Centers (CDCs), and WCSA
- Prepare a presentation of findings and recommendations of the Workplace Obstacles: Analysis and Recommendations report for government stakeholders.
- Execute LOCs with ministries
- Identify and finalize technical needs for MoWA
- Brief the deputy ministers about the findings of the GIRoA Partnership Assessment
- Complete desk reviews of national and international anti-harassment policies and implementation guidelines
- Execute MOU with MRRD and MoLSAMD to train and place interns and provide a one-year completion certificate for interns.
- Meet with EPD to discuss EPD's concept note, action plan, and budget.
- Meet with MoWA regarding the establishment of technical working group and the status of the MOU.
- Meet with IARCSC Gender Unit to identify the need for technical assistance to improve the work environment for female civil servants

Component 3: Outreach and Communications:

- Prepare for stakeholder workshop to contribute to the formative research.
- Develop and convene a content advisory group.
- . Finalize Outreach and Communications strategy
- Finalize report for formative research
- Finalize preparations for the stakeholder workshop and facilitate the stakeholder workshop.
- Establish Content Advisory Group (CAG) to review program communications and outreach messages and contents.
- Begin the second round of internship program Public Service Announcements (PSAs).
- Prepare the TV/radio guest spots.
- Prepare staffing and equipment for weekly radio program.
- Conduct bi- weekly assessments for internship training.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

- Submit quarterly activity calendar (January-March 2016) to USAID.
- Data entry of pre-assessment survey into the USAID Promote: Women in Government M&E database.

3.4 Lessons learned

The most notable lesson learned from the announcement of the second round of the internship program regards translation. Radio and TV PSAs for the internship announcement should first have been drafted in the local language and then translated into English for USAID approval. As some English words did not have an exact translation in Dari, translations from English to

Dari left a gap in messaging. Delays resulting from obstacles with ACSI have motivated the project to explore other possible options for interns' classroom-based training. Though considerations for alternative training opportunities are time consuming, continuing the internship training program for future beneficiaries is worthwhile as having alternative options for activities is important for the continuation of programmatic efforts.

4. Collaboration with GIRoA, other donor projects, or other USAID projects

4.1 Links with relevant GIRoA ministries

The project policy and research team was actively engaged with: HR directors, administrative directors, employee relations directors and female staff members of the MAIL, MoE, MoI, MoF, MoHE, MoJ, MoCN, MoCIT, MoEW, MoLSAMD, MoIC, MoD, MoCI, MRRD, MoWA, MoTCA, MoMP, MUDA and MoPW) and one independent agency, IDLG. Through these ministry engagements, the policy and research team gathered data related to women working within the government for the Workplace Obstacles Analysis and Recommendations report. The team also worked with the Policy and Planning Director of MoWA to reiterate commitments for recruiting and training interns into their respective ministries. The team has also been in communication with the Legal Director of MoWA to provide technical assistance on the implementation plan for the Anti-Harassment Regulation. Throughout this period, the team has met with ministries with training institutes, including MoEW, MRRD, MoCIT, MoE, MoF, and MAIL to explore opportunities of placing interns in their training programs.

The project management team also met with the Chairman of IARCSC, General Director of ACSI, and the Director General of Administrative Reform Secretariat to discuss the possibility of starting the training program for the 200 newly selected interns. Moreover, the project team met with the MoF and the MoLSAMD to brief them on the findings of the Partnership Assessment and to discuss the LOC. The team met with the MoJ and MRRD to affirm ministries' commitment to the internship program and to assess training partnership possibilities. The team followed up with MoWA regarding the anti-harassment technical working group and discussed engaging a short-term technical expert for the development of anti-harassment implementation guidelines, monitoring mechanisms, and an action plan.

On December 27, 2015, the USAID Promote: Women in Government ACOP met with Dr. Homayoun Qayoumy, the President's Chief Advisor, and at Dr. Abdullah's office with Ms. Nasrin Gross and spokesperson, Dr. Mujib Rahman Rahimi about the USAID Promote: Women in Government internship program's successes and challenges. Both meetings were fruitful, as these offices offered implementation support to the USAID Promote: Women in Government project.

