



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

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INFRASTRUCTURE

Girls School Rebuilt after Earthquake: Girls in Sherzad district, Nangarhar province, will return to a new, safe school after this year's winter break. Their original school was severely damaged during an earthquake in April 2009, which also resulted in the loss of 20 lives and the destruction of many homes and other buildings. USAID, in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and International Relief and Development (IRD), immediately began work to build a new, earthquake-resistant school for the girls.



The new Sherzad Girls Middle School in Nangarhar province.

PHOTO: USAID/CHEF

Despite the difficulties of construction in an area known for insurgent activity, USAID and its partners ensured the safe, rapid completion of the Sherzad Girls Middle School. The new earthquake-resistant, eight-room school provides classrooms for up to 400 students in two shifts and a safe place to study. Additional construction work is ongoing in the area, as the Sherzad Boys High School also suffered damage during the earthquake. USAID is committed to ensuring that Sherzad's children have the opportunity to receive an education in secure, well-built schools.



Members of the Lash Wa Juwayn Community Development Council show their appreciation for the canal cleaning project.

PHOTO: USAID/ADP/SW

AGRICULTURE

Water Flows Again in Lash Wa Juwayn Canal:

When Afghan communities set their own development priorities, stability and trust are likely to follow. USAID works with village elders to design development projects that meet the needs of the community, and engages community members in the implementation process. Recently, in cooperation with the Farah Governor's office, the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, and the Lash Juwayn Community Development Council, USAID rehabilitated the Lash Wa Juwayn Canal in Farah. Local laborers received a daily wage and the necessary tools to rehabilitate 20 kilometers of the canal and rebuild a 720-meter retaining wall.

The villagers celebrated the first flow of water in the canal, which had been full of silt and unusable for 30 years. Thanks to improved irrigation provided by the canal, more than 13,000 hectares will be available for farming – an area of approximately 60 square miles.



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Nearly 7,100 families (approximately 40,000 individuals) will benefit from the improved irrigation and increased food production and farming income. Upon completion of the project, members of the Lash Wa Juwayn District Community Development Council presented a certificate of appreciation to USAID and the Alternative Development Project – Southwest for its support of the canal rehabilitation.

PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM

Empowering Women in Zabul: Language and math skills, health education, and vocational training are all part of an USAID's drive to boost female literacy and capacity in the insecure southern province of Zabul. In southern Afghanistan, a weak government presence has left many women fearful of radical social strictures. Countering this fear is key to stabilization efforts in the province, where USAID and its partners are working to build links between citizens, empowering them to envision – and pursue – alternatives to conflict. One such effort is providing English-language and computer training to 60 female graduates of the Bibi Khala High School, who in turn will each mentor two current students. The project complements another initiative that is offering health education, literacy, and almond-cleaning training to 60 more women in the province. Through these programs, women in Zabul will receive the education and jobs skills that they need to play an active role in building a stable Afghanistan.



Women learn to clean and process raisins in Zabul.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD



Newly constructed stalls in Almar Market in Faryab.

PHOTO: USAID/ASMED

ECONOMIC GROWTH

New Marketplaces in Nangarhar and Faryab Provinces:

Safe, well-built markets are essential to business growth and needed places in each community where people buy food and clothing for their families. With financial support from USAID and local shopkeepers, 10 new market stalls were recently installed at Almar Market in Almar district, Faryab province. The new market stalls allow the people of Almar to buy grocery items locally; previously residents had to travel long distances to the provincial capital of Maimana for these items. The construction of the new shops created 20 permanent jobs and a number of temporary construction jobs.



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Additionally, a USAID grant facilitated the construction of new stalls at the Dara-e-Noor Bazaar in the eastern province of Nangarhar. In addition to creating 10 small businesses and providing permanent job opportunities for at least 20 people, the market gives residents of Dara-e-Noor improved access to purchasing daily necessities.

USAID provides \$130 Million in Loans to Support Enterprises in Afghanistan: Since its launch in September 2006 until its closing in December 2009, USAID's Agriculture, Rural Investment, and Enterprise Strengthening (ARIES) program disbursed more than \$130 million in loans to micro, small, medium, and larger enterprises throughout Afghanistan.

Implemented in partnership with the Academy for Educational Development (AED), the ARIES program expanded public access to financial services, making loans available to Afghans who previously had no access to financial services. The program also helped to create a strong private sector foundation upon which to develop a sustainable finance system with the capacity to provide a range of financial services. In total, ARIES disbursed 222,000 loans through 119 financial service outlets in 24 of Afghanistan's 34 provinces, and resulted in the creation of more than 226,000 jobs.



Shura leaders and community members attend an IIFC orientation in Samangan province.

PHOTO: USAID/WOCCU

The accomplishments of ARIES project will be advanced by USAID's new Rural Finance and Cooperative Development (RUF COD) project, implemented by the World Council of Credit Unions (WOCCU). RUF COD will expand access to financial services in underserved and priority districts, including opening 15 new Islamic Investment and Financial Cooperatives (IIFCs) over the next two years. IIFCs are community-based, member-owned institutions that provide a range of Islam-compliant financial services to their members. Community-outreach programs, such as providing medical services to IIFC members, are funded by a small fee that credit union members pay in the process of repaying their loans. IIFC members determine how they will use these proceeds – intended to be used for charitable purposes – to serve community needs. In the first year, the project will open IIFCs in Hilmand, Uruzgan, Kandahar, Logar, and Paktya provinces.



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DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

New Pashto Radio Programming Extends

Audience Reach: On January 30, Salam Watandar, Internews Network radio, launched its new Pashto-language service, targeting audiences in the south and southeast of the country. Since the majority of Afghans receive their news and information from radio, the introduction of expanded Pashto programming is essential to reach a broader audience.

The service offers daily news, current affairs, and cultural programming in two 90-minute blocks from 7-8:30 am and from 6-7:30 pm. The program line-up includes Pashto versions of other popular Salam Watandar programs; sports, religion, poetry, local culture, and government affairs programs; as well as “Bakhaber” (“Look Out”), a popular current affairs show. In addition, the program offers hourly Pashto news bulletins throughout the day.



The producers and reporters for Salam Watandar's new Pashto-language service.

PHOTO: USAID/Internews

Aashiqullah Yaqub headed up Salam Watandar's recruiting effort to find local Pashto-speaking journalists and producers to produce the show. “The launch of the new channel marks a milestone in our effort to expand our audience reach,” Yaqub says. “Calls on live programs have jumped from Pashto-speaking parts of the country.”

The new Pashto channel is offered as an optional service to Salam Watandar's network of 40 partner stations, which reaches 60 percent of the Afghan population. As of February 5, 11 stations in nine provinces have switched to the new service, and three others are either airing the programs on alternating days or broadcasting selected programs.



A farmer in Dand prepares his greenhouse for winter planting.

PHOTO: USAID/WOCCU

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Sharia-compliant Financing Helps Kandahar

Farmers: The Kandahar Islamic Investment and Finance Cooperative (KIIFC) is helping area farmers have a successful winter planting season by providing a wide range of Sharia-compliant financial services to its members.

The cooperative recently provided between \$500 to \$800 each to 25 Dand district vegetable growers who completed USAID-funded greenhouse farming training. The farmers received the much-needed



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capital to buy equipment that will enable them to grow vegetables during winter months.

The KIIFC is a community-based, member-owned institution that has already disbursed \$630,000 in Sharia-compliant financing to its members. So far, 71 percent of these funds have been invested in agriculture production in the area.



Bibi Ayesha (above) and 119 other women learned to weave gabion at a USAID training.

PHOTO: USAID/IDEA-NEW

AGRICULTURE

Gabion Basket Weaving Provides Income for Women and Protects Agricultural Land: In Puli Khumri in Baghlan province, USAID recently held a training program to teach 120 local women to weave gabion baskets. Gabion baskets are made of wire mesh filled with stone and used to build flood protection walls or retaining walls along the banks of rivers. Preventing flooding and erosion, the gabion baskets and the walls they construct are important structures that protect Afghanistan's agricultural land.

The participants will be able to earn an income using their newly acquired skills to weave gabion baskets

for upcoming USAID-funded gabion protection wall projects in the province. "We are very happy with this project, because on the one hand we are getting skills on how to weave gabions, and on the other hand we have a source of income to enable us to support our families," said trainee Bibi Ayesha from Puli Khumri.

PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM

Improved Road Builds Confidence in Local Government: When villagers in the Chahar Chineh district in Uruzgan asked their local governor for help improving the Sarsino Pass, he worked closely with USAID and its Local Governance and Community Development Program to improve the road. During the project, 50 villagers were hired to widen and improve the steep, narrow 1,000-meter road.

The success of the project has helped overcome the villagers' isolation, instilled confidence in the governor, and triggered an influx of new requests for projects.



Sakhar villagers work to widen and improve their road.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD



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EDUCATION

English Training Prepares Professors for Next Semester: On January 28, five lecturers from Sheik Zayed University in Khost completed an intensive, 45-day International English Language Testing System (IELTS) course provided by USAID's Afghan eQuality Alliances (AeQA) at Kabul Polytechnic University. Thanks to the small class size, English instructors were able to work closely with faculty members to design classroom exercises and to prepare for the IELTS exam at the British Council in Kabul. Like the Teaching of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) exam, a passing score on the IELTS exam is a prerequisite for many international study abroad programs.

Participating faculty were pleased to have the opportunity to improve their knowledge and skills in preparation for the next academic term in March. One of the professors has already taken the IELTS exam and is awaiting his test results. The other four participants will take the IELTS exam later next month. In the meantime, the faculty members look forward to continuing their English studies in Khost and are eager to use their new English skills in the classroom. "[USAID's] Afghan eQuality Alliances is the only one providing IT and English language classes for faculty members at our university. Without Afghan eQuality Alliances, we wouldn't be able to improve our English skills," said a Sheikh Zayed University faculty member.

Developing proficiency in foreign languages is one major emphasis of the recently inaugurated Ministry of Higher Education Strategic Plan. AeQA offers IT and English language courses at Afghan Next Generation eLearning (ANGeL) Centers at Balkh University, Hirat University, Kabul Polytechnic University, Kabul University, and Nangarhar University.



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EDUCATION

International School of Kabul Students Model Community Service:

In a country with limited understanding and resources for children with special needs, the students of the USAID-funded International School of Kabul (ISK) recently made a difference for children with cerebral palsy. ISK students launched a campus-wide clothing drive with the aim to help others and better their community. All of the international school's classes participated by collecting donated clothing for the Streams Project, a program that works with families of children with cerebral palsy in Taloqan, Takhar. ISK students collected 100 bags of clothing and then held a movie fundraiser to purchase basic toiletries and food.



A mother of a child with cerebral palsy receives clothing collected by International School of Kabul students.

PHOTO: USAID/ISK

Each school year, ISK student council members and students undertake community service projects, demonstrating a commitment to Afghanistan's future. In past years, they have planted trees, volunteered at a local hospital, and organized canned food drives. Through community service, students are improving the lives of their fellow Afghans and discovering how they can have a positive impact on the world around them.



A group of journalists from Ghor province attend a workshop at Nai's Kabul training center, with assistance from the Ghor PRT.

PHOTO: USAID/Internews

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

Strengthening Independent Media in Afghanistan:

Afghan journalists and media producers now have more access to training opportunities through U.S. Government support to Nai, an Afghan media training organization. In addition to its offices in Kabul, Nai has opened two new media training hubs in Mazari Sharif and Jalalabad. Two more training hubs are planned for Hirat and Kandahar and will open later in the year.

The initial training sessions offered include a course in community development, which is supported by a USAID grant. Reporters are learning how to network with and engage their communities to develop high-quality localized programming that builds audiences and listenership. Not only does this improve the business model of the stations, it creates the kind of community dialog and interaction that can serve as a stabilizing influence. Other training is available on a fee basis. Topics include basic journalism, radio production, media law, field reporting for television, and safety training.



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The goal of expanded media training is to provide Afghans with greater access to quality news and information. The successful growth of independent media businesses in Afghanistan is providing jobs as well as supporting the free exchange of ideas needed in a democratic society.

District Council Connects Citizens with Government:

Afghan-led, community-oriented development is essential to building a well-governed, democratic country that meets the needs of its citizens. The U.S. Government and the Afghan Independent Directorate of Local Governance are helping Afghans take ownership of their own local governance and development priorities through the creation of community councils. These councils, formed by district-wide jirgas, serve as an incubator for eventual elected councils and give the public a greater connection with government.

On February 2, a group of six USAID and State Department representatives travelled to Mohammad Agha district of Logar province to meet with a newly established District Council. The Mohammad Agha District Council members discussed some of their early work, including the development of three committees to look at security, development, and justice. The council has already begun to reach out to insurgents in the area to reduce conflict. The council's three women voiced several requests for women in the district. Overall, the council will improve community coordination and communication with the Afghan government, ensuring more stability and representation at the local level.



Council members present their programs.

PHOTO: USAID/ASOP



A Wardak villager demonstrates the use of a water divider that was built with the support of USAID.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM

Wardak Residents Take Control of Their Own Development:

In the village of Qala-e-Sofian, in Wardak province, the U.S. Government helped local residents build 46 water dividers along the primary canal. The dividers provide regulated water access to off-shoot fields and prevent overflow or uneven water distribution. As a result, this project established more equitable water distribution and removed one of the primary sources of instability in the village – water disputes. The project was funded by a USAID community stabilization grant implemented by the community members themselves, and it employed 16 laborers for approximately 20 days.



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Distributing Teaching Kits and Science Lab Equipment:

Ensuring that Afghan students receive a good education is a priority for the U.S. and Afghan Governments. In early February, USAID provided the Khost Director of Education with practical teaching kits and science lab equipment, which will benefit 50 schools in five districts of Khost province. The supplies, which were purchased with support from the USAID Local Governance and Community Development program, will reach approximately 10,000 secondary school students and 7,600 primary school pupils. The improved learning environment, along with the education director's role in bringing it about, is a key step toward improving education and boosting citizen confidence in government-provided services.



The acting governor of Khost presents science equipment to local schools.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD



Customers admire Afghan carpets at Domotex 2010 in Hannover, Germany.

PHOTO: USAID/ASMED

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Extraordinary Success for Afghan Traders at Domotex Carpet Trade Show:

For the third year in a row, Afghan carpet makers and dealers showcased their country's best hand-made carpets at Domotex, the world's premier trade show for carpets and floor coverings, held annually in Hannover, Germany. With financial and logistical support from USAID, Afghanistan's carpet sellers enjoyed their most successful trade event ever, recording \$12,116,500 in sales, a 400 percent increase over 2009 sales.

Buyer interest at Domotex demonstrated that Afghanistan's carpets are held in high esteem by the international market. The fair reported a record

number of visitors, and nearly 90 percent of the entire inventory of the Afghanistan pavilion sold in deals made with buyers from Europe and the USA. Afghan carpets also achieved industry recognition, with Nomad Ltd./Chak Palu winning the award for Standard Modern Carpet Design.

International trade fairs like Domotex not only generate significant sales and contracts for Afghan traders, but also offer participants the opportunity to learn about international business practices and raise the visibility of Afghan products in the international marketplace. The successful performance at Domotex 2010 is largely due to the experience that Afghan traders gained by participating in similar events over the past few years.



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AWBF members display their products at the annual Opportunities for Women Business Conference in Jalalabad.

PHOTO: USAID/ASMED

Afghan Women's Business Federation Builds Opportunities for Women in the East:

The role of women in Afghanistan's economic development is expanding greatly. On January 16, the Afghan Women's Business Federation (AWBF) in Jalalabad held its annual Opportunities for Women Business Conference. Ninety AWBF members from eastern Afghanistan and several key members of the local government attended the event. In addition to providing information about local business opportunities, the conference provided a platform for participants to present business proposals to international donor agencies. During the event, the Nangarhar Deputy Governor promised to reserve

space for AWBF in the new industrial park, and the Director of Women's Affairs promised that all future government-funded training on women's business issues would be implemented through AWBF. The event closed with an exhibition showcasing products from several AWBF members.



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AGRICULTURE

Village Mirabs Confer on Irrigation Issues: In Afghanistan, every village has a *mirab* – a water master – who is in charge of managing local irrigation resources. It is a critical function in this water-stressed country, as the majority of Afghans make their living from farming irrigated land. Without proper management of the irrigation systems, food production and incomes would fall.

On February 20-21, nearly 50 mirabs from villages in Nangarhar, Laghman, and Kunar provinces gathered for a USAID-facilitated workshop in Jalalabad to share their views on water management issues. The workshop was the first of its kind in the country. It was initiated by the Department of Irrigation in the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), which oversees irrigation issues under Afghanistan's Water Law. Ultimately, such meetings will improve collective water use and allow mirabs to learn from each other's experiences.



Mirabs discuss water management challenges in small groups.

PHOTO: USAID/AWATT

The mirabs discussed the key challenges they face, noting the need for new irrigation canals to bring uncultivated land to life, and the need to rehabilitate old irrigation systems filled with silt. At the same time, they expressed pride in recent accomplishments made possible by funding from the U.S. Government, which enhanced their ability to export seedlings. "Thanks for the support [USAID] provided for the Irrigation Department to have the mirabs' conference," commented Fayez Naseer Ahmad, MAIL's Director of Irrigation. "It was very useful and important for us."



Teachers learn to use a model clock to teach students how to tell time during a PACE-A teacher training session.

PHOTO: USAID/PACE-A

EDUCATION

Improving Reading and Math Instruction in Community-based Schools: In Afghanistan, many remote areas lack formal primary schools, and the Ministry of Education and the U.S. Government are working together to extend coverage to these underserved villages. To ensure that all Afghan children have the opportunity to receive an education, USAID's Partnership for Advancing Community Education in Afghanistan (PACE-A) project establishes community-based primary school classes and trains Afghans to teach them.

Through PACE-A, USAID recently provided training



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for 108 teacher trainers from 18 provinces in Afghanistan. The training will improve teachers' capacity to teach reading to rural students in community classes throughout the country. The teachers also learned to use math manipulatives, which are toys or tools that physically demonstrate mathematical concepts, to enrich regular math instruction. USAID will provide follow-up training to more than 2,000 rural teachers in time for the start of the 2010 school year in late March.

"I appreciate the efforts of teacher support working group members in initiating this training to improve the quality of interaction between the students and teachers," said Nahid, one of the teacher trainers. "I think these trainings will be even more effective [when] the support group actually visits the schools, observes the teachers, and evaluates teaching performance to achieve better results in student performance," she added.

New Training Materials for Science and Math

Teachers: To ensure that Afghanistan's teachers are equipped to provide a quality education to their students, the U.S. Government and the Ministry of Education work together to ensure proper teacher training. Recently, the Ministry of Education's Teacher Education Department (TED) and USAID produced a training manual for grades 7-12 science and math teachers. The workshop participants also designed 36 training sessions that will reach 14,000 teachers across 11 provinces in Afghanistan between March and June 2010. Senior trainers successfully piloted the training sessions, including *General Math Methods*, *Problems and Challenges of Teaching Trigonometry*, and *Developing Lesson Plans for Geology*.



USAID and Ministry of Education officials work together to develop teacher training materials.

PHOTO: USAID/Afghanistan

"Development of this manual will have a significant impact on the quality of education in Afghanistan and will be useful for school teachers, especially in the provinces and in remote areas, who have limited educational qualifications," affirmed an experienced member of the TED. "We have witnessed their weaknesses during our observations, and I think this manual can help solve most of their methodological problems."

This collaborative effort in materials development for in-service teacher training demonstrates the strong and lasting partnership between the U.S. Government and the Ministry of Education's Teacher Education Department.

International Computer Certification Builds Capacity: Computer literacy is a skill in high demand by employers throughout Afghanistan, and USAID is supporting improved computer instruction in Afghanistan's school system. On February 12, a group of 13 Professional



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Development Center (PDC) coordinators throughout Afghanistan received International Computer Driving License (ICDL) certificates. The ICDL is an internationally recognized certification indicating superior end-user computer skills.



Participants receive their ICDL certificates at Kabul Education University.

PHOTO: USAID/HEP

The 13 recipients are now certified to administer the ICDL examination in Afghanistan. This is the first step in ensuring that more people have the opportunity to take the exam and become computer skills trainers, increasing the number of expert computer users in the country.

The ICDL provides a framework for building skills in the workforce, which will boost the fast-growing area of IT in institutions throughout the country. Khalil Frough, PDC coordinator at Parwan University said "ICDL helps me to enhance my own computer skills and teach others in a better way, in order to have a brighter Afghanistan." ICDL certification is now available at 16 faculties of education, the Afghanistan

Technical and Vocational Institute, and the American University of Afghanistan.

PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM

Canal Wall Construction Creates Jobs and

Protects Crops: Most residents of Joybar village in the southeastern part of Kapisa province depend on agriculture as their main source of income. Fields are irrigated by a local canal, which is easily damaged by heavy rains. Flooding diverts water from Joybar's fields, reducing agricultural output and putting many farmers' livelihoods in jeopardy.

Through its Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) program, USAID is working with local officials and villagers to build a protection wall for the canal. The project, which is providing employment for approximately 20 Joybar residents for 25 days, will ultimately benefit the entire village by increasing agriculture output and quality. As with all LGCD projects, this effort aims to improve lives in ways that are tangible and direct, while ensuring sustainability and stability by involving local officials in the process.



Joybar villagers are building a protection wall along the canal to keep flooding from damaging their crops.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD



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A Shindand resident carries her USAID-funded winterization kit.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

Shindand District Government Supports Vulnerable Families:

Weathering Afghanistan's long winter is difficult for many families, especially for those that cannot afford enough food and warm clothing. The U.S. Government is helping the government in Shindand district, Hirat province respond to citizens' needs by providing winterization kits containing coats, blankets, charcoal, rice, beans, and cooking oil. On February 14, local officials distributed the kits to 120 of the district's most vulnerable families, such as those led by women or ex-combatants.

Underscoring the Afghan government's commitment to its citizens, the distribution ceremony was attended by representatives from the Directorate of Women's Affairs, the Peace and Reconciliation Committee, and the District Development Assembly as well as Shindand's mayor, governor, and delegate to the Hirat Provincial

Council. The enthusiasm of the beneficiaries and participating officials demonstrates the impact USAID is having through its Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) program. Through LGCD, USAID is working to bring stability to Afghan provinces and districts by building links between citizens and their government representatives.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Women Entrepreneurs in Kandahar Improve Business Skills:

Women are a growing force of economic growth in Afghanistan, and the U.S. Government is committed to building their capacity for success. From support to women's business associations to banking outreach programs aimed at women, USAID is providing women entrepreneurs the tools they need to succeed in the business world.

On January 26, 40 women business owners in Kandahar province completed a three-month business development training course. The course provided training in accounting, management, and marketing.

Through lectures and group discussions, the participants learned how to improve their record keeping and accounting, manage their business environment, increase their client base, and improve product quality. The participants agreed that their new skills will improve their business operations, enabling them to earn more income to support their families.



A woman entrepreneur receives her business development course certificate of completion.

PHOTO: USAID/ASME



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PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM

International Women's Day Celebrations Highlight Opportunities for Afghan Women:

Throughout Afghanistan, communities and local government officials came together in early March to celebrate International Women's Day. The celebrations attracted thousands of women and their families and reinforced the credibility of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in fostering women's empowerment and providing a safe venue for such public events. The U.S. Government is committed to fostering opportunities for women, from education to community leadership. Celebrations in some of Afghanistan's most insecure provinces demonstrate that the efforts of USAID and the Afghan Government are providing a better environment for women.



The governor of Hilmand presents a gift on the occasion of International Women's Day.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

Hilmand – A year ago, barely 50 women dared attend an International Women's Day celebration in the contested southern province of Hilmand. However, if the celebration honoring this year's Women's Day is any indication, hope is beginning to trump fear. Approximately 600 women attended a celebration in Lashkar Gah, organized by the Department of Women's Affairs with support from USAID. The governor of Hilmand encouraged the participation of women in leadership roles, and media covered the event, demonstrating that the Afghan Government was able to provide a safe, secure environment to celebrate the important role of women in Afghan society.

Kandahar – More than 600 women braved security threats to celebrate International Women's Day in Kandahar city. The governor, parliament and provincial council members, members of civil society and international organizations, the director of Women's Affairs, media representatives, teachers, and students actively participated in the event. The celebration included songs and speeches that highlighted women's achievements and the challenges they face. The governor of Kandahar highlighted his support for women in his speech, saying, "I encourage more meetings to be held on women's issues and the challenges they face in our society." The Department of Women's Affairs organized the event in cooperation with the Afghanistan Independent Human Right Commission, UNAMA, and USAID.

Uruzgan – Despite serious security concerns, USAID supported two Women's Day events in Tirin Kot. On March 10, approximately 400 women attended the larger of the two events. All participants received gift bags that included health and hygiene items, and an additional 100 gift bags will be distributed to women unable to attend.



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AGRICULTURE

Reforestation Improves Environment and Diet:

Reforestation improves the environment and provides healthier spaces for Afghan citizens. USAID is helping to reforest the country with a variety of trees, including fruit trees, to provide both greenery and income-generation opportunities. Additionally, USAID is planting trees at schools to increase environmental awareness, and is planting along roads or canals to decrease erosion and reduce water loss.

Recently, USAID reforested public areas including schools, city parks, and industrial parks. Girls and boys schools, industrial parks, and Jalalabad municipality received 1,950 trees. Nearly 2,500 local farmers received forest saplings and fruit trees, the products of which – fruit and wood – will become a renewable source of income. Currently, more than 9,500 families in three refugee camps are receiving 42,000 trees, which they will plant around their homes to provide greenery and a source of fruit to their diets.



An Afghan farmer plants a tree sapling.

PHOTO: USAID/IDEA-NEW



Science professors at Kabul Education University use the outdoor environment to find creative ways to teach science.

PHOTO: Fiona Rowand

EDUCATION

New Ideas for Teaching Science: Science instruction in Afghanistan has been reenergized thanks to a USAID-supported professional development program for university education science faculty members. “Injecting Inquiry into the Classroom” is one of a series of science seminars that uses active experimentation and gives participants first-hand knowledge of how to make science fun by using local materials. The videos, which are filmed in U.S. classrooms, dubbed into Dari, and subtitled in Pashto, are also used to show how active lessons benefit learners and trainers.

In the most recent round of seminars, 201 science professors (64 women) from 17 faculties of education across the country received training in 11 workshops. The previous round, which included professors from Kabul, Paktya, and Kandahar, ran in late February.



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Participants from Kabul Education University used the university grounds to look for ways to turn their surrounding environment into research ideas. One participant commented, "Before this seminar, we saw science teaching as simply transferring knowledge, but now we see it as a continuous process of discovery."

New Research Provides Insight into Student Politics: In late 2009, USAID funded the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) to study the role that student politics play within the larger political sphere. The recently published research paper gives a historical picture of Afghan student politics from the 1960s until today and connects these student movements to the development of political parties in Afghanistan.



The research is based upon approximately 100 interviews with students and political activists in Kabul, Hirat, Mazari Sharif, and Jalalabad, as well as interviews with former student activists from the 1960s and 1970s. Some of the key findings of the study include:

- The number of students actively involved in "rebellious" activities is much lower than in 2001, although it is gradually rising.
- The first signs of radicalism have started to appear among non-Pashtun students. However, only a very small numbers of educated Afghans and recent university graduates have been involved in anti-government activities to date.
- Afghan Government recognition of youth activist organizations as legitimate civil society groups will help strengthen democracy.

The full report is available online at <http://www.areu.org.af/> under "Latest Publications."



The anti-corruption committee drafts its policy, supported by technical assistance from USAID.

PHOTO: USAID/BESST

Ministry of Education Drafts Anti-corruption Policy: Combating corruption is a top priority for the Afghan and U.S. governments. A letter issued from President Karzai's office in January 2010 instructed all ministries to design strategies to eliminate corruption, and the Ministry of Education's (MoE) Human Resources Department established a committee to draft an anti-corruption policy for its department. USAID's Building Education Support Systems for Teachers (BESST) project provided technical assistance and supported the process.



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The committee, consisting of four high-ranking officials from the Human Resources Department, formulated two documents: “Anti-Corruption Policy and Implementation Plan for the MoE’s Human Resources Department” and “Procedures to Review Complaints of All MoE Personnel.” The new policies and procedures will take effect after review by the general director of Human Resources Department and approval by the minister of education.

The new policies will help the Human Resources Department to tackle corruption effectively and to establish a work environment that ensures fairness for all employees. One member of the Human Resources Department, eager to see the new policy take effect, stated, “Corruption is a very unprofessional act; the strict enforcement of this policy will make employees realize that corruption is not acceptable in the workplace anymore. The procedure to review complaints will provide an opportunity for employees to stand for their rights.”

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Hirat Mustofiat Medium Taxpayer Office Launches Operations: On February 20, the Hirat Mustofiat (provincial unit of the Ministry of Finance) graduated 26 Afghan tax officers, marking the completion of four weeks of intensive training in Afghanistan’s new tax laws. Through its Economic Growth and Governance Initiative (EGGI), USAID supported the training, in partnership with the United Kingdom Department for International Development/Adam Smith International.



Case preparation at the new Taxpayer Service Center in Hirat.

PHOTO: USAID/EGGI

USAID will continue to provide advisory services to these 26 tax officers as they begin their assignments in Hirat’s Medium Taxpayer Office (MTO) – the office that handles tax collection for medium-sized businesses, educational institutions, and international organizations. Immediately following graduation, the MTO director led his staff into the creation of a Taxpayer Service Center with completion anticipated in 30 days. The Taxpayer Service Center will provide educational seminars to an initial inventory of 900 taxpayer cases before the start of the income tax filing season, which is scheduled to commence on March 22, 2010.

AWAZ Communication Launches Afghan Successes: On February 11, USAID’s Afghanistan Small and Medium Enterprise Development (ASMED) program signed a Global Development Alliance (GDA) with AWAZ Communications to produce a weekly, primetime business and economics newsmagazine called *Afghan Successes*. The 30-minute television and radio program will highlight successful Afghan enterprises, while visually demonstrating the many business opportunities Afghanistan can offer. The overall goal of the program will be to encourage private investment, primarily targeting the Afghan business community.



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In order to attract as wide an audience as possible – ranging from young entrepreneurs to farmers and women – the program will be broadcast in both Dari and Pashto, and will package business information in entertaining formats, such as interviews, reports, portraits, and business tips. An important component of the program will be a weekly segment featuring Afghan businesswomen. Hosted by a moderator, the show will include guests and participants from the private sector, leading political figures, and key members from the business community to provide commentary and analysis. The first episode will feature the graduation ceremony of the first class of students from the Turquoise Mountain Institute of Afghan Arts and Architecture.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Practical Training Builds Better Engineers: Ninety engineering students in Kabul Polytechnic University's Power Department recently had a rare practical training opportunity to better prepare them for employment. In early 2010, the students completed six weeks of on-the-job training across the electrical power sector spectrum. Accompanied by three professors, the seniors spent time at power plants, substations, a junction station, and the Kabul dispatch center, learning the operation and maintenance skills needed at each type of installation.



Kabul Polytechnic University seniors who participated in USAID-sponsored practical training.

PHOTO: USAID/AECB

After the training, the students were tested on their new skills and knowledge. At the graduation ceremony on March 4, two students gave presentations that acknowledged how much this training had enhanced their insight into the power sector, since most of their engineering studies had been theoretical. "KPU gratefully appreciated USAID's work in this educational effort," stated Chancellor of Kabul Polytechnic University Dr. Ezatullah Aamed. Professor Qais observed, "Our students have really benefited from this USAID program, as well as the professors that accompanied them." Essentially all students agreed this experience would have a positive impact on their career choices and motivation in their future jobs. Several students expressed they would seek future employment at power sector sites in the private sector or the Afghan Electric Utility, requesting technical assignments rather than administrative duties.

Reliable Power for Kandahar Hospital: Until recently, Mirwais Hospital in Kandahar received electricity for only ten hours a day. With 350 beds and international professional staff, Mirwais is the only source of advanced medical care for three million Afghans in Hilmand, Kandahar, Zabul, and Uruzgan Provinces. Thanks to the dedication of the staff of the local electric utility and to USAID's infrastructure program, the hospital has had 24-hour power all winter. The new power comes from the Kajaki Hydropower Plant, where USAID's



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repairs increased electrical generation, and supplements diesel power from generators donated and maintained by USAID, but run entirely on fuel provided by the Afghan Government. An assessment of how to best improve power distribution within Kandahar is to be completed in a few weeks. Plans are ready to install additional capacity at Kajaki, as soon as the security situation permits.



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AGRICULTURE

Landmark Export Deal for Afghan Juice Factory:

Consumers in Europe will soon be savoring the sweet taste of Afghanistan. The United Kingdom's leading pomegranate juice company recently agreed to a deal worth nearly \$4.5 million with Afghanistan's first juice concentrate facility. Pomegreet became the first international company to purchase juice concentrate from Afghanistan, committing a minimum of 500 tons of pomegranate concentrate and 500 tons of fresh fruit from the Omaid Bahar Fruit Processing Facility.



A worker inspects pomegranates before the fruit is turned into juice concentrate.

PHOTO: USAID/ASAP

"Being given the chance to source the best pomegranates in the world from their spiritual home is something I couldn't overlook," said Adam Pritchard, chief executive officer of Pomegreet. "The Afghan pomegranate is the best in the world."

"I am proud to have built this factory, and the commitment from Pomegreet gives me great hope for the future," said Mustafa Sadiq, owner of Omaid Bahar Fruit Processing Facility.

The Omaid Bahar Fruit Processing Facility, which opened in October 2009 with support from USAID, receives fruit from 50,000 farmers from at least seven provinces across Afghanistan. The facility provides approximately 200 full-time jobs, with women composing about 35 percent of the staff. USAID provides technical assistance, a cold storage facility, equipment, logistical support, and market linkages with farmers and international buyers.



A school management committee member addresses students at the school opening ceremony in Nowyab village.

PHOTO: USAID/PACE-A

EDUCATION

Communities Across Afghanistan Celebrate the Start of the New School Year:

In late March, USAID-supported community-based classes celebrated the start of a new school year with the enrollment of more than 40,000 male and female students in 2,000 classes throughout the country.

School opening ceremonies were held in most of the communities. In Nowyab village in Parwan province, female members of the school management committee, children, and their parents held a celebration for the entire community. Village elders spoke about the importance of education and placed emphasis on increasing female participation in



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educational activities. "I am very pleased that once again I have the opportunity to attend my class, meet classmates, and learn. I hope one day, each and every Afghan girl will have the opportunity to go to school for as many years as she wants," stated student Gul Cheen.

Graduation at Kabul Education University Marks a New Era: On March 10, 2010, 41 students in Kabul celebrated their graduation from Master's of Education (MEd) programs, made possible due to support from the U.S. Government. Almost half the graduates earned their degrees from Kabul Education University, while the others studied abroad at Indiana University or the University of Massachusetts.

The graduates are professors of education from around Afghanistan. The increased number of faculty members with advanced degrees will help revitalize the quality of teaching in education departments throughout the country. Fifty percent of the MEd graduates are female, which is a major breakthrough for Afghan universities, where women were banned from working and studying during the Taliban period.



U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Karl Eikenberry presents a graduate with her diploma.

PHOTO: USAID/HEP

More than three hundred people attended the event, including U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry, who said it was a "truly historic occasion" and that education would "contribute to making Afghanistan and the world a much better place for everyone." The graduation marked both the end of two years of hard work for the proud students and the beginning of an effort to improve the quality of education for future teachers in Afghan schools.



AUAF students mingle with members of Kabul Dreams.

PHOTO: Mohammad Shariq

The American University of Afghanistan Rocks for Charity: On March 4, 2010, the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF) hosted quite possibly the first ever rock-and-roll concert on an Afghan college campus. The concert was organized by the AUAF Music Club as a fundraiser to benefit children and families in Kabul-area settlements. Ticket proceeds of more than \$1,800 were used to buy blankets for internally displaced persons.

The concert was sponsored in part by Kabul Rock Radio, 108 FM, Afghanistan's only rock-and-roll radio station, and its parent the Killid Media Group (TKG), a



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non-profit independent media initiative of Development and Humanitarian Services for Afghanistan (DHSA). TKG promotes civic engagement, free speech, and open discourse in Afghanistan and strengthens the press as an independent source of information for Afghans.

The concert was broadcast live on Kabul Rock Radio. It opened with traditional Afghan music played by world-renowned artists from the Aga Khan Trust for Culture section of the Aga Khan Development Network. The Aga Khan musicians were followed by the only all-Afghan rock-and-roll band, Kabul Dreams, which includes AUAF students. The AUAF Music Club plans to organize similar events in the future to allow the AUAF community to enjoy time together while raising money for charity.



A presenter answers questions during one of the Grand Rounds discussions in Kabul.

PHOTO: USAID/HEP

Grand Rounds Discussions Enrich Kabul Medical Community: Lacking exposure to the latest medical trends and techniques in their specialty areas, medical professors in Afghanistan often teach using outdated curriculum and materials. Fortunately, the USAID-funded Higher Education Project is addressing this problem through Grand Rounds discussions.

Grand Rounds are presentations of current trends in medicine followed by an interactive question-and-answer session with the audience. More than 140 doctors, midwives, nurses, and medical students attended the first discussions held in three teaching hospitals in Kabul. Two hospitals held presentations

on preventing and managing heart disease, while the third focused on clinical care in the management of diabetes.

These discussions provided an opportunity for approximately 50 healthcare clinicians with international experience to engage with the medical community in Afghanistan. Participants found the rounds motivating and closely related to the medical challenges they face every day. They also requested additional presentations on surgery, radiology, and anesthesiology.

Building the Knowledge and Skills of Secondary School Teachers: This March, USAID's Building Education Support Systems for Teachers (BESST) project held a workshop in Kabul to develop an accelerated learning program for teachers. The accelerated learning program will offer an opportunity for existing teachers who have completed grades 6 through 11 to study and gain the knowledge required to complete a secondary education and, eventually, enroll in a teacher training college.



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The workshop participants developed test questions for subjects taught in grades 7 to 12. These test questions will be used in exams to determine whether teachers have the required knowledge of secondary school subjects to qualify for entry into teacher training colleges. Workshop organizers optimistically expected to generate 3,000 questions from the workshop, but ended up developing 7,000 test questions. Organizers attributed the success to excellent support from the Ministry of Education (MoE) Teacher Education Department and the hard work of the 62 participants. The participants included officials from the MoE Curriculum Department, teacher training colleges, high school teachers, and university professors. Participants worked together in teams to check the accuracy and clarity of the questions.



Afghan education experts participate in a test question writing workshop.

PHOTO: USAID/BESST

“This workshop reached the target and now there are enough questions for different subjects for grades 7-12. We really appreciate BESST’s cooperation to develop such workshops and trainings,” commented an experienced staff member from the MoE Curriculum Department. With the support of USAID, the MoE is taking steps toward developing a system to assess the knowledge and skills of high school teachers.



Men in Khawja Shahab build a boundary wall for the local high school.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM

Village High School in Hirat Secured by USAID-funded Boundary Wall: A high school in rural Hirat is now a safer place in which to learn thanks to a new boundary wall built by USAID and the local community. In response to a request from community elders and teachers in Khawja Shahab village, USAID’s Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project worked with Afghan stakeholders to fund the construction of a boundary wall around the Khawja Shahab Village High School.

The community cited security, vandalism, and adequate privacy for female students and their teachers as critical problems that could be alleviated by a barrier wall. USAID coordinated with the Hirat Province Directorate of Education, district government officials, the Guzara District Development Assembly, community development councils, and representatives of the nearby PRT to design and implement the project. In addition to strengthening



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secondary education in the village, the processes of identifying the need for this project, securing funding, and completing construction increased linkages among local, district, and provincial officials and the community at large. Building the Afghan Government's responsiveness to community needs is a key mission of LGCD, USAID's flagship stabilization program in Afghanistan.



Staff of the Shinwari District Center receive IT equipment funded by USAID.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

Powering Local Government with IT and Solar Energy:

In a wide-reaching initiative aimed at improving local government responsiveness to citizens' needs, USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) program recently installed networks, computers, and solar lighting systems in five district centers throughout Afghanistan. These seats of government, located in Nangarhar, Paktya, and Ghazni provinces, are at the forefront of a country-wide push to improve public services and the credibility of Afghanistan's government. By working directly with government officials, USAID is fostering community trust and helping to create opportunities for peaceful cooperation and improved livelihoods. In each of the

five district centers cited above, for example, LGCD also trained local government staff to operate and maintain the IT networks and solar power systems.