On December 27, 2015, USAID Promote: Women in Government ACOP met with the Minister of MoLSAMD to discuss the internship program. As ACSI is the only existing institution that can provide a one-year certificate, MoLSAMD suggested that, as an alternative plan, USAID Promote: Women in Government consider training the interns at the ministries. Following the completion the training program, the interns could take the civil service exam to enter the government workforce.

4.2 Links with other donor agencies

On October 14, 2015, the project Training Specialist attended a Skype meeting with the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) Gender Equality Project (GEP-II). The purpose of the meeting was to discuss various gender issues and women's empowerment work in Afghanistan. The project team also provided information on the USAID Promote: Women in

Government project activities. The UNDP GEP-II requested assistance and recommendations for its second phase of the GEP-II.

On November 22, 2015, the project's Alumni and Scholarship Team held the first meeting with USAID's Assistant to the Legislative Bodies of Afghanistan (ALBA) program for the purpose of conducting desk research of available internship programs in Kabul. To compare the USAID Promote: Women in Government internship program with similar training programs, this research focused on national and international organizations that provide internships for USAID projects. By assessing these programs, the policy and research team applied the best practices and lessons learned to the project's internship program. During the data collection period a total of 18 USAID projects and 12 projects from other international donors were included in the desk research. The team met with eight focal points for internship programs and the data for other projects were collected through email correspondence. Among the contacted entities, eight organizations did not respond to the emails and 11 USAID Projects did not have internship programs at the time of the assessment.

As a part of the desk research, the research team met seven project focal points and collected information from USAID projects and from projects implemented by national and international organizations. Data from the following 12 projects and other organizations were collected.

- Equal Access (EA)
- Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO)
- Financial Access for Investing in the Development of Afghanistan project (FAIDA/USAID)
- Assistance to Legislative Bodies of Afghanistan project (ALBA/USAID)
- Strong Hubs for Afghan Hope and Resilience project (SHAHAR/USAID)
- Initiative to Strengthen Local Administrations project (ISLA/USAID)
- Regional Agricultural Development Program –South project (RADP-S/USAID)
- Organization for Research and Skills Trainings for Women (ORSTW)
- American University of Afghanistan (AUAF)
- Afghanistan Trade and Revenue project (ATAR/USAID)
- Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)/Promotion of Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Afghanistan
- Civil Peace Service/Zivilier Friedensdienst (ZFD)

A report of the desk research has been submitted to USAID Promote: Women in Government management team and is currently under review.

4.3 Links with other USAID projects

On October 1, 2015, the USAID Promote: Women in Government ACOP and the outreach and communications team attended the second IDIQ Outreach and Communications Working Group meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to share the Promote Communication Strategy developed by USAID and to discuss how the four Promote task orders could contribute to the Promote monthly e-newsletter, quarterly brochure, and website to share information and establish common outreach tools. During the meeting, the four Promote task order implementing partners were asked to provide their comments on the communications plan, which is intended to provide a unified message for the entire Promote program. USAID

requested the task order projects to regularly share their calendar of events for opportunities to collaborate on similar events.

On October 4, 2015, the project management team attended the Promote task order coordination meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the new Promote project, Musharikat. The meeting also focused on how the four projects can work together to build consistency across task orders. During the meeting, the Promote task order management teams expressed concern about branding and marking plans in reference to the Development Outreach and Communications office. The Promote chiefs of party (COPs) agreed to share this concern with their respective Contracting Officer's Representatives (CORs). The project representatives also decided to share relevant project documents, such as MOUs, curriculum, scopes of work, and assessment reports in an effort to align activities.

On October 8, 2015, the USAID Promote: Women in Government ACOP, and Outreach and Communications team attended the Promote coordination meeting. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss communications requirements of the IDIQ, address security concerns of the Promote task orders, and achieve consistency and quality for improved development results. During the meeting, all four Promote task orders shared their concerns about security and provided comments on USAID's Promote Communications Strategy.

On November 30, 2015, the project's ACOP, and Internship Coordinator Team Lead met with COP and Gender specialist of the Financial Access for Investing in the Development of Afghanistan (FAIDA) project, a USAID-funded project implemented by Chemonics International. The team discussed areas of collaboration between the two projects. Since the FAIDA project implements a specific internship program for the period of six months, where interns receive on-the-job training from ministries and soft skills training from Chemonics' Afghanization Building Capacity (ABC) team, they inquired about the possibility of their interns joining the USAID Promote: Women in Government internship training. This possible collaboration could expand interns' opportunities to obtain a job in the civil service. Further discussions on ideas for collaboration will continue.