INFRASTRUCTURE

USAID Helps Make MEW's Vocational Training Center a School of Choice: The Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW) established the Vocational Training Center (VTC) in 1976 with the vision to provide technical training to employees of MEW, as well as establish a technical high school and a two-year technical vocational school. VTC aims to educate and train Afghanistan's youth to become science and technology professionals, while also providing facilities for scientific seminars and specialized short courses to increase professionals' skills. While the conflicts in Afghanistan have limited the development of VTC, the U.S. Government started providing support in 2006.



The VTC school director oversees the entrance exam process.

PHOTO: USAID/AEAI



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Now, thanks to modern electrical/electro-mechanical laboratory equipment, increased access to computer and English classes, upgrading of instructor skills via mentoring and developmental workshops, student interest in attending VTC across Afghanistan has increased dramatically. On March 17, 2010, 400 applicants, including 10 women, took the entrance test for the evening classes at the technical vocational school (grade 13) level. The 130 highest-scoring applicants will be accepted into the program. USAID continues to support VTC so that it will become a sustainable technical training center serving the people of Afghanistan.

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

Radio Roundtable Links Civil Society and Parliament: On March 16, 2010, USAID's Initiative to Promote Afghan Civil Society (I-PACS) project conducted a radio roundtable discussion, bringing together members of parliament (MPs) and representatives of civil society organizations (CSOs). During the roundtable, participants discussed the creation of political space for CSOs, CSO interactions with parliament, and CSO involvement in the policy-making process. The discussion featured four participants: two MPs and two CSO representatives. The hour-long program was aired on Killid Radio on March 23, reaching a potential audience of 12.5 million in the provinces of Kabul, Balkh, Hirat, Kandahar, Kapisa, Kunar, Laghman, Logar, Nangarhar, Parwan, and Wardak.

On the topic of collaboration between parliament and civil society, roundtable participant Ms. Palwasha Saboori, director of Afghan Women Training and Development Organization (WTDO), shared, "This is the *first* time that I have had the opportunity to talk about our problems directly with MPs." She continued, "I know that MPs are expected to act as the representative for different groups of people... but their six-day workweek and the poor security situation in the provinces means that they have few opportunities to spend time in remote areas, to find out what people really need and say." At the close of the program, Ms. Saboori asked the MPs to allow for and attend regular meetings with civil society organizations and activists "so that parliament actually hears voices of everyone." This radio roundtable program will be followed by three additional I-PACS roundtables in the next six months.



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AGRICULTURE

USAID Brings Hope to Marja: Only a month after the end of Operation Moshtarak, newly appointed Marja District Governor Hajji Zaher has already held the first in a series of meetings with local elders on USAID's Afghanistan Vouchers for Increased Production in Agriculture (AVIPA) Plus program to explain the benefits and responsibilities that come with it. At the first meeting, the District Governor gave the elders the good news that USAID will soon deliver 4,000 mobile water pumps. The pumps will help farmers irrigate their fields using water from existing canals. Additionally, USAID will distribute agricultural machinery to the district and will organize cash-for-work canal cleaning activities to provide licit employment opportunities.



The District Governor of Marja calls on elders to participate in AVIPA's voucher distribution program.

PHOTO: IRD/AVIPA Plus

The first meeting set a precedent for future cooperation by encouraging community participation and government guidance – the base on which AVIPA's interventions in agriculture rest. The program promotes cooperation between farmers and government representatives, using agriculture to stabilize conflict-ridden areas of Afghanistan.

The effort is already bearing fruit. "We are happy with the government. We need these pumps to increase irrigation capacity. The District Governor is asking us to take responsibility for this process," said one of the elders. Another elder commented, "Providing employment, seed, and fertilizer is the right way to start."



Local leaders applaud winter maintenance of the Bamyán-Dushi Road at a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new District Governor's Office Building in Bamyán's Shibar District.

PHOTO: USAID/IRP

INFRASTRUCTURE

Winter Road Maintenance Keeps Traffic Flowing:

In many areas of Afghanistan, the roads in winter are almost impassable. On April 6, Afghan leaders in Bamyán applauded the USAID-sponsored winter maintenance program that kept the road from Bamyán to Dushi open and cut travel time between the cities by six hours.

A local Afghan firm performed snow removal and grading work to smooth the rough, bumpy road during the winter months. In addition, the program added 14 additional kilometers at the request of the provincial government, allowing easier entry into Bamyán City.



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The maintenance prevented further erosion and helped to set the stage for the redesign and reconstruction of the 164-kilometer road in the coming year.

Gifts, anthems, and speeches indicated the warm feelings of the local population toward the improvements to their region. At the conclusion of the ceremony, the Governor of Bamyan made clear that such projects will bring changes. "This important project will boost economic activities as well as help the people who live along the road," Governor Habiba Sarabi said. "I would like to thank all donors and companies who responded to our request."



Delegates tour Tata BP Solar India Limited's solar water heater production facility in Bangalore.

PHOTO: USAID/SARI

Women Work for Clean Energy Access in

Afghanistan: The newly launched Women's Institute for Sustainable Energy Research (WISER) commenced operations by hosting a nine-day capacity building program for 18 female delegates from Afghanistan. The participants included solar engineers, government employees, teachers, community leaders, social activists, and recent graduates. They benefited from a mix of classroom training and hands-on skills training about renewable energy and energy efficiency technologies, financing mechanisms for clean energy, and gender considerations in energy policy development.

The USAID-funded program brought the women to India, where they observed how another country in the region provides clean energy access. In Kerala, the delegates conducted site visits of commercial facilities that employ renewable energy and energy efficiency measures, attended demonstrations of village-level energy technologies, and observed a rural women's energy clinic. In Bangalore, they participated in a two-day session hosted by Tata BP Solar that addressed design considerations and distribution mechanisms for solar photovoltaic and solar thermal systems. The delegates also visited the Solar Electric Light Company to learn about its market-based approaches for solar energy.

As a result of the program, the Afghan delegates committed to forming a chapter of WISER to institutionalize their efforts. Their roadmap for increasing clean energy access in Afghanistan emphasizes working in rural areas to deploy household-level clean energy technologies such as improved cook stoves, solar lighting, and water heating systems. To better serve the urban areas they suggested developing hydropower projects to increase electric generation capacity. They also emphasized the need for gender mainstreaming in energy policies and sector applications.



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Engineering Interns Graduate with Practical Skills:

In early April, 23 engineering students from Afghan universities graduated from a USAID-sponsored internship program on road construction and maintenance. The hands-on program allows students to participate in laboratory and field work, better preparing them for their future careers. Ninety-one students have graduated from the program since its inception in 2007, and construction firms now employ many of the program alumni.

The internship program provides instruction in materials testing and quality assurance. Students conduct tests on natural rock and soil found in road beds, and they evaluate the quality of asphalt used by contractors in road construction. It is important for engineers to understand how the environment affects different materials as well as the safety and durability of the road. Some roads, for example, must bear the weight of many trucks while other roads experience lighter traffic.

“When we came as trainees, we were so happy to work with the lab staff and supervisors,” said one of the graduates. “Now, we can do all of the physical testing of soils and materials, and we can go to the sites to do quality assurance.”



Students attend their engineering internship graduation ceremony.

PHOTO: USAID/AIRP



VTC instructors inspect the new engineering text books provided by USAID.

PHOTO: USAID/AEAI

New Technical Reference Books for MEW's Vocational Training Center:

The Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW) established the Vocational Training Center (VTC) in 1976 to prepare technically inclined Afghan students to enter the energy sector workforce. While past conflicts in Afghanistan have limited the development of VTC, the U.S. Government started providing development support in 2006.

On April 5, USAID provided the VTC library with 334 new technical reference books and English dictionaries. The new additions to the library included beginner electrical engineering and mathematical text books, in addition to the English dictionaries. The selection of books was closely coordinated with the VTC instructors in an effort to provide books required for the start of the school year. VTC Director Engineer Tajenesa Besmil thanked USAID for its continued support, saying, “I hope that such kind of cooperation will continue in the future.” The instructors noted that the new books would help them prepare better class lectures by providing up-to-date technical information.



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STABILIZATION

Vocational Training Launched in Ghazni: High unemployment is a major destabilizing factor in Ghazni Province, where many people lack the education and skills they need to escape a lifetime of subsistence farming. To address this, USAID's stabilization program, the Local Governance and Community (LGCD) project, coordinated with provincial and district government officials and community leaders to develop a portfolio of vocational skills workshops.



Stakeholders in Ghazni attend the vocational training program launch.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

On March 29, an opening ceremony for three of these training programs in the provincial capital revealed strong government and community support for the training workshops. District officials and district development council members representing all the planned training locations attended, along with Assistant Director of the Department of Labor and Social Affairs Nasurullah Siasi, who spoke about the importance of encouraging youth to reject violence and learn a vocation in order to build their country. LGCD works in some of Afghanistan's most volatile provinces to promote links between Afghan citizens and their government.



The third class of Afghan Master's in Education students.

PHOTO: USAID/HEP

EDUCATION

New Class of Future Afghan Education Leaders Enter Master's Program: The third group of students in the Afghan Master's of Education program began classes at Kabul Education University on March 23. The 22 participants, half of whom are female, are education professors from universities in Kabul, Baghlan, Faryab, Jawzjan, Kandahar, Paktya, Parwan, and Samangan provinces. The program improves the teaching skills of professors through training in pedagogy, subject knowledge, and professional attitudes.

The participants educate future secondary school teachers at Afghan universities. Their advanced education experience will have a cascading effect on future secondary teachers as they watch how their professors' teaching styles improve and incorporate new methods into their own teaching practice.

Ahmed Shuaib Moslemyar, one of the participants in the third class, said that the course will "teach me about the importance of globalization in education and how Afghanistan can play



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a part in that.” He is very enthusiastic about the degree opportunity and smiled as he said, “For a long time I wanted to...[earn]...a Master’s degree and now I am like a thirsty man in front of a big pond.”

Designing Afghanistan’s First Master’s in Public Health Degree: Afghanistan has very few Master’s in Public Health (MPH)-educated professionals and requires educated personnel to improve the country’s poor health outcomes, such as high child and maternal mortality rates. To address this need, USAID is supporting the development of an MPH program at Kabul Medical University (KMU) – the first graduate degree program to be offered at KMU. The program expects to draw students from Kabul, Hirat, Kandahar, Kapisa, Khost, and Nangarhar provinces.



This USAID-supported task force is designing a Master’s in Public Health program at Kabul Medical University.

PHOTO: USAID/HEP

A task force meets every two weeks to discuss and design the MPH so that future graduates can better address the public health care needs of the Afghan people. The task force includes members from USAID, the Ministry of Public Health, the donor community, non-governmental organizations, and Kabul Institute of Health. Ultimately, the task force will develop a viable, sustainable curriculum tailored to the Afghan context.



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ECONOMIC GROWTH

Afghanistan International Marble Conference

Connects Producers and Investors: From April 12-16, USAID and the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry (ACCI) hosted the second Afghanistan International Marble Conference in Hirat. The fair brought together more than 300 sector stakeholders to highlight the country's wealth of marble, address industry challenges, and learn about new techniques and equipment. Minister of Mines Wahidullah Shahrani, Governor of Hirat Ahmad Yusuf Nuristani, and U.S. Ambassador Karl W. Eikenberry delivered remarks at the conference launch. U.S. Deputy Secretary of State Jacob Lew presented the first Superior Achievement Award to Equity Capital Mining. The Ministry of Finance

announced the removal of tariffs on all Afghanistan-processed marble, effective immediately.



Representatives from Arcan Stone exhibit some of their products at the conference.

PHOTO: USAID/Afghanistan

Afghanistan's marble resources are vast, with the potential to drive the country's economic development. However, decades of conflict have left the Afghan marble industry underfinanced and underdeveloped, conditions that limit its profitability. Thus, the primary benefit of the conference was the opportunity it provided to link Afghan producers with international investors, partners, and donors. One example is that the Ministry of Mines and the Embassy of Italy announced approval of \$40 million for construction and improvements on the road from Hirat to Behsod. Another link example is that the Overseas Private Investment Corporation, American investors, and Afghan partners agreed to provide access to credit ranging from \$100,000 to \$250 million as long-term loans for businesses. A third link is that Afghan Growth Finance agreed to provide access to financing for businesses ranging from \$50,000 to \$10 million with interest rates set between nine and 17 percent.



Students at Zarghona Ana Middle School in Kandahar receive OLPC laptops.

PHOTO: USAID/ASMED

One Laptop per Child Program Distributes

Computers in Kandahar: As part of the One Laptop Per Child (OLPC) Afghanistan initiative, USAID and the Afghan Ministry of Education distributed 200 laptops to 120 girls and 80 boys at Zarghona Ana Middle School in Kandahar City. With the laptops, students and their families can access word processing, the internet, job information, and resources for small business and farm development. OLPC is a joint effort between the Afghan Government, USAID, Roshan Telecom, and Paiwastoon Networking Services Ltd. USAID's



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Afghanistan Small and Medium Enterprise Development (ASMED) project provides financial, logistical, and communications support.

Jalalabad Carpet Traders Move into New Bazaar:

During the years of war and instability in Afghanistan, many carpet weavers and traders relocated to Pakistan. Now, USAID's ASMED project is helping these carpet weavers and traders move their businesses back to Afghanistan. Through a grant to the Eastern Region Carpet Exporter Guild, ASMED provided financial support for transportation costs, temporary storage, and the refurbishment of a new Jalalabad Carpet Bazaar to ease the carpet producers' transition. As an additional incentive to move to Jalalabad, ASMED will provide the guild office with furniture, transportation, a comprehensive business-to-business website, business management and advisory services, and international marketing support.



Carpet traders examine goods at the opening of the Jalalabad Carpet Bazaar.

PHOTO: USAID/ASMED

The new bazaar celebrated its grand opening on March 25. The Governor and Deputy Governor of Nangarhar Province; Deputy Minister of Commerce; head of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industry; and representatives from the Export Promotion Agency of Afghanistan, parliament, the provincial council, and the Carpet Exporter Guild attended the opening event. The bazaar, a modern, secure, and centrally located market, exclusively devoted to the sale of Afghan carpets with room for 180 small and medium businesses, should greatly increase sales throughout the area.



The Afghan Artist and Artisan Exhibition in Hirat led to sales of more than \$60,000.

PHOTO: USAID/ASMED

USAID Sponsors Artisan Fair to Celebrate International Women's Day:

The New Community Development Organization (NCDO), with financial support from USAID, recently hosted a four-day Afghan Artist and Artisan Exhibition in Hirat in coordination with the Directorate of Women's Affairs. The fair, as part of the official celebrations to mark International Women's Day, provided high-profile retail space for 62 exhibitors. Most of the participating businesses were female-owned or female production oriented small and medium enterprises.

The event was a rousing success, with total sales of more than \$60,000. The exhibitors' profit margin was significant enough that the NCDO was



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able to demonstrate how the business owners can self-finance similar events and still turn a profit. The networking element of the event also had a particularly significant impact, as a number of interested traders came to make new market linkages. The Dorkhshan Women Carpets Association from Badghis Province, for example, made eight separate agreements to begin shipping goods to Hirat-based traders. Pre-orders for their carpets are in excess of \$18,000, which is significantly more than their current annual sales.

Afghan Journalists Hone Their Trade and Business Reporting Skills:

A corps of journalists well informed about economics and trade issues is essential for accurate reporting and an open press. To improve the quality of business journalism in Afghanistan, USAID recently supported a workshop about reporting on critical trade issues for nine journalists. Media advisor Naomi Goldsmith worked with the Afghan journalists for five days, facilitating the workshop's classroom and field activities, and mentoring the journalists' work.



Journalists practice interview techniques with a trader at the Kabul Customs House.

PHOTO: USAID/TAFA

As part of the training, USAID's Trade and Accession Facilitation for Afghanistan (TAF) project arranged a trip to the Kabul Customs House, where participants observed trucks arriving from Pakistan, toured the warehouse where goods are inspected, and learned about the laboratory where goods are verified and the offices where the products are classified in a newly automated system. The journalists had the opportunity to speak to traders and Customs House staff about the challenges facing Afghanistan's import and export activities, and how TAF's effort to address these issues will benefit the Afghan economy. At the end of the training, TAF announced the establishment of a press club to raise interest and understanding of trade issues and reporting, thereby building on the knowledge and goodwill created during the workshop.

STABILIZATION

USAID Participates in Badghis Peace Jirga: A recent peace jirga in Qadis District of Badghis Province has reaffirmed the close working relationship between USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) program and the Qadis District Governor, host of the jirga. While the warm spring weather increases the mobility of anti-government elements and the number of attacks across the country, Afghan government officials and security forces joined with local communities and invited international stakeholders to rally in support of peace and governance efforts. The District Governor, provincial government officials, and several international agency representatives, including representatives from USAID, joined an estimated 1,000 local residents at the April 22



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gathering. Speakers emphasized the importance of inter-ethnic unity and cooperation to bring peace to the district, including those portions still controlled by insurgents.

At the event, USAID engaged the youth of Langar Village, who will soon benefit from LGCD infrastructure projects. The projects will employ young men to rehabilitate more than eight kilometers of roads, a quarter kilometer of canals, and 11 culverts. At the jirga, USAID also further strengthened its relationship with the community development committee heads from Buzbay and Khajah, with whom LGCD is coordinating to implement community stabilization grant projects. The Qadis District Governor thanked USAID for its assistance and confirmed the importance of the LGCD program for the district. When the Afghan Government, community members, and the international community work together, development efforts advance and the influence of the insurgency decreases.



Qadis residents, Afghan officials, and USAID representatives attended the peace jirga.
PHOTO: USAID/LGCD



Refugee families receive hygiene kits.
PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

Afghan Government Delivers Hygiene Kits to Displaced Families in Kunar: The government of Kunar Province, with support from USAID’s LGCD program, recently distributed 630 hygiene kits to displaced families that had moved into the Sholtan Valley following fighting in Pakistan’s Bajaur Agency. The distribution took place despite a number of significant security incidents in the area, including a nighttime attack on the District Center. Despite the danger, the Afghan Government and the community continued to support the project, with numerous Afghan officials engaged in the process.

On the second day of the distribution, a delegation from the provincial council distributed some of the kits to the refugee families. LGCD also hired ten laborers to help young orphan refugees and female-headed households in unloading and carrying kits. The District Governor appointed a committee to support this initiative, specifically verifying beneficiaries, ensuring security at distributions, observing the transparency of the process, and using the opportunity to engage with residents in the unstable Sholtan Valley.



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Road in Ghazni Furthers USAID Stabilization

Goals: In late April, LGCD delivered construction materials to community laborers working on a 336-meter road in Sange-e-Masha Village. The village is home to small businesses and families dependent on agriculture as the main source of food and income. Due to the district's terrain, harsh winters, and relatively remote location, this road, connecting the village with the district bazaar, is in a state of severe disrepair. This disrupts farmers' ability to transport undamaged produce and goods to market quickly. The new road will ease the time and cost of transportation to market, enabling farmers to increase their net incomes. It will also provide better access to health clinics and schools.



Men from Sange-e-Masha Village inspect materials for repair of a main access road.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

USAID's Food Insecurity Response in Urban Populations program is mobilizing laborers from the community to complete the work, and LGCD purchased the needed tools and materials. This sharing of resources will maximize USAID's stabilization efforts in the district. The project also provides an immediate source of work and income for the local population, reminding villagers of the Afghan Government's commitment to development.



A grant from the Ambassador's Small Grants Program allowed a local association in Char Bolak to purchase ten cows and run a livestock program for vulnerable women.

PHOTO: USAID/ASGP

CROSS-CUTTING

Ambassador's Small Grants Program Brings Literacy and Livestock to Women in Char Bolak:

Most women in remote Char Bolak District located in Balkh Province are illiterate and live in poverty. Rahima and her husband Haji Shahzada were determined to improve the quality of life of the area's women through their newly established Char Bolak Women Development and Animal Husbandry Association. Hearing about the U.S. Ambassador's Small Grants Program for Gender Equality in Afghanistan, Rahima developed a project to purchase ten cows for vulnerable women in the village, as well as to improve the association's facilities.

As a result of the grant, the association has experienced tremendous growth and has been able to reach out to many local women. The association now has 150 members, 20 of whom are involved in livestock training and a substantial majority of whom receives literacy training. Now that the women have the skills and opportunity to earn an income and



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improve their families' diets, their lives are changing for the better. "For the first time, Char Bolak witnesses the implementation of such a dynamic project that attracts an increasing number of women," Rahima reports proudly.



Midwives graduate in Hirat.