The USAID Promote: Women in Government team received a request from the USAID-funded project, E-Government Resource Center II (EGRC II), of MCIT to share the resumes of female graduates from computer science departments that were received by the project office during the October internship recruitment cycle. In response to the EGRC II request, the team shared nine resumes of female graduates with computer science backgrounds. These applicants were not selected for the USAID Promote: Women in Government internship program, as they had previous work experience and therefore, did not meet the program qualifications. In the spirit of the Promote program, the project shared these resumes with government ministries to encourage recruitment of more women in government.

On November 29, 2015, the project's ACOP participated in the Promote Advisory Committee meeting, which was held in the CEO's office. All four Promote TOs shared a brief update about activities. Additionally, PAC members shared their comments and feedback on TO's ongoing activities. The project's ACOP and DCOP also participated in a monthly recurring meeting with the management staff of all the Promote TO teams. The meetings focused on discussions related to branding and marking plans and in particular, safety concerns associated with implementing the current branding and marking plans. To ensure the safety of Promote beneficiaries, stakeholders, and program staff, and to increase the effectiveness of program behavior change messaging, the TO COPs drafted a unified waiver request to the Promote

branding and marking plan. This meeting provided an opportunity to further discuss ways all the Promote TOs can continue to collaborate with each other, further advancing the objective of the Promote program. During this meeting, all TO management representatives decided on a united plan to carry out an anti-street harassment campaign. As discussed in the Gender Analysis, GIROA Partnership Assessment and Workplace Obstacles Report, street harassment is a major impediment for working women. Unfortunately, the challenge of street harassment is shared across all Promote projects; yet it is an issue that all TOs will address in a unified way. On December 6, 2015, the ACOP, participated in a joint briefing session for Promote TOs where an update on activities and progress made was provided to senior-level Afghan government officials, including the First Lady, and the ministries of MoLSMAD, and MoWA. The First Lady provided her specific comments and input for each of the TOs. The ACOP also described to the First Lady the challenges the project is facing with IARCSC. As a result, the First Lady requested the ACOP to provide a brief note explaining the challenges and a copy of the signed MOU with IARCSC to present the issue to the President for a possible solution.

5. Management and Administrative Issues

5.1 Personnel

The USAID Promote: Women in Government project continues to recruit qualified candidates for past vacancies, in addition to recent new vacancies. These positions include the re-recruitment of the project Chief of Party (COP) and M&E Manager. Interview panels were conducted for the vacant Communications and Outreach Manager. Unfortunately, the candidates did not meet the minimum level of qualifications needed for the position. A new recruitment ad for this vacancy has been posted on the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief and Development (ACBAR) job portal. Recent vacancies include the HR Manager, HR Officer, IT Specialist, Training Specialist and Database/Communication Specialist. In anticipation of the current Subcontracts Manager's departure, the vacancy for this position is under recruitment and an approval request for the Subcontracts Manager, M&E Manager, HR Manager, HR Officer, and IT Specialist was submitted to USAID. In addition, the team is currently working on conducting interviews to select qualified applicants for the position of Database/Communication Specialist.

5.2 Adaption of the activity

The USAID Promote: Women in Government team also conducted an assessment on existing capacities, resources, and the applicability for the interns' training. On December 12, a report on alternative training institutes for the internship program was submitted to USAID. The aim of this report was to explore the opportunity of training and simultaneously placing interns in the ministries' embedded institutes and to seek alternative options and other potential partners for training in the event that ACSI is not able to meet USAID Promote: Women in Government objectives. This was decided in consideration of implementation delays at ACSI. The general assessment revealed that institutes established within different ministries serve their own technical area. The institutes either graduate students with Associate degrees issued by the Ministry of Education or Bachelor's degrees by the Ministry of Higher Education. These institutes have their own approved curriculum by MoE and MoHE. Although some ministries have short training programs, they are tailored to their respective institutional needs. Out of the institutes assessed, the most suitable institute for absorbing the Women in Government Internship Program was MRRD. The institute had well-trained instructors and a flexible curriculum and was properly equipped in a secure and accessible location. Although the institute has yet to be registered with any formal educational institution (MoE and MoHE), MRRD in the process of negotiating with MoHE to provide Associates and Bachelor's degrees to their students.