PHOTO: USAID/Afghanistan

HEALTH

Midwives Graduate from Hirat Institute of Health Sciences:

Forty new midwives graduated from the Hirat Institute of Health Sciences, ready to provide improved care to mothers and infants in their home communities, on April 21. Midwives are essential to improving healthcare in Afghanistan, as the country currently has the second highest maternal mortality rate in the world. About every 30 minutes a mother dies giving birth in Afghanistan, and 77 percent of these deaths are due to factors that could be avoided with proper health care. The neonatal mortality rate is also high in Afghanistan, with 60 newborns out of

every 1,000 dying in the first month of life. The 40 newly minted midwives will do their part to ensure that expecting mothers receive necessary prenatal care and assistance during delivery.

Ambassador E. Anthony Wayne, the U.S. Embassy Coordinating Director for Development and Economic Affairs, and Dr. Suraya Dalil, the Acting Minister of Public Health, joined Hirat Governor Yusuf Nuristani, regional Afghan health officials, and members of the international donor community in congratulating the graduates. "It takes two years of intense training to provide these women with the knowledge and skills needed to become midwives, and I thank them for committing to the important role of serving mothers and newborns in Afghanistan," Ambassador Wayne said in his remarks. "By setting this high standard for accreditation, the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) has shown commitment to the goal of professional care for Afghanistan's women and children. We will continue our support to Afghan families in this important area."

This U.S.-funded Health Services Support Program is collaborating with the ministry to support ten midwifery schools throughout Afghanistan and increase the number of skilled midwives in an effort to reduce infant and maternal mortality. With multi-donor support and high-level commitment from the MoPH, the number of midwives in Afghanistan has increased from 467 in 2002 to 2,200 in 2009. USAID has helped train more than 1,400 midwives and developed the midwifery education program utilized by 34 midwifery schools in 32 provinces.



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Improving Disease Outbreak Monitoring: To bring disease surveillance systems to the next level, both local and international public health officials must take advantage of advances in information technology. On April 12, World Health Organization (WHO) and Afghan MoPH personnel completed their first comprehensive training on geographical information systems (GIS). Disease Early Warning System Afghanistan and its partners (WHO, USAID, and UNFPA) initiated the process of training public health professionals in the field with the goal of improving disease surveillance in the country.



Afghan public health professionals learn to use new tools, such as GIS, to improve disease surveillance.

PHOTO: USAID/DEWS

“This training is a stepping stone to building future capacity of our public health managers and surveillance units at the regional level,” said WHO representative for Afghanistan Peter Graaff. “This is the first GIS training program launched in Afghanistan for public health experts and data managers. Today, WHO and the Economic and Social Research Institute International will certify 15 training participants. These participants are public health experts and data managers representing all regions of Afghanistan.”

The training will be followed by establishing GIS units in all regions of Afghanistan and at the national level. This training course will be offered yearly for entry-level public health professionals and data managers, and four refresher trainings per year are scheduled for those who completed the first course. Using mapping software to track disease outbreaks and other public health issues of concern will improve healthcare delivery for the people of Afghanistan.



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AGRICULTURE

Water Pumps Arrive in Marja: USAID, through its Afghanistan Vouchers for Increased Production in Agriculture Plus (AVIPA Plus) program, has delivered the first batch of 4,000 irrigation pumps to Marja District in Hilmand Province. The pumps will benefit rural farm families by bringing much-needed water to fields that will soon see a distribution of red onion, spinach, turnip, radish, carrot, cauliflower, and fertilizers.

The AVIPA Plus pumps, maintenance supplies, and tubes are the first agricultural aid inputs to be taken to Marja District, which continues to be plagued by insurgent-initiated violence. The voucher pumps, combined with the vegetable seed and fertilizer, will help wean the population off the production of poppy, a crop that helps fund the insurgency.

Over the coming months, the delivery of AVIPA Plus agricultural inputs and small grants, as well as the initiation of agricultural training and quick impact cash for work programs, will gradually help to turn the tide in Marja.



The first shipment of irrigation pumps reaches Marja in Hilmand Province.

PHOTO: IRD/AVIPA Plus

HEALTH

Reducing Neonatal, Infant, and Child Mortality in Afghanistan: On May 6, the National Maternal and Child Survival Committee of Afghanistan launched the revised Child and Adolescent Health Policy and Strategy and presented the Reproductive Health Strategy at its inaugural meeting. The revised policy and strategy aim to reduce neonatal, infant, and child mortality, and stress the need for coordination between the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and all its partners to reach the objectives of the National Health and Nutrition Strategy by 2013.

Acting Minister of Public Health Dr. Suraya Dalil chaired the inaugural meeting, bringing together several ministries, donor agencies, UN agencies, academic institutions, private sector representatives, and non-governmental and civil society organizations that contribute to maternal, neonatal, and child survival in Afghanistan. In her remarks, Dr. Dalil noted that despite formidable



Acting Minister of Public Health Dr. Suraya Dalil gives opening remarks at the inaugural meeting of the National Maternal and Child Survival Committee.

PHOTO: USAID/BASICS



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progress in the area of maternal and child health since 2002, too many newborns and children are dying every day in Afghanistan, mostly from preventable or easily curable conditions. Dr. Dalil urged all members to contribute to the effort to reach Afghanistan's Millennium Development Goal, and stated, "Through the implementation of the revised policy, the [MoPH] intends to reduce infant mortality by 30 percent and child mortality by 35 percent."

Established with support from USAID's Basic Support for Institutionalizing Child Survival project, the National Maternal and Child Survival Committee will raise the issue of maternal and child survival with the government of Afghanistan, development partners, and other parties responsible for the health and wellbeing of Afghanistan's mothers and children. It will also ensure that the strategies for reducing maternal and child mortality include the empowerment of families with the knowledge, skills, and behavior to ensure safe motherhood, healthy children, and a good start in life for newborns. Additionally, the committee will focus resources toward the implementation of cost-effective interventions that reduce maternal, infant, and child mortality in Afghanistan. It will monitor progress and evaluate outcomes of maternal and child survival activities and track the allocation and use of financial resources for achieving national health objectives. Finally, it will improve coordination, communication, and knowledge sharing among the key actors concerned with maternal and child survival. To achieve these goals so essential to the health of mothers and children, the committee will meet every four months.

Developing Standard Treatment Guidelines to Improve Medical Care: Afghanistan's MoPH, in collaboration with USAID's Strengthening Pharmaceutical Systems (SPS) program, the World Health Organization, and Kabul Medical University, is developing Standard Treatment Guidelines (STG) for the Basic Package of Health Services. STGs provide physicians, midwives, pharmacists, and community health workers with evidenced-based recommendations and guidance on the appropriate treatment of common diseases and medical conditions. Currently, there are no STGs in Afghanistan, which contributes to improper treatment and the inappropriate use of medicines.



An STG Writers' Orientation Workshop participant presents her ideas to the group.

PHOTO: USAID/SPS

In February, an STG Stakeholders Consensus Workshop gained wide support and buy-in from government officials, health care professionals, non-governmental organizations, private sector health providers, and international health agencies. An STG Writers' Orientation Workshop followed on May 11-12 at the Ibn Sina Emergency Hospital to



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introduce treatment guideline concepts and to teach specific guideline writing principles. Thirty-seven participants from the MoPH and Kabul hospitals attended the two-day workshop. The STGs should be completed by the end of August.

STABILIZATION

Six New Libraries for Khost Students and Citizens: Representatives from six schools and associations in Khost Province have signed agreements to receive grants from USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) program to establish school and community libraries. These projects, created in close coordination with the Khost Department of Education, address a set of long-standing community requests, thereby demonstrating the Afghan Government's responsiveness to community needs.

Four of these grants will be used to set up school libraries, two at girls' schools, which will improve educational services and opportunities for youth. The other two grants will establish public libraries, giving the local populace access to never-before available resources. At the grant signing, Mr. Sayed Mohammad Musa Majroh, a representative of a community receiving one of these grants, expressed his opinion that providing a "safe, calm, and academic place for the district students" will help them to keep busy and turn away from drug use.



The head of the Women United Independent Society signs a grant agreement to provide library books for Gharghast Girls' School.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD



New canal intakes in Laghman Province.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

Canals Provide Irrigation and Electricity:

Following a development shura, USAID's LGCD program completed eight community stabilization grant projects in Laghman's Dawlatshah District. These projects rehabilitated canals that are already providing increased irrigation water for the villages of Abatoo, Chandal, Panba Paya, Chikla, Shaad Mir Dugran, Dumoor, Garookwato, and Mayoo Frashghan.

In Chandal, the community rehabilitated 70 meters of an existing canal to increase the availability of water for its own agricultural land as well as that of nearby villages, and may also be sufficient to provide additional power to two nearby micro-hydropower plants that provide communities with electricity.



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Officials from the Ministry of Energy and Water tour the Tarakhil Power Plant.

PHOTO: USAID/AIRP

INFRASTRUCTURE

Appreciation Ceremony Honors Power Plant Builders:

USAID and the Ministry of Energy and Water (MEW) held an appreciation ceremony at the Tarakhil Power Plant during the first week of May to thank key individuals and organizations for their contributions to the completion of the project.

The plant plays an important role in the delivery of electricity to Kabul and surrounding areas, supplying up to 20 percent of peak power usage during the winter daily peak. In total, the plant produces 105 megawatts of electricity for the Kabul area, an amount capable of providing power to 1.5 million citizens. The plant also houses a state-of-the-art control room to monitor operations. Twenty-eight engineers from Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS – Afghanistan’s

national electricity corporation) are participating in training programs to manage the plant when it is handed over by USAID.

Among those receiving certificates awarded by the Deputy Minister of MEW were the chief operating officer of DABS and the MEW planning director, who paid special tribute to the hard work required to complete the project. “This is not for me,” she said, “but for all of the people who have worked as a team to build this power plant.”

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Faster Payment for Afghan Civil Servants: On April 21, the Ministry of Finance and Da Afghanistan Bank signed an agreement to streamline the direct deposit system for government employees. The agreement will allow the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) to pay salaries more quickly and eliminate the issuance of physical checks, which have caused delays in payroll payments. The U.S. Government supported the enhancement of the national payment system through USAID’s Economic Growth and Governance Initiative.

The enhancement of the national payment system not only allows GIRoA employees to receive salaries without delay, it also mitigates the possibility of employees not receiving the amount to which they are entitled. The Ministry of Finance will also be able to track activity online and enhance its audit controls over transactions for both the creator and the authorizer. This transparent, accountable system will reduce the potential for corruption and other payroll abuses.



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Initially, the enhanced payment program will immediately affect up to 360,000 GIRoA employees currently registered in the existing direct deposit system. In the coming months, all of Afghanistan's government staff – more than 641,000 employees – may benefit from the more efficient process. The overall improvements will include quicker access to salaries, more dependable payment dates, and less interference in payment distribution. This will also set the stage for a more transparent and fully automated salary distribution system, which the GIRoA plans to roll out within the year.



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HEALTH

Afghan Private Hospitals Join Efforts to Fight Tuberculosis: On May 2, eight private hospitals in Kabul signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Afghanistan Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) to join efforts to fight tuberculosis (TB). Under the MOU, the private hospitals will provide TB detection and treatment services free of charge under USAID's TB DOTS program, supplementing the 30 public hospitals and health facilities already providing these services. The MoPH will provide the hospitals with laboratory kits, medication, and training.



Ministry of Public Health and private hospital representatives sign a memorandum of understanding to join efforts to fight TB.

PHOTO: USAID/TB DOTS

DOTS, which stands for Directly Observed Therapy Short Course, is the world standard for TB eradication and involves the detection and direct daily administration of medication by healthcare providers. Tuberculosis, which kills more than 9,000 Afghans each year, is being effectively combated in rural areas through the TB DOTS program. Detection and treatment success rates are impressive and the system is bringing many rural areas up to international norms for diagnosis and treatment success. Urban results, however, have not been as successful, and urban infection and deaths are on the rise. Getting more hospitals involved in treatment is one key to success.

The MoPH Office of Private Sector Coordination and the National Tuberculosis Control Program led the effort in partnership with the Afghan Private Hospital Association. The MoPH plans to extend this initiative to private hospitals in other urban areas in the near future.



A herder displays cashmere at the Road Show.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

AGRICULTURE

Celebrating Cashmere in Panjsher: In mid-May, the first Cashmere Road Show took place in Panjsher province, with participation from both U.S. and Afghan government officials. Last year, the USG-funded Accelerating Sustainable Agriculture Program (ASAP) visited villages in Panjsher and taught 2,700 herders and their families how to comb, collect, and clean cashmere. This event celebrated the success of the past training efforts, and 25 to 30 herders showed up with samples of their cashmere to sell. Their efforts were well rewarded as eager buyers bought all the offered cashmere on contract. The cashmere sellers were paid about \$13.50 per kilogram, the average



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output from four Panjsher goats. The estimated number of cashmere goats in the province is about 25,000.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Students Graduate from Business Internship Program:

This month, 131 students from Hirat University received certificates of accomplishment for completing a three-month internship program organized under the USAID-funded Afghanistan Small and Medium Enterprise Development (ASMED) project. This is the third graduating class since the ASMED internship program began in Afghanistan's western region in 2007. The internship program exposes students to real-world applications in the business environment and gives them practical experience working inside a business. As a direct result of this program, private sector organizations and government offices are already employing several of the recent graduates.



Students graduate from the ASMED business internship program.

PHOTO: USAID/ASMED



An aerial view of the Tarakhil Power Plant.

PHOTO: USAID/AIRP

INFRASTRUCTURE

Energy Networks Maintain Steady Power in Kabul:

During the second week of May, a request came to the USAID-funded 105 megawatt (MW) Tarakhil Power Plant located on the outskirts of Kabul. One of the transmissions lines of the Northeast Power System (NEPS) about 200 km away was damaged. Could the power plant supply the electricity during the repairs?

Six months earlier, the request could not have been granted. However, in December 2009 the fully energized 105 MW plant came on-line, providing enough back-up power to keep the system operating. During the repair to the transmission line, the plant supplied a morning peak of 85 MW. The supplied power ensured that the lights stayed on for an estimated 500,000 residents during the energy-hungry daylight hours.

"The incredible thing," said a top energy official with USAID's Office of Infrastructure, Engineering and Energy, "is that the system was down and nobody even knew it. A year ago, Kabul would have been dark." A further success is that communication was seamless between the plant and Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat, Afghanistan's power utility. "This is really a routine activity at this point," the plant manager said. "When a line goes down, other stations pick it up."



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PROVINCIAL RECONSTRUCTION TEAM

Community Infrastructure Handover Ceremony:

On May 10, Afghan citizens and officials in Hirat's Saywoshan Valley celebrated the completion of four small bridges over irrigation canals and a school boundary wall. The structures, which were built under USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) Program, are now owned by the community. The boundary wall provides privacy and security for female students, which will greatly increase school attendance. The bridges, which were destroyed in October 2009 by anti-government elements before Afghan and international forces brought stability, will allow greater mobility and safe passage for Saywoshan communities.



Saywoshan residents stand on a new bridge.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

Afghan officials at the handover ceremony highlighted the importance of providing a safe environment to encourage students, especially girls, to continue their education in rural areas. In their remarks, the district governor and chief of police urged community members to encourage others to continue to support government peace and development efforts and expressed appreciation to USAID for the completed construction projects.



Female Afghan officials in Baghlan learn about the media and its uses.

PHOTO: USAID/Afghanistan

CROSS-CUTTING

Tuning in to Women and Media: On May 16, PAIMAN Radio successfully completed the first of a series of two workshops focusing on women and media in Baghlan province. Through a State Department public diplomacy grant, PAIMAN conducted a training workshop to strengthen the skills of 20 female officials already in leadership positions. The second set of workshops will introduce younger females in university and high school to the idea of using media to create messages and influence.

The use of media by women has proved to be a critical gap in Baghlan. During the campaign leading up to the August 2009 elections, eight women ran for seats on the provincial council, but only two took advantage of radio and TV for their campaigns. PAIMAN, located in Baghlani-Jadid, provides a critical link with citizens in a very unstable district. The grant also provided the station with the necessary equipment to increase its capacity, enabling PAIMAN's progressive programming to reach all citizens within the district as well as the more remote surrounding areas.



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HEALTH

National Immunization Days Fight Polio:

Afghanistan is one of four countries still suffering from active transmission of the polio virus. Although polio cases have decreased since 2001, there were still 23 documented cases of this preventable disease as of October 2009. To halt disease transmission, the Afghan Government conducts eight regional polio vaccination campaigns each year for children under five.

With support from USAID, Afghanistan conducted an immunization campaign in the southern and eastern regions of Afghanistan from June 7-9. The campaign reached 2.9 million children. Those Afghan families unable to travel to health facilities to obtain vaccinations for their children benefit from the mobile approach of national immunization days, as it ensures that as many children as possible are protected against polio. As the official campaign slogan states, "Every child counts, every drop helps."



A 12-year-old boy, crippled by polio five years ago, helps to vaccinate a young child against the disease.

PHOTO: Afghan Ministry of Public Health



Community leaders and project staff select well locations based on village needs.

PHOTO: USAID/SWSS

INFRASTRUCTURE

Laghman Residents Gain Access to Potable Water:

Many people throughout Afghanistan do not have access to the clean water needed for drinking, cooking, and bathing. To improve health and sanitation for rural Afghans, USAID's Afghan Sustainable Water Supply and Sanitation (SWSS) project recently started to build 15 new wells in Qarghaee District of Laghman Province. USAID worked with community development councils to select the wells' locations in accordance with community needs.

More than 300 households will benefit from the new wells. According to Qarghaee residents, access to clean water is an urgent need because their children frequently suffer from waterborne diseases. Abdul Wakil, a resident of Qarghaee District, explained, "We have to walk a long way to get potable water, but now with these new wells we will have water pumps within our own house boundaries." SWSS also teaches communities how to care for their newly built infrastructure. Communities assign members to care for the new wells and users contribute a nominal sum to ensure that spare parts can be purchased should the need arise.



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SWSS seeks to increase access to potable water supply and sanitation services in poor communities, decrease the prevalence of water-related diseases through household hygiene interventions, and improve the sustainable management of potable water quality and quantity in project-assisted communities. SWSS plans to build 1,800 wells throughout Afghanistan in its first year of operations to provide potable water to thousands of households currently suffering from waterborne diseases and lacking safe toilets.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Increased Efficiency at Da Afghanistan Bank: Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB, the Central Bank) recently implemented Core Banking System (CBS) operations at teller service windows, a move that will significantly reduce customer transaction processing times and posting errors. Before installation, back office operators entered transactions into the CBS based on a hand-written voucher. With workstations at service windows, the teller completes transaction processing and voucher printing, which will reduce processing times from 25 minutes to 10 minutes.



A Da Afghanistan Bank teller prints a CBS-issued voucher following a client transaction.

PHOTO: USAID/EGGI

USAID's Economic Growth and Governance Initiative is supporting DAB with these CBS improvements, which will continue to enhance accounting, financial reporting, and payment transfer services. The new CBS procedures have also been implemented in DAB zone offices in Kunduz, Mazar-i Sharif, and Jalalabad, with more branches expected to come online in the next few months.



Participants of the Baseline Assessment Survey of Women and Young Entrepreneurs workshop in Kabul.

PHOTO: USAID/TAFA

Assisting Women and Young Entrepreneurs: To address the unique challenges facing youth and women in business in Afghanistan, USAID recently held a two-day workshop titled "Baseline Assessment Survey of Women and Young Entrepreneurs" for the Afghan Women's Business Federation (AWBF). Participants included young entrepreneurs and businesswomen identified through their work with the AWBF and its member organizations.

The workshop provided an opportunity for youth and women to express their concerns related to trade facilitation and trade reform, and identify areas where trade issues affect their livelihoods. Participants



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enjoyed presentations on trade and tariff policy reform, barriers to trade, and benefits of improved trade processes in Afghanistan, such as improved standards of goods to reach international markets. The workshop raised a number of key issues to be addressed, such as exemption from income taxes, annual custom tax procedures, the identification of international markets for Afghan goods, and the need for government and international financial and technical support for young entrepreneurs.

Moving forward, USAID's Trade and Accession Facilitation (TAF) program will use the feedback gathered from the participants to structure programs that address the needs of women and youth. TAF will also follow its workshop participants to identify how their perceptions towards trade issues change over time, and if the trade issues affecting their livelihoods improve over time.