5.3 Modifications and Amendments

No modifications or amendments were made to the contract during the reporting period.

6. Success Stories and Photos



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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

SUCCESS STORY

Overcoming Anxiety, Improving Communication Skills

Well-structured trainings and effective teaching techniques is building interns skills to prepare them for entry into Afghan civil services



Photo Credit: WIG/USAID

“Before joining the USAID Promote: Women in Government internship program, I lacked good communication skill and this was considered my biggest problem in professional life. The project trainings helped me change my biggest weakness to my biggest strength.”

(Quote translated by USAID Promote: Women in Government project.)

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██████████ a 22-year-old woman who graduated from Kabul University in 2014 with a degree in psychology, found the USAID Promote: Women in Government internship program very effective in building soft skills. Since she started the program, Ms. ██████████ has observed improvements in her self-confidence and communication skills which have enabled her to overcome anxiety at work.

Before starting the internship program, towards the end of her university program, Ms. ██████████ worked with a local radio station as host, where she struggled with anxiety during recording sessions for her program. She discovered that she needed to improve upon her communication skills and self-confidence with the guests of her program. Ms. ██████████ stated, “Before taking the USAID Promote: Women in Government internship training, I was unable to speak confidently in public, couldn’t deliver presentations confidently to an audience, and eventually all these became a big issue during my work with the local radio station.”

After taking a number of the USAID Promote: Women in Government internship trainings, particularly in communications, and fulfilling a program requirement of presenting her reports in front of an audience, Ms. ██████████ felt more confident to speak out and share her ideas amongst a group of people. This is a result of progressive training methods such as participatory, presentations and frequent group work, which provides participants with the opportunity to actively take part, present, and speak out in front of the class. Traditional university teaching methods lacked such variety as students rarely participated or gave presentations.

Ms. ██████████ believes the USAID Promote: Women in Government internship program is paving the way for female university graduates to build and expand their networks. She added that by joining the Promote: Women in Government internship program, she has improved her communication skills. The knowledge and skills that she is gaining from the internship trainings enables her to overcome anxiety. This will be essential as she aims pass the civil service entrance exam and be a civil servant.



SUCCESS STORY

Strong Professional Relationships for Lifelong Networks

The USAID Promote: Women in Government project has provided opportunities to build strong professional relationships and networks



USAID Promote: Women in Government, interns at ACSI

“The USAID Promote: Women in Government internship program has happened as a unique opportunity with providing a resource to refer to for solving any problems and obstacles in future during working in a civil service institutions and so for preparing for entrance to a civil service position within government.”

- A group of interns at ACSI

(Quote translated by the USAID Promote: Women in Government project staff.)

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Photo Credit: WIG/USAID

The current USAID Promote: Women in Government interns feel confident that the internship program represents a critical first step to building a strong professional network in the Afghan civil service. Through their intensive training at the Afghanistan Civil Service Institute (ACSI), interns are cultivating foundational relationships between fellow interns, trainers, and ACSI staff.

According to one of the current interns at ACSI, [REDACTED] “The ACSI progressive training methods, such as participatory approach, presentations, and frequent group work have also resulted in building both positive personal and professional relationships among interns. When we know one another well, we are much more likely to work and interact well.” She adds that, “This relationship building has also improved our morale and increased productivity to our day-to-day learning and work and enabled us to collaborate and work together.”

Other interns have noted how such enriching relationships have improved the accuracy and overall quality of their assignments. Describing how interns work together, [REDACTED] stated, “... in terms of personal and professional development, we can be more innovative and creative since we can share lessons learned and our experiences.” She also emphasized the importance of intern-trainer relationships in expanding interns’ networks. By preparing interns in the core civil service functions to pass the entry exam, trainers are supporting more resilient women’s networks in the public sector. [REDACTED] also reflects on this relationship-building process for her future career. She believes that building and maintaining professional relationships will not only make her fellow interns more engaged and committed to their goals, but will also open a path towards effective networking in the future. With this established network, USAID Promote: Women in Government alumna will be better equipped to solve common problems they may face while working within government ministries and institutions.