Aqcha Islamic Investment and Finance

Cooperative Turns Three: On April 25, the Jawzjan-based Aqcha Islamic Investment and Finance Cooperative (AIIFC) celebrated its third anniversary at its annual general assembly meeting. Since its launch in April 2007, the AIIFC's highly motivated and committed employees served as volunteers, formulating and adopting the governing laws and articles of incorporation, and developing the policies that govern the cooperative's overall operations.

Today, the AIIFC is one of Afghanistan's most successful IIFCs, due to its strong business operations and outstanding performance that yields strong income growth. Through extending crop production and livelihood projects and providing its members with a micro-credit program, the AIIFC increased its net income by 45 percent from March 2009 to March 2010, a record one-year net income improvement. With the increased income, AIIFC members are receiving a larger share in the form of dividends credited directly to their member shares and savings accounts.



The Aqcha Islamic Investment and Finance Cooperative celebrates its third anniversary.

PHOTO: USAID/RUFCOD

Cool Storage Facility Opens in Panjsher Province: On April 27, the Koh-e-Tolkha Cooperative in Panjsher Province celebrated the opening of a new cool storage facility. USAID's Afghanistan Small and Medium Enterprise Development Program provided a grant to finance construction of the facility and to train farmers on proper produce storage techniques.



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In the past, local farmers' profitability was limited by the lack of product storage facilities. The farmers had to sell their products when harvested, flooding the market with fresh produce and sharply reducing its price, leaving farmers with great profit losses. In addition, about 30 percent of the produce was lost due to spoilage. The new facility can hold 50 metric tons of fresh fruit and other agricultural products, allowing farmers to store their produce and sell it when prices and demand increase during post-harvest months.

STABILIZATION

Bakery Raises Dough, Extra Time for Residents of

Gujerekhil: Thanks to USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) program, residents of Gujerekhil Village in Parwan Province now have a local bakery. LGCD provided bakery equipment and supplies, which led to the opening of the first bread bakery in the Gujerekhil area. Since June 3, the bakery has been operating six days a week, five hours a day. The bakery is run by a resident, who was selected by the community because he previously owned a bakery in Pakistan. The owner provided the building for the bakery, and LGCD provided the oven, necessary equipment, and an initial supply of flour.



Gujerekhil community members celebrate their new bakery.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

This project provides increased access to affordable bread for an area that includes 250 families (a population of 1,750). The community is very happy about this project, and residents stated that having a bread bakery was an important priority for the community. Now, women are able to drop off their dough to be baked and can spend time on other activities.



Arghandab residents listen to the first radio broadcast.

PHOTO: USAID/Afghanistan

Tuning in to Good Governance with Arghandab

Radio: June 9 marked the opening of a new radio station in the Arghandab District Center in Kandahar Province. This initiative was a result of cooperation among the local government, USAID, and the military. District Development Assembly (DDA) members were excited about the radio station and said it would bring better security and a new era of open communication in the district.

Currently, the station has a broadcast radius of 25 kilometers, with plans to expand in the near future. Radio personnel are receiving training, and more staff



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is expected to join the team in the near future through USAID's Afghanistan Stabilization Initiative (ASI) program. The station's initial programming consists of news, public service announcements, security updates, weather forecasts, and music. Programming will soon expand with content such as interviews, cooking shows, agricultural news, and messages from district leaders in order to reach a broader audience.

During the next DDA shura, village elders will receive radios so their constituents can hear about new developments in the district. Arghandab Radio is a step toward increasing transparency in local government and making representatives more accountable to the population.

EDUCATION

Active Lessons for Future Doctors: Afghan medical English teachers from six provinces learned how to create student-centered classrooms and inject fun into their lessons during a training course facilitated by the USAID-funded Higher Education Project (HEP). Eight English faculty members from medical schools in Kabul, Balkh, Kandahar, Kapisa, Khost, and Nangarhar participated in the training from May-June 2010, learning how to use modern methodology and create a more active learning environment.

English teachers in Afghanistan's medical schools have to battle with large class numbers, lack of facilities, and few teaching materials. A lively learning environment and access to modern resources will produce doctors better equipped to improve healthcare delivery in Afghanistan. The faculty members who participated in the HEP course will implement their new skill set in the medical school classroom to encourage students. A specialized *Medical English Resource Book* written by project staff will be available to the teachers in July 2010.

A faculty member from Khost said, "I learned a lot about methodology and will use the new ideas to make my lessons more interesting for the students." HEP trainers will visit each of the provinces regularly to observe the teachers' progress and provide guidance.

Communities Bank on New Financial Institution: A crowd of more than 80 gathered in Qalat Ruy Deh Village in Panjsher Province on June 9 to witness the grand opening of the Isteqlal Community Bank, the first community bank in Panjsher. A ribbon-cutting ceremony and luncheon celebration, provided by the local villagers, demonstrated support and



A trainee learns to use a word jumble exercise to make English lessons more engaging.

PHOTO: USAID/HEP



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enthusiasm for the new bank, which was funded through the USAID Learning for Community Empowerment Program-2 (LCEP-2). To increase Afghans' access to capital, LCEP-2 integrates literacy and numeracy education with vocational and business development skills and helps establish savings and investment groups who invest in microenterprises and livelihood activities. With USAID support, these groups are federated to form community banks, which foster community economic empowerment and promote self-employment for Afghans.

In compliance with Sharia law, the Isteqlal Community Bank does not collect interest. The bank's system of administration includes representatives chosen from among 19 separate male and female self-help groups that are currently depositing money into the bank. Their hope is to use the bank as an opportunity to create community wealth and to support a variety of individual and group local economic opportunities. Concurrent with the event, 14 women gathered in a nearby school for an LCEP-2 train-the-trainer session to enhance their knowledge of financial literacy to provide instruction for local self-help groups.



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INFRASTRUCTURE

Tarakhil Power Plant Transferred to Afghan Government: On June 27, the U.S. Government transferred control of the 105-megawatt Tarakhil Power Plant to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Tarakhil, a state-of-the-art thermal facility, is capable of serving more than half a million Kabul residents at peak periods. Three years ago, Kabul received only a few hours of electricity per day, but now has round-the-clock power thanks to Tarakhil and other energy initiatives.

Flanked by Afghan ministers and accompanied by USAID Mission Director Earl Gast, U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry called the transfer another example of America's commitment to Afghanistan's development. "I am deeply honored to represent the American people to celebrate the success of extending power to 600,000 men, women, and children," Ambassador Eikenberry said. "The transfer of this highly efficient power plant to the Government of Afghanistan increases access to energy and affects everything the Afghan Government wants to achieve for its people."

Ambassador Eikenberry singled out for special recognition the plant's Afghan operators, who will assume management of the plant and help Afghanistan to meet its goals of self-reliance and businesslike performance in the energy sector. "These fine young people in green and orange are the future of Afghanistan and the reason for hope and confidence," the Ambassador said.



U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry (right) is joined by (right to left) Minister of Economy Abdul Hadi Arghandiwal, USAID Mission Director Earl Gast, and a power plant operator to transfer the Tarakhil Power Plant from the American to the Afghan people.

PHOTO: USAID/AIRP



Children in Bagh-e-pol Village receive their new school supplies.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

STABILIZATION

Zhari District Governor Supports Schools: In Zhari District, Kandahar Province, schools have been abandoned for the past two years after the Taliban closed them. Reopening them was a priority for District Governor Niaz Muhammad Sarhadi. USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) program provided him with school supplies including 150 desks and chairs, stationery, and other classroom equipment to distribute to Pir Mohammad School in Senajary Village and a temporary school in Bagh-e-pol Village.



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Community members came out to see the District Governor and school principals distribute the supplies, and reporters patrolling with ISAF forces that day covered the event. Classes at the temporary school in Bagh-e-pol are now in session, and students are pleased to have proper school supplies to aid their studies. Students of Pir Mohammad School will enjoy their new supplies when the school reopens in September. LGCD is continuing to work with local Afghan government institutions to strengthen governance through improved service delivery in Zhari.

Health Training Reaches Women Throughout Logar Province: The Department of Women's Affairs (DoWA) in Logar has prioritized health education for women to combat high rates of preventable disease and infant mortality. USAID's LGCD program partnered with DoWA to implement a two-phase health and hygiene program for women in four priority districts where educational opportunities are extremely scarce. Female trainers from the districts of Puli Alam, Azra, Muhammad Agha, and Charkh completed a training-of-trainers session and then led classes of 60 women from each respective district.

After completing the training, the participants committed to sharing their knowledge with two other women in their home villages. Thus far, 320 women received training and LCGD distributed 500 hygiene kits containing basic toiletries to families in these vulnerable districts. By supporting sub-national Afghan government institutions like DoWA with the resources required to deliver basic services and establish a presence in volatile areas, LGCD is working to improve stability in Afghanistan.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Afghan Carpet Traders Participate in Domotex Middle East Trade Show: Ten Afghan carpet companies successfully participated in the Domotex Middle East Trade Show in Dubai. USAID's Afghanistan Small and Medium Enterprise Development (ASMED) project sponsored a pavilion representing carpet production from various regions of the country. The Afghanistan pavilion displayed many styles and designs, including Khal Mohammadi, Mushwani, Chobi Ziegler, Sherwan, Turkmen Bokhara, Kazak, Kargai, and Belgique.

Although the global carpet market is suffering from the effects of the global economic recession, Afghan participants' sales and contracts totaled \$450,000, a 15 percent increase from the previous year. Buyers represented hotel chains, apartment complexes, and carpet wholesale and retail outlets from across the Middle East.



Potential customers admire Afghan carpets at the Domotex Middle East Trade Show.

PHOTO: USAID/ASMED



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

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ASMED also worked with the Export Promotion Agency of Afghanistan (EPAA) to host a matchmaking event, bringing together Afghan carpet traders and several buyers in a more intimate venue to discuss overcoming obstacles to trade between Afghanistan and the Gulf region. ASMED presented various project initiatives designed to support the value chain, including cut-and-wash facilities and carpet design training. ASMED and the EPAA are considering further marketing initiatives, including a trade mission to Russia and South Africa.

Successful Core Banking System Implementation in Da Afghanistan Bank's SherKhan Bandar Border Branch:

USAID's Economic Growth and Governance Initiative and Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB) have implemented the Core Banking System (CBS) in DAB's SherKhan Bandar border branch. This achievement brings the number of DAB branches using the system to 33.

The CBS allows the SherKhan Bandar branch to produce daily trial balance and profit and loss statements. Its clients get daily computer generated statements, which minimize errors and discrepancies. Moreover, the system eliminates the need to prepare manual statements for each account. This improvement will have a positive impact on revenue collection and on-time transfer to the treasury single account at DAB's head office. The border branches are especially important to both the Ministry of Finance and DAB as a convenient and efficient location for border-crossers to pay fees and duties.



A trainer instructs staff of the SherKhan Bandar border branch on how to use CBS reports.

PHOTO: USAID/EGGI



Provincial Council member Mahbobullah Mahbob cuts the ribbon to inaugurate the Kunduz Gemstone Training Center.

PHOTO: USAID/ASMED

Gemstone Training Center Launched: The Shamal Afghanistan Jewelry and Gemstone Association Training Center in Kunduz Province celebrated its official inauguration. USAID's ASMED project supported establishment of the training center by providing specialized equipment for cutting and polishing gemstones, as well as two generators.

The gemstone training center is the first of its kind in Afghanistan and will help to increase the quality of gemstones cut and polished in Afghanistan. The center represents the strength of Afghanistan design as an internationally recognized and high-quality brand for export.



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DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

Paved Roads in the Tirin Kot Bazaar: USAID's Afghanistan Municipal Strengthening Program recently paved three streets in the Tirin Kot Bazaar in Uruzgan Province. The project paved the bazaar area's three main roads totaling 500 meters in length. The concrete pavement is a significant improvement over the previously dirt roads, which were extremely dusty during dry periods and very muddy during the wet seasons. Having a paved street has greatly benefited both the merchants and the customers in the Tirin Kot Bazaar.



Merchants and customers walk along the newly paved road in the Tirin Kot Bazaar.

PHOTO: USAID/AMSP

The poured concrete streets were the third phase of a learning-by-doing street construction program in Tirin Kot that had previously constructed three cobblestone street sections and a concrete paver street section in other areas of the city. The local labor force performed work on all three projects.



Kandahar University students and faculty tour the new ANGeL center.

PHOTO: USAID/AeQA

EDUCATION

Afghan Next Generation e-Learning (ANGeL)

Center Opens at Kandahar University: On June 17, Kandahar University administrators, faculty members, and students celebrated the opening of the university's ANGeL Center. The center will fundamentally change the roles of faculty by giving them access to current information in their respective disciplines. Through computers in the center, instructors will be able to connect to the Afghanistan digital library system and e-learning resources, such as online journals and academic papers. Since resources will be readily available, instructors will be able to spend less time searching for materials and

focus more time on facilitating student learning.

Vice Chancellor Shah Mahmoud Barak opened the ceremony by emphasizing the importance of this learning center to Kandahar University's efforts to provide quality instruction. A USAID representative noted that the ANGeL Center will provide an important link between Kandahar University and universities in other parts of the world. Students will



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now have access to online courses in academic areas that are not currently available in Kandahar.

IT skills instruction at the center will follow the International Computer Drivers License (ICDL) curriculum. This ANGeL Center – like the six other ANGeL Centers already operating in Afghan universities – will be licensed to offer ICDL certificates to individuals who complete all seven course modules and obtain a passing score on the ICDL exam. The ICDL and English classes will begin this summer.

After the ceremony, members of the university community visited the ANGeL Center, which includes 50 computers and other media that will support instruction in information technology, English, and e-learning for Kandahar University faculty and students. Students and faculty members who attended the ribbon cutting ceremony expressed their gratitude to USAID and Afghan eQuality Alliances for making it possible to access the skills and information they need.



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STABILIZATION

Rehabilitating the Potable Water Supply in Paymunar Village: In early July, USAID worked with the Afghan Government and Paymunar Village in Kabul Province to improve the village's access to fresh, clean water. In Paymunar, many families had been using unsanitary water from irrigation canals, causing a number of health issues in the community.

By supporting the Afghan Government's efforts to respond to community needs at the district and provincial level, LGCD aims to improve the relationships between vulnerable populations and their local governments in Afghanistan's most volatile provinces.



Children collect clean drinking water from a rehabilitated hand-pump well in Paymunar.
PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

Residents approached the District Governor for assistance in rehabilitating 20 hand-pump wells, and USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project provided a grant to allow the District Governor to fulfill the request. The grant also provided short-term employment for local laborers. Soon thereafter, five repaired hand-pump wells were installed and supplied potable water to 380 families in the village. Work continues on the remaining wells.

"I am pleased that our *malik* (village elder) did a wonderful job in introducing this project to the District Governor, and that the Government approved the project and sent it to LGCD. Finally, we are pleased and thankful for LGCD's implementation of this project," said Shafiullah, a Paymunar Village resident.



Parmakan School students enjoy learning in their refurbished classroom.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

USAID and U.S. Special Forces Repair School in Shindand: Since fighting between the Taliban and Coalition Forces damaged their school, the 600 students at Parmakan School in Hirat Province's Zirkoh Valley have been forced to sit on the floor during classes in a room riddled with bullet holes. U.S. Special Forces pledged to help the community repair the damage, and USAID's LGCD program coordinated with the U.S. Department of Education to furnish the newly refurbished school with desks and chairs for all students, teachers, and administrators.



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The handover ceremony for the refurbished school building coincided with delivery of the furniture on June 23, 2010. Village leaders, Afghan government officials, U.S. Special Forces, and USAID representatives attended the handover and were pleased that repairing the school encouraged cooperation. By working in close coordination with sub-national Afghan Government institutions and officials, the LGCD program fosters better relationships between communities and local governments to improve the delivery of public services by the Afghan Government in the most volatile provinces.



Laborers from Shah Kabul Kaln receive tools at the launch of the road project.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

Wardak Village Gains Access to the Kabul-Kandahar Highway: Wardak Province straddles the key highway linking Kabul to southern Afghanistan. The Governor of Wardak identified poor transportation infrastructure as a major obstacle to engaging rural communities. In response, USAID's LGCD program is working with community development councils in priority districts to identify road improvement projects that most effectively address vulnerable villages' grievances.

Through a USAID grant, Shah Kabul Kaln villagers began a cash-for-work project to gravel the 10-kilometer road linking their village to the Kabul-Kandahar Highway. The U.S. Military provided more than \$15,000 worth of gravel to the community. Improved access to the Kabul-Kandahar Highway now allows year-round access to markets, bazaars, and medical care at the District Center, and creates a closer link to government resources.

EDUCATION

Science Educators Learn to Use Locally Available Teaching Aids: A lack of teaching material and classroom resources can hinder even the most experienced teacher's ability to engage students in active learning. In Afghanistan, many schools do not have textbooks or teaching aids. Additionally, most teachers in Afghanistan have not completed twelfth grade, nor attended a teacher training college.

To improve the quality of instruction in schools, the USAID-funded Building Education Support Systems for Teachers (BESST) program provides teachers with intensive twelve-day workshops to learn and



Teachers observe the use of locally available teaching materials in a chemistry experiment.

PHOTO: USAID/BESST



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practice active, hands-on teaching methods, including the use of teaching aids. The current round of training is being conducted for educators of science subjects in grades seven to 12. During the training, the teachers learn to make and use teaching aids from materials found in nature or that can be purchased inexpensively in local markets.

Recently, BESST held a workshop at Safiudin High School in Hirat Province. Sixteen teachers (nine females) practiced teaching lessons with materials they had found, made, or bought at a low price. Teachers in small groups designed science lessons on electric charges in water, contraction and expansion processes with temperature, and how lungs work. “The BESST project has played an important role in capacity building of teachers and school managers in the use of active teaching methods and other important skills for educators,” commented the school’s headmaster as he observed the training.

Across 11 of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces, an estimated 13,000 teachers will have completed the science subject training (as of June 2010).

INFRASTRUCTURE

Establishing a Road Authority in Afghanistan: In mid-June, senior level officials from the Afghan Government and leaders from the private sector gathered at a USAID-sponsored conference in India to hear innovative practitioners from around the world discuss best practices in road management and finance.

The purpose of the “Conference on the Management and Financing of Roads” was to advance the Afghanistan National Development Strategy to provide sustainable financing and management of Afghanistan’s newly revitalized road network. It concluded with an action plan for the creation of an independent road authority to manage the private sector delivery of both road construction and maintenance.



Senior Afghan officials consider the way forward in creating an independent private sector oriented road authority to manage and finance the nation’s road assets.

PHOTO: USAID/AIRP

Through donor funding of close to \$4 billion, Afghanistan has seen its road network become one of the country’s greatest national assets. However, this valuable asset will rapidly erode without continued maintenance. “Paying attention to road maintenance is one the most vital issues for Afghanistan’s economic growth,” said Azarakhsh Hafezi, president of the International Affairs Committee of the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce and Industries.



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ECONOMIC GROWTH

Children in Baghlan Receive “One Laptop Per Child” Computers: On July 11, the Ministry of Education provided specially designed laptops through the One Laptop per Child (OLPC) Afghanistan program to 279 children and teachers from grades four through six at Firdausi High School. These computers will be integrated into the school’s teaching curricula, providing students with vast educational resources including access to word processing and e-mail. Equipped with internet connectivity, educational software, and a small business tutorial and market information toolkit provided in Dari and Pashto by USAID, the computers are a valuable tool for the entire family.



Children in Baghlan line up to receive their One Laptop per Child computers.

PHOTO: USAID/ASMED

“The integration of this technology into schools across the country is changing the face of education in Afghanistan, offering children a window to the outside world, access to educational resources, and empowering them for future growth and development,” said Earl Gast, USAID Afghanistan Mission Director. “These computers are an investment in Afghanistan’s most important resource – its people.”

The innovative OLPC Afghanistan program is a public-private partnership between USAID, the U.S.-based One Laptop per Child Foundation, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Communication and Information Technology, Roshan Social Programs, and the Afghan telecom company Paiwastoon Networking Services. USAID is providing financial support for the program through its Afghanistan Small and Medium Enterprise Development (ASMED) project. Thus far, 3,500 laptops – more than half of the total committed – have been distributed in schools throughout the country. This successful venture improves Afghanistan’s educational system and rebuilds the country’s human capacity, creating opportunities for much-needed income generation.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

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HEALTH

Community Outreach Promotes Healthy Behaviors:

USAID is working with local non-government organizations to implement *Jalasa Sehi Jamea* (JSJ), or community health meetings, as an effective way to spread key health messages and promote positive behavior change within villages and communities. The JSJ program is a series of structured, segregated meetings of men and women who live in the same community carried out over a six-month period of time.

Using local language audiocassettes, these two-hour interactive sessions bring information and answers to the health discussions in a confidential and supportive environment. During the sessions, the men and women are able to learn about birth spacing methods, safe water systems, and diarrhea prevention products as well as express their needs and misconceptions related to these public health products.



A facilitator leads a community-based JSJ women's health meeting.

PHOTO: USAID/COMPRI-A



Men discuss birth spacing products and other health products at a JSJ men's meeting in Daman District, Kandahar.

PHOTO: USAID/COMPRI-A

Participants' direct participation is encouraged and accurate information on the health topics and USAID's socially marketed condoms, oral and injectable contraceptives, safe water solution, and oral rehydration salts is presented. The participation of husbands within the separate male sessions underscores the role they play in providing basic family planning and maternal and child healthcare for their families. The JSJ sessions are complemented by radio and TV spots, religious leader training, and in more remote areas, mobile cinemas.

The program was first introduced in four districts of Hirat, Nangarhar, Takhar and Bamyán provinces and was later expanded to 24 districts in Hilmand, Uruzgan, Kandahar, Farah, Nimroz, and Ghazni

provinces. Recently, the program further expanded to an additional 88 districts in 18 provinces, with a particular emphasis on key terrain districts and provinces in the south and east with the goal of reaching all 34 provinces in the country. So far, the program has conducted over 5,250 meeting sessions and reached approximately 70,500 men and women with life-saving health information.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

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EDUCATION

USAID Returnees Bring Research Methods to Their Universities: Master's graduates from the University of Massachusetts (UMass), Amherst Center for International Education are giving back to their faculties of education by passing on training and research as part of USAID's Higher Education Project (HEP) returnees program

Between July 3-15, a workshop brought together returnees from five universities to share their experiences of coming home and to design and develop a "Basics of Academic Research Course" for their colleagues.



USAID's Higher Education Project (HEP) returnees program members.

PHOTO: USAID/HEP

The six USAID/HEP returnees not only brought the knowledge and experience they acquired at UMass, but also a practical perspective on the Afghan higher education context to the course design process. Their background gave them a unique insight into carrying out research in Afghanistan and also key knowledge about the needs and capabilities of their Faculty of Education colleagues. In addition, they were knowledgeable about the procedures of the Ministry of Higher Education, which outlined in its National Higher Education Strategic Plan 2010-2014 its commitment to improving academic research in their institutions.

Improving Reading in Community Based Schools: The USAID Partnership for Advancing Community-based Education in Afghanistan (PACE-A) project organized training for 17 emergency community-based education (ECBE) trainers from Hilmand, Kandahar, and Urzgan provinces. The training mainly focused on improving participants' knowledge in supporting the ECBEs. The participants gained new methods on how to improve students' reading skills. In addition, the trainers also obtained new knowledge on community mobilization such as how to convince people to establish school management committees to support education and sustain school operations.

Due to insurgent activity in the abovementioned provinces, the Ministry of Education-run schools have been closed, and there was no opportunity for students to continue their education. USAID installed the ECBE in areas where the populations have been displaced or threatened by displacement. In addition to the training, the teachers receive new skills and teaching methodology like how to attract students to actively participate in the learning process. Communities and parents were not seriously involved in school activities in the past.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

July 16-July 31, 2010

STABILIZATION

Cricket Training in Jalalabad Brings Young Cricketers from the Eastern Region Together:

Sports can be an effective medium to engage at-risk youth in a healthy and productive activity that transcends tribal and ethnic lines – a rare symbol of national unity. With Afghanistan's recent cricket success on the world stage, qualifying for its first major national team tournament (2010 ICC WorldTwenty20), cricket is becoming a very popular sport.

A recent USAID/Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project provided 22 young cricketers playing for their provincial teams from Laghman, Kunar, and Nangarhar with the opportunity to train for two weeks at the Nangarhar Cricket Academy in Jalalabad - with new uniforms and cricket equipment they could keep. The training allowed the boys to build friendships, learn better sportsmanship, and improve their athletic skills with professional mentors. The final cricket match and closing ceremony event was covered by various local media outlets. USAID's Deputy Field Program Officer for Nangarhar, the Head of Youth Affairs in Laghman Province, and Nangarhar's Head of Sports and Olympics were joined in the audience by two Afghan national cricket players and their Deputy Coach, who announced that he may select one of the trainees from Kunar Province to play on the National under-19 Cricket Team and thanked USAID/LGCD for providing him with the opportunity to discover unknown talent in the country. The Local Governance and Community Development program is a USAID stabilization program working to strengthen the connections between communities and their local governments at the district and provincial level throughout Afghanistan.



Aftab Alam, national cricket team member, awards medals to young cricketers.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

Kandahar City Youth Engaged in Vocational Training: In Kandahar City, USAID's LGCD program is funding a six-month vocational training program in masonry and carpentry for 40 working-age men. At the opening ceremony on August 2, 2010, the Manager of Vocational Training Programs at the Department of Labor and Social Affairs (DoLSA) spoke about the importance of the opportunity this training represented for the individual trainees as they face high rates of unemployment. Both the office of the Governor and DoLSA were closely involved in planning the project, a process LGCD pursues in-line with its aim to build communities' confidence in the government's capacity to provide these services. As these trainees enter the workforce, the project also represents an effort to ensure that funds being spent on construction projects in Kandahar profit local laborers.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

July 16-July 31, 2010

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Assistance to 14 Budgetary Units in Preparing Budget Circular 1 for (Afghan Year)

1390: Budget Circular 1 is an essential document that requires a budgetary unit to specify its priorities for the next three years and indicate how these priorities will be achieved through new and ongoing development projects. At this stage, only indicative cost figures are required, but the priorities must be clear, precise, and well-defined to reflect the budgetary unit's policies and responsibilities and their relationship with Afghanistan National Development Strategy. This document is the first step that marks the beginning of the New Budget Preparation cycle for 1390. All 14 budgetary units assisted by Economic Growth and Governance Initiative (EGGI) advisors submitted their Budget Circular No. 1 to the Ministry of Finance.

Training of Introduction to the Economy of

Afghanistan: On June 7, 2010, Private Sector Development Directorate (PSDD) staff received training on "Introduction to Economy of Afghanistan." The training sought to increase the Directorate staff's awareness and understanding of core issues and the context of their work within the Ministry of Commerce and Industries (MOCI).

Provincial Budget Execution Workshop at the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and the Disabled:

On May 30, 2010, EGGI advisors, in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance, conducted a Provincial Budget Execution Workshop for 41 Provincial Directors and staff from the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled. The workshop provided instruction on program budget reform and budget execution. The Budget Execution module broadly explained the coding system and filling processes for different budget execution forms.

Training of Trainers Workshop for Program Budget Trainers: On June 9, 2010, the Ministry of Finance Budget Integration Reform Unit conducted a "Training of Trainers" workshop for eight EGGI program budget trainers to prepare them for upcoming Program Budget workshops. The training focused on revised training modules, forms and other important terminologies.



EGGI principal advisors lecture during the Introduction to the Economy of Afghanistan training session.

PHOTO: USAID/EGGI



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

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INFRASTRUCTURE

Training for Water Utility Business Units: USAID's Commercialization of Afghanistan Water and Sanitation Activity Program (CAWSA) is continuing its on-the-job training in four water utility Strategic Business Units. CAWSA completed GPS training for the Gardez Water Supply Department's technical unit head and the head of field technicians on how to collect key coordinates and leveling points that will be used to prepare digital maps of the distribution network and relevant infrastructure. These maps will incorporate critical maintenance planning information including the age, composition, and condition of system components. This activity will help the Gardez Water Supply Department improve its management of the water utility by providing critical information on the system infrastructure. USAID's project is helping utilities such as Gardez improve service delivery and efficiently provide clean, potable water for their customers.



A CAWSA technical engineer provides practical GPS training in the field to the Gardez Water Supply Department.

PHOTO: USAID/CAWSA



Participants outline community-led total sanitation requirements and responsibilities.

PHOTO: USAID/SWSS

Community-led Total Sanitation: Ninety-two percent of Afghanistan's nearly 30 million people do not have access to proper sanitation. This has placed the country at the top of the list of "the worst places in the world for sanitation." About 25 percent of under-five children in Afghanistan are affected annually by diseases originating from poor and/or bad sanitation. In order to help address this problem, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Government of Afghanistan are investing in projects that improve access to drinking water and proper sanitation.

A new approach, Community-led Total Sanitation (CLTS), is currently being applied by USAID in six provinces in Afghanistan. The approach, developed by an Indian social scientist, is being utilized in about two dozen countries with notable results. The CLTS approach supports communities to build or improve safe, unsubsidized latrines, eventually leading the communities to stop the practice defecation without sanitation facilities. USAID's project is the first to implement this community-initiated sustainable hygiene and sanitation program. Approximately 114 people have been trained on CLTS approach in seven provinces. Now these trained Afghans are working to sensitize residents to maintain improved hygiene and sanitation; helping to improve the overall health of their communities.



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Health and Hygiene Training Closing Ceremony, Parwan Province.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

STABILIZATION

Ministry of Public Health Supports a Cleaner Future for Parwan:

In cooperation with the Afghan Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) program recently completed hygiene training that reached a total of 3,380 students and mothers in Parwan. Using the health and hygiene curricula developed by the MoPH's Community-based Health Care (CBHC) Department, trainers also distributed hand soap to trainees in 12 communities throughout the four districts prioritized for stabilization and development activities by USAID/LGCD. The closing ceremony was held on August 2.

Cash For Work Irrigation Projects Benefits Citizens in Priority Districts:

On August 4, USAID/LGCD held a closing ceremony for a large-scale cash-for-work project to rehabilitate approximately 45km of irrigation canals running through in five village clusters in central Jalrez District, bringing farmers in 17 villages better access to irrigation water and a total of 278 unskilled laborers and 16 skilled laborers with 30-35 days of short-term employment. The District Governor, who worked closely with USAID's Local Governance and Community Development program to design and implement the project, personally handed workers their final wage payments. In the words of Hajji Zafarv Khan, one of the farmers whose fields will benefit from the improved canals, "We really appreciate the projects being implemented by the local government ... all the residents of this village have worked and fed their families and have cleaned the canals, which the community couldn't afford to do alone." The LGCD program works to increase GIROA legitimacy through better service delivery in underserved communities throughout Afghanistan.



The hall was packed for the closing ceremony of the Jalrez District canal cleaning project.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

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ECONOMIC GROWTH

Program Budget Training for 51 Government Budgetary Units Completed: EGGI and the Ministry of Finance (MOF) Budget Integration Reform Unit (BIRU) completed the training of 743 Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) budgetary unit employees in the basics of program budgeting. This ends the training required to prepare all 51 budgetary units for the full rollout of important reforms in the next budget cycle. The reform is a major component of the Public Financial Roadmap presented at the Kabul Conference in July, and is also a major structural reform benchmark in the new International Monetary Fund (IMF) program.



GIROA Budgetary Unit staff receive training in program budgeting, Kabul.

PHOTO: USAID/EGGI

EGGI and BIRU employees conducted training sessions to help GIROA employees develop program structures, strategic objectives, program objectives, and outputs and outcomes for their respective budgetary units. The trainings also included four modules on changes in the Program Budgeting process and updates on the MOF's future plan for this reform.



A truck loaded with Afghan goods prepares for travel at the Kabul Inland Customs Depot. Under APTTA, trucks will use electronic tracking devices.

PHOTO: USAID/TAFA

Historic Afghanistan Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement Signed: On July 18, Afghanistan and Pakistan signed a historic transit trade agreement that will reduce by half the amount of time it takes goods to cross the border between the two countries. The Afghanistan-Pakistan Transit-Trade Agreement (APTTA), once ratified by the governments of Afghanistan and Pakistan, will be a major overhaul of the 1965 agreement, the last transit agreement in place. APTTA updates and improves the joint transit system to reflect current economic conditions, infrastructure, technology, and transport practices. The new transit regime increases the number of transport routes available to trucks from both countries, lowering the cost of imports and making exports more competitive in the global market.

Unlike the 1965 agreement, APTTA does not limit Afghanistan and Pakistan to the two current trade routes and one railway system. APTTA provides for 10 additional transit corridors in Pakistan and eight new corridors in Afghanistan. This increased freedom of



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transit will link Pakistan to the Central Asian countries of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and beyond to Kazakhstan and other key trading partners. Pakistan will also benefit from improved access to raw materials from Central Asia. Similarly, APPTA will link Afghanistan to the world via three Pakistani ports under designated routes. Afghan trucks will now be allowed to transport Afghan exports to any of the three Pakistan seaports (Karachi, Qasim, and Gwadar), load goods, and return with imports from third countries or Pakistan. Moreover, APTTA will allow Afghan exports to be transported to India and China.

Both countries agreed to increase cooperation to control informal trade and take measures to increase the modernity and security of the current transit system. Tracking devices will be installed on trucks to monitor their locations. Authorized agents, such as shippers and brokers, will provide financial guarantees for payment of customs levies of transiting imports. These will be released once transit imports exit the transit country. Both countries will also provide each other with Customs-to-Customs information on clearance of cargo at their final destination point.

TAFA assisted in eliminating key policy and technical bottlenecks obstructing the signing of APTTA. During the final round of negotiations, which took place in July 2010, TAFA advisors assisted the negotiating team to understand the various alternatives and commitments available, particularly concerning the revised dispute resolution mechanism and measures to counter smuggling.

USAID Launches Technical Assistance to the Ministry of Economy: This month, USAID officially began its assistance to the Ministry of Economy (MOEC) by providing an Economic Policy Advisor to support the Minister. Since joining, the EGGI advisor has supported the Minister's participation in a number of high-level events and has begun a two-month functional audit assessment to better understand the core functions of the MOEC at the central and provincial levels. This will help inform EGGI's strategic advice to the Minister on the directions for reform in the MOEC over the medium term.

EDUCATION

Consensus Reached to Improve the Masters in Public Health Curriculum: A USAID-supported one-day "Curriculum Consensus Workshop" challenged participants to define the attributes and processes that will culminate with an internationally respected curriculum for an Afghan Masters in Public Health (MPH) degree. The workshop involved representatives from the Ministry of Higher Education, USAID, Kabul Medical University (KMU), lecturers in public health, Jhpiego, WHO, and international



Curriculum Consensus Workshop participants.

PHOTO: USAID/HEP



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

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experts in curriculum development and public health. The facilitated discussions were at times lively as one Afghan senior lecturer, striving to be heard over other voices, shouted, "This curriculum," while waving the book that defines medical education curriculum in Afghanistan, "should be tossed in the trash! We are here to discuss how we can better prepare teaching for our students so that they really learn something!"

The workshop, held on July 26 at KMU, included presentations and participative group work facilitated by the Higher Education Project (HEP) medical education staff. Curricular reform in medical education, clinical skills training, and public health can prepare Afghan doctors to better attend to the country's urgent health needs. Health statistics have improved since 2001 thanks in great part to the significant investment of many millions of dollars by the American people, through USAID and other donors.

At the end of the workshop, participants were in agreement regarding the look and feel of a curriculum, and the processes involved in developing the courses and content. As Dr. Yosoufpur, a KMU senior professor stated, "I hope that we will be able to implement the solid thinking that we discussed." All of the participants agreed that development of a robust MPH curriculum will take a long time and that now the hard work will begin.

BESST Training of Senior Trainers of ALPT Completed: USAID's BESST (Building Education Support Systems for Teachers) project is working with the Ministry of Education's Teacher Education Department to plan and establish a program for primary education teachers to study and complete the equivalent of secondary education while they continue teaching. To prepare for the Accelerated Learning Program for Teachers' (ALPT's) roll-out in eleven provinces of Afghanistan, BESST held workshops to train 55 senior trainers from July 27 to August 5. The workshop used practical, hands-on lessons to prepare the senior trainers to train ALPT facilitators. During the last week of training, thirteen teachers without a secondary school education attended the training to help the senior trainers test the study guides and facilitation techniques by participating in mock ALPT study groups.



Primary education teachers study and complete their secondary school equivalent while they continue teaching.

PHOTO: USAID/BESST

The senior trainers then returned to their respective provinces, prepared to train the ALPT facilitators. Once the facilitators are prepared, they will begin tutoring ALPT participants and conducting the ALPT study groups in most districts in the eleven provinces supported by BESST. Approximately 11,000 teachers have registered and are ready to participate in ALPT.



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Beginning in September 2010, ALPT will provide teachers with tutoring, small group study, and subject-area study guides for self-directed study. Teachers will be continually assessed by taking standardized exams developed by the Ministry of Education for each subject and each grade level. Passing these exams will certify each participant as having satisfied the academic requirements for entry into Teacher Training Colleges.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

August 16-August 31, 2010

HEALTH

New Regional Hospital Under Construction in Paktya:

On August 4, Paktya government officials held a cornerstone laying ceremony at the construction site for a 100-bed regional hospital to be built in Gardez City. The new hospital, built to international building code standards and able to withstand earthquakes, will house an emergency area, out-patient and in-patient wards, delivery and surgery theaters, examination rooms, and administration facilities. When completed in June 2012, the hospital will serve one million people from Paktya and the neighboring provinces of Paktika, Khost, and Ghazni.



A model of the 100-bed regional hospital under construction in Paktya Province.

PHOTO: USAID/CHEF

USAID's Construction of Health and Education Facilities project aims to raise standards of health care in Afghanistan. USAID and its partner in this project, the International Organization for Migration, are committed to providing quality construction in a transparent manner through this activity and others. In addition to the Gardez regional hospital, the project will build a 20-bed hospital in Paktika Province and three midwife training centers in Badakhshan, Bamyán, and Khost provinces. All these health projects combine the joint efforts the USAID, IOM, and the Government of Afghanistan for the benefit of the Afghan population.



A rebuilt segment of the Bamyán-Dushi Road.

PHOTO: USAID/AIRP

INFRASTRUCTURE

A Road Rises from the River: The Bamyán-Dushi Road reopened in late July following months of repairing damage caused by severe spring floods in Tala wa Barfak District. USAID's Afghanistan Infrastructure and Rehabilitation Project reconstructed an extensive length of the road. The final three kilometers repaired had been submerged under the river, necessitating that stretch of road to be rebuilt entirely above the water level. Rehabilitation of this critical transportation route to connect Baghlan to Bamyán provinces has permitted Tala wa Barfak citizens to once again travel to the provincial capital of Puli Khumri. Following the re-opening, on July 25, USAID representatives met with district officials in

Tala center as well as elders from 53 communities to discuss current dynamics in the district.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

August 16-August 31, 2010

New Wells in Khost Reduce Disease and Provide Potable Water: In Kapari Community in Khost Province, many area wells had stopped functioning, causing a desperate need for potable water. Residents were forced to walk long distances and collect water from rivers and streams. The unclean river water caused frequent illness in the community's young children, and a high portion of people's income was spent on medicine and medical treatment for their children.

To address this problem, USAID's Afghan Sustainable Water Supply and Sanitation (SWSS) project constructed 25 bore wells throughout Kapari that are currently providing potable water to 8,000 beneficiaries. Villagers are committed to maintaining their new infrastructure, which is very important for sustainability of the new wells.



Children stand in front of a new bore well constructed by USAID.

PHOTO: USAID/SWSS

SWSS seeks to increase access to potable water supply and sanitation services in poor communities, decrease the prevalence of water-related diseases through household hygiene interventions, and improve the sustainable management of potable water. The SWSS mandate is to build 1,800 wells throughout the country in its first year of operations to provide potable water to thousands of households that are currently suffering from waterborne diseases.



Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock Asif Rahimi and U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry open the Kabul Women's Farm Service Center.

PHOTO: USAID/ASAP

AGRICULTURE

Kabul Women's Farm Service Center Opens:

Afghanistan's women farmers will have more access to seeds, supplies, and materials thanks to the opening of the Women's Farm Service Center in Kabul on August 16. The Kabul Women's Farm Service Center is one of seven Farm Service Centers currently operating throughout Afghanistan, but the only one tailored specifically for women farmers. These seven Centers are the foundation for opening a nationwide network of Farm Service Centers in all 34 provinces. Benefitting more than 43,000 Afghan households, the seven Farm Service Centers in Afghanistan have created more than 235 jobs, trained more than 15,000 people, and achieved \$24 million in

sales from March 2008 to June 2010.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

August 16-August 31, 2010

With a \$3.5 million U.S. Government investment through USAID's Afghanistan Farm Service Alliance program, this first women's farm service center and will benefit more than 10,000 Afghan women. The center will serve as the prototype for several women's Farm Service Centers to be located throughout Afghanistan.

All the U.S. Government-supported Farm Service Centers offer high quality products such as seed, fertilizer, animal feed, tools, machinery, and greenhouse supplies. In addition, the store functions as an outlet for other female head of household enterprises, such as jams, pickles, honey, and handicrafts. "The United States of America is proud to support this effort and especially to assist dedicated women who are working to support their families, feed their children, and contribute to the overall growth and prosperity of the economy of Afghanistan," said U.S. Ambassador Karl W. Eikenberry at the opening ceremony.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Foroshgah Shopping Center Reopens After January Attacks: On August 22, Kabul Mayor Mohammad Younus Nawandish, U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry and USAID Deputy Mission Director John Atteberry re-opened the Foroshgah-E-Borzorg Shopping Center in Kabul, which was severely damaged in a bombing by insurgents on January 18. The reconstruction of the shopping center began in February with the help of the U.S. Embassy and the U.S. Military.

In May, Mayor Nawandish and Ambassador Eikenberry also announced a grant distribution program for the Foroshgah-e-Borzorg shopkeepers. The grants were part of an assistance program through USAID to help shopkeepers at the shopping center restock their inventories after suffering tremendous loss due to the bombing. The U.S. Government provided 81 grants, ranging from \$3,000 to \$5,000 each, to the shopkeepers.

At the ceremony, Mayor Nawandish thanked the people of the United States for helping rebuild the shopping center to help spur economic and retail growth in the city. "The City of Kabul appreciates all the support from the people of United States in general," said Mayor Nawandish. "I am also thankful for the people of United States and their support of the Foroshgah Shopping Center at this critical time."



Kabul Mayor Mohammed Younus Nawandish and U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry cut the ribbon to re-open the Foroshgah-E-Borzorg Shopping Center in Kabul.

PHOTO: USAID/ASMED



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

August 16-August 31, 2010



Participants learn about trade issues at the Conference on National Youth Policy.

PHOTO: USAID/TAFA

Engaging Youth in Trade: The Ministry of Information and Culture (MOIC) hosted a “Conference on National Youth Policy” from August 7 through 9. A variety of governmental and nongovernmental organizations facilitated seven working groups with Afghan youth from 34 provinces to discuss issues of importance to the youth of Afghanistan and help the MOIC to develop policies to solve these issues.

USAID’s Trade and Accession Facilitation for Afghanistan assisted the MOIC to facilitate three working groups: Trade and Youth; Gender and Youth; and Security, Peace, Good Governance, and Youth. The working group on trade taught participants about international trade and how trade liberalization results

in increased employment opportunities for youth. The participants also learned about important trade agreements, including the Southern Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) and the Afghanistan Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA), and the benefits of these agreements to the Afghan people. Participants asked questions on a variety of subjects from the meaning of a free market and free transit to specific questions about Afghanistan’s trade with neighboring countries. Participants also received informational materials on trade in Dari, Pashto, and English.

STABILIZATION

Water and Sports Projects Open Hirat

Communities: Less than a year ago, government officials could not enter the Siawshan area of Guzara District, located only 25 km from downtown Hirat. Now, Siawshan students are competing with other Guzara students on the soccer field, thanks to four community development projects funded by USAID’s Local Governance and Community Development project.

Three projects focused on improving sports facilities for boys and girls at three schools in Siawshan, Zeyaratjai, and Wazir Fateh Khan. The improvements include leveling soccer fields, providing sports equipment and uniforms, and installing containers to hold sports equipment and serve as changing rooms. The fourth project extended clean drinking water to 114 households



A student soccer player in Siawshan, Hirat Province, is grateful for the new, USAID-provided sports facilities.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

August 16-August 31, 2010

directly and 186 indirectly in Bahador Zayeeha Village. The local communities contributed labor for grading the playing fields and digging ditches for the water pipes.

On July 22, community members in Guzara District, Hirat Province celebrated the handover of the four projects. The Guzara District Governor, educational officials, coaches, soccer clubs, girl athletes, SCR-West, USAID staff, and LGCD implementers participated in the ceremony. Several students prepared speeches in English for the occasion.

EDUCATION

Afghan University Faculty Members Plan for the Future: Participants from universities across Afghanistan were proud to present their institutional plans to their colleagues at a conference in Kabul from August 3 to 5. The conference was the culmination of more than four years of hard work by faculty members to improve the learning environment for themselves and their students, supported by USAID's Higher Education Project (HEP).

Afghan universities were shattered by decades of conflict and often were empty shells with no equipment, books, or electricity. Students took exams outside and families were afraid to send girls to study because of lack of security. The remaining faculty members were struggling and did not know how to build the capacity of the institutes they had kept going throughout the Taliban years.

USAID introduced institutional development teams (IDTs) at the universities, which helped faculty members to determine their own futures by learning how to request funding and make plans for changes in the university environment. The changes have included buildings, professional development, the establishment of kindergartens, and sports facilities for students.

The conference in Kabul was the occasion for more than one hundred members of IDTs across the country to present their plans to their colleagues, share successes, and get mutual support. They discussed how to present their development needs, build solid teams, and keep the progress going. One participant said, "this conference is very important because it allowed us to meet colleagues from all over the country, some for the first time, we were able to share ideas, problems and solutions."



Participants share their institutional plans with colleagues.

PHOTO: USAID/HEP



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

August 16-August 31, 2010

Interactive Lessons for Medical Students: Medical students in Afghanistan can look forward to a more interactive and up to date curriculum thanks to a workshop run from August 1-5 by USAID's HEP. The ten participants from medical and nursing faculties traveled from Kabul, Khost, Kandahar, Kapisa, and Jalalabad to join colleagues in Hirat for the Training of Professional Instructors of Public Health. In addition, three staff members from the Hirat Provincial Health Directorate were invited to attend the workshop.

Years of conflict and economic devastation in Afghanistan have meant medical students do not have the facilities needed to train properly in modern techniques of medicine and patient care. Universities do not have a standard curriculum, and methods of teaching and learning and materials are often decades old.



Medical students and professors discuss needed improvements to the medical school curriculum.

PHOTO: USAID/HEP

The workshop focused on steps of developing a curriculum, content selection, teaching methodology, and assessment and evaluation procedures to document students' learning. Faculty members were prepared to incorporate materials they have discussed in previous HEP intensive public health courses. Participants were very enthusiastic about adapting new teaching methods to the Afghan context and were particularly keen on interactive lecture techniques, which will include students involvement in the learning process in classes which are still very large.

Techniques were discussed and put into practice very quickly and the participants were excited about introducing them into classes. Dr. Shafiq Ahmed Joya from the faculty of medicine in Hirat said, "During this course I learned how to make my lessons more interactive. I also learned how to develop a case study to be used in the classroom." Students in Afghanistan will definitely welcome the change.

The American University of Afghanistan Opens New Building, Welcomes New Faculty: The American University of Afghanistan (AUAF) is Afghanistan's only private, independent, coeducational institution of higher learning. Supported by USAID and private donations, AUAF provides an American-style, high-quality academic program to students from throughout Afghanistan.

In spring 2010, AUAF had its largest enrollment since its inception with 531 students. AUAF expects those numbers to increase for the fall term and to increase again in the spring of 2011, reaching 800 by the end of the academic year. Student registration is underway and classes began August 22.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

August 16-August 31, 2010

A record 21 new faculty members have arrived for the start of the new school year, bringing the total full-time faculty to 49 and maintaining a student/faculty ratio of less than 16 to 1, with small classes and individual attention to students. AUAF President Dr. C. Michael Smith and Dr. Sharif Fayez, former Minister of Higher Education and a founder of the university, welcomed the new staff. One new faculty member commented that the process of receiving and orienting new faculty was the best he had seen in ten years of experience working overseas.

To accommodate the new staff members and students, AUAF has opened a new building with 24 faculty offices. Construction began on June 15 and was completed in record time. The university took possession of the building on August 15 and faculty moved in the next day. The current campus now has seven main buildings, in addition to its maintenance shops and transportation offices. The new faculty members and new facilities support a full range of academic degree programs in business, computer science, and the liberal arts.

Afghanistan National Engineering Policy Workshop: From August 2 to 4, more than 100 engineers, faculty members, and policy makers from Afghan and international government institutions, universities, and non-governmental organizations attended a three-day Afghanistan National Engineering Policy Workshop at Kabul University.

The workshop provided a rare opportunity for Afghan and international partners to discuss strategic planning and the status of engineering education in Afghanistan. The Ministry of Higher Education reaffirmed the ministry's commitment to improving the quality of education. Representatives from eight Afghan universities discussed their engineering programs in detail highlighting the need to sustain recent achievements in facilities expansion, faculty development, engineering curricula, and student enrollment. Implementing partners from U.S. and international higher education institutions described their experience working with study abroad and technical assistance programs in Afghanistan.



Afghan faculty members and policy makers discuss a variety of topics including curriculum development and creating standards for engineering programs in Afghanistan.

PHOTO: USAID/AeQA

Workshop participants developed recommendations for selected issues in engineering education including creating a favorable work environment for university professors; developing partnerships between universities and the private sector; establishing guidelines, standards, and an approval process for specialized engineering curricula; establishing an Afghan national accreditation board for engineering programs; and developing a



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

August 16-August 31, 2010

standardized, national core curriculum in engineering. At the end of the workshop, participants developed a list of action items and agreed to form an advisory committee to coordinate national engineering education policy with the Ministry of Higher Education. The increased coordination and planning will help improve the quality of engineering education at public universities throughout Afghanistan.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

September 1-September 30, 2010

EDUCATION

Building Enthusiasm for Teaching among Young Afghans: In remote parts of Afghanistan, it is difficult to find adults with the 12th grade education that the formal education system requires of its teachers. USAID's Partnership for Advancing Community Education in Afghanistan (PACE-A) helps to ensure that children in these underserved areas receive an education. PACE-A has worked with more than 3,000 remote communities to establish community-based classes and trained 3,100 people with less formal education to serve as their primary grade teachers.



High school students Wajiha and Wasia attended a PACE-A teacher training.

PHOTO: USAID/PACE-A

Besides subject knowledge, training programs provide teachers with pedagogical tools such as ways to incorporate no-cost local materials as teaching aids. Teachers and students alike are noticing the benefits of these innovative approaches, and the reputation of PACE-A training is spreading. Recently, when trainers arrived in Hirat Province, they found two young women who were not on the official list of participants among their group of expectant trainees. The women turned out to be students from a nearby high school who wanted to join the training as volunteers.

The young women almost changed their minds when they found that the training included both male and female trainees. However, they decided to stay, explaining, "Our enthusiasm and interest did not allow us [to leave], and we said we will join like other female trainees. We would like to attend this training to gain more knowledge, and we don't want any privileges for our participation." Other young people are also interested. "Every time, please consider [inviting] two to three students of higher grades to your training as volunteers," they recommended. A positive, if unintended, outcome of the PACE-A program seems to be inspiring enthusiasm for teaching among young Afghans!



Governor Akbarzada lays the foundation stone at Shahr-e-Kohna Middle School.

PHOTO: USAID/BESST

Schools Receive Grants Based on Community Prioritization: The Education Stabilization Initiative, implemented through USAID's Building Education Support Systems for Teachers (BESST) project, provides grants to schools to improve education in Afghanistan's insecure areas. Grants are dispersed to communities that prioritize the needs of their schools and work with district or provincial Ministry of Education offices to solicit grant funding. USAID/BESST grants finance the construction of school boundary walls, latrines, wells for clean drinking water, and refurbishment of school buildings to support positive changes toward stabilization.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

September 1-September 30, 2010

In August, BESST awarded a grant to Shahr-e-Kohna Middle School in Ghazni City for the construction of a boundary wall around the school grounds. On August 22, BESST held a groundbreaking ceremony to initiate the implementation of the grant. The governor of Ghazni Province, Mohammad Musa Akbarzada, laid the foundation stone of the boundary wall. The Provincial Education Director, a member of Afghan National Assembly, and community elders of Shahr-e-Kohna also participated. The Governor of Ghazni underlined the value of education and the importance of boundary walls for safety and security of both schools and students. He affirmed, "The only thing that can help improve a community is quality education; therefore, it is our responsibility to ensure a safe environment for education."

Recently, BESST has committed over \$100,000 USD to fund four of these kinds of grants for schools in Khost and Ghazni provinces. Relations between communities and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan are improved through the collaborative process of identifying community grievances and funding projects that respond to community needs.

USAID MPPA Student Hosts President Karzai at Afghanistan Civil Service Institute: As a senior instructor, Abdullah Kakar, Head of Research and a Senior Public Policy Instructor at the Afghanistan Civil Service Institute (ACSI), is responsible for training more than 4,000 civil service employees in Kabul and 12,000 civil service employees in the provinces on topics such as public policy, strategic planning, and good governance. Recently, Mr. Kakar was teaching a course on public policy to senior Afghan government officials when he received a surprise visit from President Hamid Karzai. President Karzai sat in on part of the training session and asked him questions about the importance of public policy in Afghanistan.



Abdullah Kakar presents a lesson on public policy to Afghan President Hamid Karzai at the Afghanistan Civil Service Institute.

PHOTO: Afghan Civil Service Institute

As Mr. Kakar recounts, "The President entered my class and asked, 'What are you teaching to these top public managers?' I said, 'Public policy.' He said, 'Look, I am your student, and I am sitting here on the chair. Please teach me about public policy.' When I explained using a PowerPoint presentation and answered his questions, he said, 'Your presentation convinced me perfectly' and shook my hands warmly."

Mr. Kakar, who is also a student in the USAID Master's in Public Policy and Administration program at Kabul University, is already applying the knowledge and skills that he learned in graduate school in his job as a senior trainer with the Afghan Government. He uses



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

September 1-September 30, 2010

interactive teaching methods and has translated many of his MPPA course materials into Dari. These adaptations make the materials more accessible to civil service employees in the ministries and district offices. Mr. Kakar believes that education and learning are the keys to developing a professional and competent Afghan Civil Service that can meet the needs of Afghan people.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Celebrating Road Construction in Ghazni: On September 5, local officials and Ghazni community members celebrated the construction of the Ghazni to Gardez Road project with a ribbon cutting ceremony. “The Ghazni to Gardez Road is the most important project in the entire province,” said Ghazni Provincial Governor Musa Ahmadzai at the event. “Roads are not just rocks and gravel: they pave the way for the development and growth of our region.”

The 93-kilometer Ghazni to Gardez Road connects two of Afghanistan’s most important provincial capitals. When completed in summer 2011, the paved road will reduce travel time between these cities from 4 hours to 1.5 hours, creating new trade opportunities and providing better access to essential services for local communities. In addition, the travel distance from Pakistan to Afghanistan’s Ring Road will be reduced by 500 kilometers. In rural areas, new business opportunities are crucial for community prosperity and stability. A trader in Ghazni City said, “I buy my goods in Pakistan. Travelling on the Ghazni to Gardez Road has become much easier [already]. In the end our whole community will benefit from it.”

The road is funded by USAID as part of the Strategic Provincial Roads (SPR) project, which works with Afghans communities and Afghan construction companies to build high-quality roads across Southern and Eastern Afghanistan. Not only are local leaders and community members engaged in roads planning, but local construction companies are taking the lead in all aspects of the road building business, from design, planning, and project management to HR, finance, and management. In addition to Afghan-led road construction, the SPR project also has a community grants component that reaches out to Afghan communities located along the road. Strategic provincial roads create development corridors across Afghanistan, connecting some of the world’s most remote and isolated communities to the region and to the world.



Local officials and Ghazni community members celebrate the construction of the Ghazni to Gardez Road.

PHOTO: USAID/SPR-SEA



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

September 1-September 30, 2010

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

Elders' Network Meetings Raise Awareness about Rule of Law: USAID's Rule of Law Stabilization Program – Informal Component (RLS-I) project held several elders' network meetings in Kandahar City in early September. The meetings' purpose was to introduce elders to each other from several villages in the Arghandab District of Kandahar Province, and to introduce elders to the RLS-I project's future activities.

Separate meetings were held for men and women to ensure that elders of both genders could meet and discuss key issues openly. The men's meeting drew 130 participants and the women's meeting drew 65. The women's meeting particular was a success, especially since women sometimes encounter difficulty attending events that involve travel outside of their homes and villages.



Sixty-five women attended an elders' network meeting to discuss rule of law and community-based dispute resolution.

PHOTO: USAID/RLS-I

During both meetings, elders discussed strengthening community-based dispute resolution, and how their actions as elders and jirga members link to the formal justice sector. Many of the men remarked that this was the first time they had met together as elders from different villages. Many women said it was the first time they had ever attended such an event.



The DAB Head of Payments discusses the live operations of the Clearinghouse.

PHOTO: USAID/EGGI

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Afghanistan Clearinghouse Goes Live: On August 15, the Afghanistan Clearinghouse began live operations with participation of all 17 commercial banks. The Clearinghouse, operated by Da Afghanistan Bank (DAB) and supported by all 17 of Afghanistan's licensed banking organizations, will serve as the central hub for the "bank-to-bank" interchange and settlement of low-value customer checks. Mir Aziz Baraki, Deputy General Director of Bank Operations for DAB, representatives of 14 licensed banking organizations, and members of the Afghanistan Banks Association attended the launch.

Designed and implemented by DAB, with technical assistance from USAID's Economic Growth and Governance Initiative (EGGI), the new Clearinghouse formalizes the exchange of checks and vastly improves the existing system of bilateral clearing between individual commercial banks. The previous lack of a formal clearing system often resulted in lengthy delays in the process of crediting individual accounts. With the launch of the new formalized



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

September 1-September 30, 2010

clearance system, the banks have agreed to a next-day settlement of any check presented to the Clearinghouse, meaning that customers will receive credit for the funds within one day of presentation of the check. This improvement in the efficiency of the clearance process is expected to foster use and acceptance of checks by the private sector, perhaps increasing the flow of deposits into the banking sector. This system is a key step in the modernization of the payments system for Afghanistan as outlined in the Payments Roadmap adopted by the National Payment Council.

Gemstone Trainees Graduate: On August 25, the first group of gemstone cut-and-polish trainees graduated from the Gemstone Training Center in Jalalabad. USAID supports the training center through a Global Development Alliance with American Nuristani Imports International.

USAID is setting up regional gemstone processing facilities and training centers to help gem dealers and miners learn new techniques and meet international gemology standards. By building the skill and human capacity of the Afghan gemstone sector, USAID's Afghanistan Small and Medium Enterprise Development (ASMED) project is helping Afghanistan to maximize the economic potential of this important and highly lucrative industry.



Graduation ceremony at the Gemstone Training Center in Jalalabad, Nangarhar Province.

PHOTO: USAID/ASMED



Newly hired interns participate in a two-day orientation session.

PHOTO: USAID/EGGI

Women In Government Internship Program Strengthens the Afghan Government's Program Budgeting:

Six "Women in Government" interns were recently selected for placement in various Afghan Government ministries to support program budgeting. These six interns will receive training in the basics of program budget methodology, and will also receive on-the-job mentoring as they assist their assigned ministries in the preparation of program budgets. Over time, the interns will take on additional responsibilities including providing training to government officials and conducting research and data reviews in support of budget preparation.

The Women in Government Internship Program, supported by USAID's EGGI, provides young women with work experience and the opportunity to learn functional knowledge relevant to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan or related entities. Their



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

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time with Afghan Government ministries will provide them with the necessary skills and knowledge to obtain long-term employment in the public or private sectors. To date, the program has hired 25 female interns to support the Afghan Government.

Attracting Investment to Industrial Parks: Foreign investors must have safe and adequate industrial locations at which to manufacture goods. To support a wide range of modern manufacturing processes, industrial parks require consistent electricity and water, access to roads from which to receive raw materials and send finished goods to market, and adequate security. The Afghanistan Investment Support Agency (AISA) currently manages industrial parks in Bagrami, Mazari Sharif, Kandahar, Jalalabad, and Hilmand that all feature prominently in its strategic plan to attract foreign investment.



A textile manufacturer at Bagrami Industrial Park.

PHOTO: USAID/TAFA

On August 24 and 26, USAID's Trade and Accession Facilitation for Afghanistan (TAF) project staff met with the Afghanistan Industrial Parks Association and AISA regarding technical assistance requirements to attract new business and expand existing ones. Most of Afghanistan's industrial parks, like the Bagrami Industrial Park, represent or house firms ranging in size from large textile companies employing 600 full-time workers and 2,000 temporary workers to smaller firms producing pharmaceuticals. In virtually every case, companies wish to export their goods, not just put them on the local market. However, to do so they require business development services to upgrade the quality of their products, improve management, reduce the cost of bank financing, provide vocational training to upgrade the skills of workers, and locate new external markets.

TAF will coordinate this assistance in collaboration with other donors, and will take the lead role in setting up a donor coordinating committee for AISA to provide assistance to industrial parks in Afghanistan. This coordinated assistance will help ensure that textile businesses, like the one shown in Bagrami, continue to grow and expand their businesses, bringing new investment to Afghanistan.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

September 1-September 30, 2010

STABILIZATION

Women Empowered to Generate Income for Their Families:

In September, 50 women graduated from a USAID-funded five-month “Fruit and Vegetables Processing and Basic Hygiene” training course in Paktya Province. USAID’s Local Governance and Community Development project conducted the course and provided culturally appropriate and highly valued vocational skills to the 50 women participants.

The curriculum included kitchen hygiene and food safety, purchasing safe food, cleaning chemicals, and food storage, as well as fruit and vegetable processing sessions. In addition to benefiting from the basic kitchen hygiene and food safety skills, the trainees are now able to play an active role in generating income for their families. As part of the training, the participants received toolkits that will help them sell their homemade fruit and vegetable products, such as jams and pickles, at local markets.



“Fruit and Vegetables Processing and Basic Hygiene” training course graduates receive their marketing toolkits.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

This project also helped strengthen linkages between provincial government officials and local communities, as the directorates of Women Affairs (DoWA), Economy, Labor and Social Affairs all played an active role by selecting trainees, monitoring the classes, and presenting graduation certificates to participants at the closing ceremony. DoWA involvement in this initiative also helped promote the role of women in the development of their communities. Ms. Halema Hazan, Paktya Director of Women Affairs, commented, “This and all other trainings for women are highly appreciated in the local communities and [the Afghan Government], and bring positive behavior changes in local communities.”



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

October 1-October 15, 2010

HEALTH

National Immunization Days for Polio Eradication:

New cases of polio have fallen by 99 percent globally in the past two decades, but Afghanistan remains one of the world's four polio-endemic countries. To protect its young citizens against the deadly disease, Afghanistan holds Polio National Immunization Days (NIDs) four times per year.

On October 3, Afghanistan inaugurated a three-day polio NIDs campaign at the Khair Khana Hospital in Kabul. Around the country, more than 55,000 vaccinators dispensed both polio drops and albendazol (deworming) tablets, reaching 7.8 million children under the age of six. This was the first time that albendazol was included and 4.7 million children between the ages of two and five years received the tablets.



National Immunization Days vaccinators protect young children against polio.

PHOTO: USAID/Afghanistan

The disease remains a stubborn problem, especially in the southern and eastern parts of the country where a poor security environment impedes polio vaccinators and there is cross-border importation of the virus with Pakistan. In between NIDs, smaller campaigns are conducted in areas where new cases have been found. USAID support, along with that of the World Health Organization, UNICEF, and other international donors, is credited with helping the Afghan Ministry of Public Health keep the number of new polio cases at low levels for the past five years.



U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry tours the 2010 International Agricultural Fair.

PHOTO: Daniel Wilkinson

AGRICULTURE

Agricultural Fair Showcases Afghanistan's Bounty:

From October 6 to 8, thousands of visitors from Afghanistan and around the world converged on Badam Bagh Farm in Kabul to attend the 2010 International Agricultural Fair. The AgFair hosted 136 Afghan and 40 international vendors, showcasing the country's crown jewels of agriculture, such as grapes, pomegranates, dried fruits, nuts, cashmere, and other high value crops and agricultural services.

U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry, Minister Asif Rahimi and Deputy Minister Saleem Kunduzi of the Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) celebrated the opening of the fair. "Afghanistan's progress in the agriculture sector is helping lead this proud nation along the pathway to development and self sufficiency by helping feed the Afghan people, opening



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

October 1-October 15, 2010

markets, and stimulating economic growth and investment opportunities,” lauded Ambassador Eikenberry.

USAID, in collaboration with MAIL, has sponsored 13 Agricultural Fairs since 2007 to encourage trade and generate business opportunities in the agricultural industry. These fairs help participants forge new business relationships in Afghanistan’s growing agriculture sector. They also bring together hundreds of producers, buyers, packagers, cold storage technology companies, equipment vendors, international representatives, and government agencies to facilitate stronger business linkages and partnerships. Seminars, presentations, and demonstrations will share knowledge and best practices for increasing agricultural production.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Thousands Take Part in Global Hand Washing Day

Celebration: Many common illnesses can be prevented by increasing the practice of hand washing. To promote better health and hygiene, the Afghan Ministry of Public Health and the international community led celebrations of Global Hand Washing Day across the country on October 15. USAID’s Afghan Sustainable Water Supply and Sanitation (SWSS) project and the Afghan Government supported the day in Badakhshan, Baghlan, Laghman, Logar, Nangarhar, and Takhar provinces by providing soap and water at community events.



Schoolgirls show their hands after washing them with soap and water.

PHOTO: USAID/SWSS

Based on annual statistics, diarrheal diseases and acute respiratory infections are responsible for the deaths of more than 67,500 children under the age of five in Afghanistan. One of SWSS’s key objectives is to promote improved hygiene practices and reduce diarrheal diseases within communities. To achieve this, SWSS works with communities to improve key hygiene behaviors such as hand washing with soap, safe water transport and storage, and the use of improved pit latrines.

This year’s theme of Global Hand Washing Day, “more than just a day,” aimed to establish hand washing with soap as a life-long and life-saving habit. In a gathering of thousands in Badakhshan province, the Provincial Public Health Director Abdul Mobin Jalali said, “The celebration of hand washing in schools is of great importance. Through this gathering, approximately 4,000 students and families are receiving important hygiene messages.” He then asked the attendees to make hand washing with soap a regular habit. While washing his hands, student participant Abdul Wakil agreed, saying, “Washing our hands with water and soap can reduce disease and the cost of soap is less than 10 Afghani (\$0.20).”



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

October 1-October 15, 2010

Energy Monitoring and Control System Training:

Bringing electricity to Afghans in a more efficient manner is a joint goal of the U.S. and Afghan governments. Recently, Mr. Gulla Jan Hairan, chief operating officer of Afghanistan's public/private energy corporation Da Afghanistan Breshna Sherkat (DABS), and a USAID energy officer participated in the successful testing of a centralized energy monitoring and control system. The system will soon be implemented in Kabul to provide supervisory control and data acquisition (SCADA) for electricity. The session occurred in Istanbul, where Afghan engineers have been undergoing USAID-sponsored training for six months under the guidance of the Infrastructure and Rehabilitation Program.



DABS engineers will control electricity for the North East Power System through this SCADA master system display.

PHOTO: USAID/IRP

The SCADA system will allow DABS to control the way that energy is generated, transmitted, and controlled in the North East Power System, increasing the efficiency and safety of power plants and substations that deliver electricity to residences and businesses. "This SCADA system will be a tremendous benefit to DABS and our ability to serve our customers," Mr. Hairan said. "There is potential to add features that will help us to operate new stations and synchronize our operations with Uzbekistan and Tajikistan in the future."



CSO representatives practice advocating for their cause during a simulation exercise.

PHOTO: USAID/APAP

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

Afghan Civil Society Organizations Learn to Advocate in Parliament: Around the world, civil society organizations (CSOs) are in a unique position to advocate on behalf of people whose voices would otherwise go unheard. They can play an important role in shaping a national agenda that responds to people's needs, and this often involves CSO representatives taking their message straight to a nation's politicians. However, in Afghanistan, civil society participation in the law-making process remains rare and few CSOs know that they can use legislative advocacy to affect the crafting of public policy.

To help Afghan CSOs boost their influence, the Afghanistan Parliamentary Institute, supported by the USAID-funded Afghanistan Parliamentary Assistance Project (APAP), provided four days of legislative advocacy training in late September. The 28 participants from 15 organizations learned different legislative advocacy tools and techniques. A course



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

October 1-October 15, 2010

highlight was a simulated committee public hearing on an actual bill pending in parliament. With insightful testimony from “CSO representatives” as well as thoughtful questions from “MPs,” the exercise gave participants a glimpse into the conduct of committee business and how they can provide input to the legislative process.

Speaking afterwards, Mr. Zabiullah Bahar from the Center for Youth Affairs believed the exercise had built the capacity and confidence of CSOs to connect with parliamentarians. “The knowledge that CSOs can participate in committee hearings will diminish the barriers between CSOs and parliament,” he said. Another participant, Ms. Muqadas Atalwala from the Afghanistan Women’s Educational Center, said the training had opened her eyes to a new role her organization could play on the national stage. “We now know that CSOs should be involved in the law-making process. We learned from the course that it is important to bring public opinion to the attention of parliament.”

Judicial Training for a Fledgling Democracy:

Twenty-five judges from Balkh, Faryab, Jawzjan, Samangan, and Sari Pul provinces recently attended a judicial training program held in collaboration with the Afghanistan Supreme Court and USAID’s Afghanistan Rule of Law Stabilization Program — Formal Component. For many judges of the war-torn country, it was the first such training of its kind that they had ever attended.



Judges refresh their knowledge at a USAID judicial training session.

PHOTO: USAID/RLS-F

The 14-day training session included theoretical and practical sessions on topics such as civil law and procedure, judicial ethics, and fair trial principles. At the end of the training, the participants left feeling that they could rely on the invaluable skills and knowledge learned during the sessions to handle cases, rather than basing decisions on informal information-gathering. One participant, Judge Zabihullah, commented that the training refreshed long-forgotten knowledge he had acquired during his academic tenure.

The impact of judicial training efforts by the Afghanistan Supreme Court and USAID continue to grow. According to judges that attended the training program, not only do they use skills and knowledge learned in the training in their daily work, but they also spread this newly acquired knowledge to their colleagues. In addition, the reputation of the training has prompted other judges to request and seek out similar USAID judicial training programs in their own regions. The Afghanistan Rule of Law Stabilization Program — Formal Component plans to replicate this highly successful program in the eastern province of Nangarhar.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

October 1-October 15, 2010

STABILIZATION

Turning on the Lights in Muqur: Residents of Muqur in Badghis Province are enjoying a safer bazaar with increased lighting thanks to their local government and USAID. The District Governor of Muqur recently identified the need to revitalize the Muqur District Center with increased lighting in and around the bazaar as one of the highest priorities for the community. In response, USAID's Local Governance and Community Development project supported the installation of lighting in close coordination with the District Development Assembly to ensure placement of the lights according to the community request.



A solar light recently installed in Muqur, Badghis Province.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

Completed on October 6, the installation of the 30 solar lights around the central bazaar has increased safety in the area. Merchants have extended their business hours and the community has held social events. This will positively affect commerce in the region, especially during the winter season. Due to the close coordination with the District Governor, the solar light installation also built the confidence of local communities in the Afghan Government's ability to secure the area and create economic opportunities."



Professor Mirwais assists students during a building construction practicum at the Kabul University Faculty of Engineering.

PHOTO: USAID/Afghanistan

EDUCATION

Engineering Professors Integrate U.S. Study Abroad Experience into Courses: In early October, six engineering professors from Kabul University and Kabul Polytechnic University began integrating new course content and teaching methodologies gained through USAID-supported graduate certification through the University of Colorado at Boulder.

The professors took courses in engineering and engineering management in a 2009-2010 study abroad program. They also obtained the latest textbooks and teaching materials, learned to use specialized software programs such as ArcView and MATLAB, and improved their teaching and classroom management skills. One professor said, "I wasn't using a syllabus before I went to Colorado. Now I have a website and a syllabus for all of my courses." The professors have made other



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

October 1-October 15, 2010

changes, including encouraging student participation and discussion, incorporating more laboratory and fieldwork in their courses, and using English materials in their presentations and reading assignments.

While in Boulder, the professors audited up to 10 extra classes to maximize their learning in subjects like leadership, accounting, statistics, and project management. Professors from the University of Colorado also provided their counterparts with lecture notes, PowerPoint presentations, course syllabi, textbooks, and reference materials to promote improvements in course quality and content. As a result, the professors were to begin teaching new subjects using improved methods and materials within a few months of their return home.

Women's Community Engagement and Leadership Program at Kabul University: With USAID support, the National Women's Dormitory at Kabul University is preparing to launch civic education and civic participation-based activities that develop the leadership capabilities and community engagement of its residents. The program furthers the strategic goals of the national higher education strategy by encouraging young women to be active, responsible and engaged citizens in developing a modern and democratic Afghanistan. Since the dormitory houses more than 1,000 female students from Afghanistan's outlying provinces, the program will reach some of the brightest, most motivated young women from throughout the country.



Student dorm committees discuss the importance of civic participation and ways to better the community through volunteering and activism.

PHOTO: USAID/TAF

In October, representatives from the student dorm committees brainstormed potential activities for the students, including creating a debate club or a monthly magazine highlighting student writing, poetry, and discussion of current events. After the meeting, Suryay, a senior science major, stated, "The leadership program in particular is the most interesting program for us, as this can build our capacities to overcome more challenges in our future life."

Interactive Job Website Links Employers and Skilled Graduates: USAID recently assisted the Afghanistan Technical Vocational Institute (ATVI), a two-year coeducational program, with an innovative website redesign. With new, interactive features to link students and employers, the website now allows students to search and apply for jobs, upload resumes, create personal profiles, and view fact sheets on employers. The site gives companies the ability to locate qualified technicians in the critical sectors of agriculture/horticulture, construction, information and communications technology, and



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

October 1-October 15, 2010

automotive mechanics. It also allows potential employers to search through profiles and resumes from ATVI's pool of graduates.

A female student from the construction department was pleased with the opportunity to connect with employers. She explained, "The new website with a secure login will be very good for me to apply for my desired post." A male business management student was impressed with the personalized features, noting, "The website is quite exciting and user-friendly, and has interactive pages to make my own profile."



Students learn how to upload their resumes and build profiles.

PHOTO: USAID/STAY+



Minister of Mines Wahidullah Shahrani speaks at the Afghanistan Investment Forum.

PHOTO: Ian Wagreich/© U.S. Chamber of Commerce

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Afghanistan Mining Investment Conference Sparks Interest:

Afghanistan is a country rich in minerals and natural resources, including copper, iron ore, coal, and natural gas. Situated near some of the largest and fastest growing markets in the world, Afghanistan's mineral and natural resources are of high strategic and economic importance to the country, offering unique opportunities for international investors in the mining and extractive industry sectors.

On September 29, Minister of Mines Wahidullah Shahrani, Minister of Finance Omar Zakhilwal, and Noorullah Delawari, CEO of the Afghanistan

Investment Support Agency (AISA) participated in the Afghanistan Mining Investment and Business Opportunity Conference in New York City. Hosted by USAID, the conference promoted investment opportunities in Afghanistan's mining sector, and enabled the Ministry of Mines (MoM) to develop business relationships with mining companies and collect information on potential investors for future minerals and hydrocarbon projects.

More than 100 participants attended the conference, including representatives from mining companies, investment banks, various governments, and the media. The conference provided up-to-date information about Afghan mining development opportunities, as well as specific details relating to the upcoming public tender for the Hajigak iron ore deposit, one of the largest unexploited iron ore deposits in Asia. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) has recently introduced significant anti-corruption measures and reforms to its legal and regulatory framework, designed to facilitate private sector investment and development of its mineral sector in an open and transparent manner, based on



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

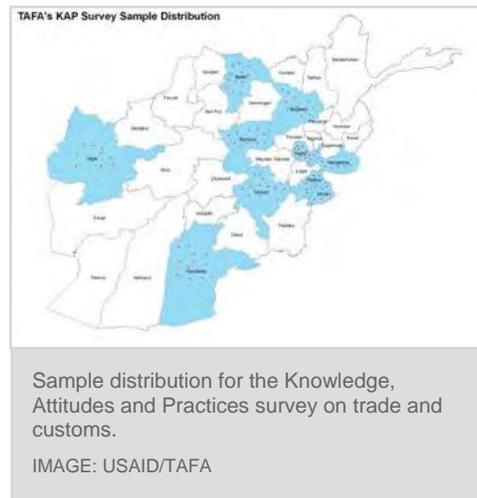
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internationally recognized best practices. Presenters emphasized the GIRoA's commitment to working with potential investors to extend political and legislative support for business investments in Afghanistan. The success of the conference is promising for generating investment in the mining industry in Afghanistan, and ultimately stimulating sector growth.

Through its Economic Growth and Governance Initiative, USAID assisted with the planning and facilitation of the conference, with additional support from the commercial section of the Afghanistan Embassy in the U.S., the U.S Department of Commerce, and the U.S. Department of State. Going forward, USAID will provide support to MoM to follow up on leads developed at the conference and will help facilitate the investment process for interested parties.

Knowledge, Attitudes, and Practices Survey

Finalized: USAID's Trade Accession and Facilitation for Afghanistan project recently completed its nationwide Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) survey on trade and customs. The KAP survey obtained views on trade and customs from more than 1,300 Afghans in 10 provinces. The results of the survey demonstrated that Afghans overwhelmingly support trade, but have concerns that trade leads to increased crime, corruption, and substandard imported goods. Respondents identified benefits to the country as a result of trade in Afghanistan, including overall economic growth, better job opportunities, better relations with other countries, more export of Afghan goods, access to more imported goods, and improvements to industry and infrastructure.





PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

October 16-October 31, 2010

AGRICULTURE

A Bountiful Harvest in Northern Afghanistan:

USAID is helping Afghan farmers ensure that this season's harvest is exceptionally abundant. Thanks to training provided by USAID's Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives – North, East, West (IDEA-NEW), farmers are using their new agricultural knowledge to produce exceptional crop yields. In Badakhshan Province, farmers received seeds and technical training in bed layout, irrigation, pest control, and harvesting practices. In Takhar, farmers recently began constructing plastic tunnels that will serve as greenhouses for cauliflower, cucumber, cabbage, and tomato crops. Plastic sheeting will cover the tunnels to create a warm environment that extends the growing season, allowing farmers to sell traditionally fall-harvest vegetables in winter and fetch a strong price at the market.



Farmers receive training to increase crop yields in Badakhshan Province.

PHOTO: USAID/IDEA-NEW

In Badakhshan, where the harvest is already over, farmers who participated in the program praised USAID for its assistance in making this year's crop yield one of the best they had ever seen. "This year all the other farmers who cultivated onion on their land had a terrible harvest and lost about 50 percent of their crop," said Abdul Khaliq, a farmer in Langar Village in Badakhshan Province. "But our crops are fine and I will obtain a strong harvest from my onions, as well. I also got the tomato seeds on time and I am sure that I will yield 3,500 kg. I am very happy with the harvest this year overall, and after this training I will be a [better] farmer because I know how to get good benefits from our land."



An ASMO staff member demonstrates how to mix oral rehydration salts with water to hydrate a sick child.

PHOTO: USAID/COMPRI-A

HEALTH

USAID Launches the Afghan Social Marketing Organization:

On October 17, U.S. and Afghan government representatives and members of the international community gathered in Kabul for the official launch of the Afghan Social Marketing Organization (ASMO) – an Afghan-led non-governmental organization. The organization is a result of efforts by USAID's Communication for Behavior Change: Expanding Access to Private Sector Health in Afghanistan (COMPRI-A) project. COMPRI-A is a social marketing project designed to increase access to and use of quality health products and services by women and children, especially in the rural and underserved areas, through private-sector



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

October 16-October 31, 2010

providers. With the launch of ASMO, Afghan staff transitioned to the new organization to carry on this important work.

Social marketing is the systematic application of marketing concepts and techniques to promote healthy behaviors to increase demand for health products and services. Using a variety of media such as billboards, product branding, radio and TV commercials and soap operas, mobile cinemas, and community outreach, ASMO promotes and sells condoms, injectable and oral contraceptives, safe water chlorine solution, and oral rehydration salts at subsidized rates through the private sector. These efforts create the demand for an expanded health market and ultimately contribute to public health goals.

U.S. Deputy Ambassador E. Anthony Wayne lauded ASMO's success saying, "The United States Government, through the Afghan First Initiative, is committed to supporting and promoting strong, local Afghan-led organizations. I congratulate the ASMO management team and the distinguished Board of Directors on this exciting launch. This day marks a new era for social marketing efforts in Afghanistan."

STABILIZATION

Afghan Government Delivers School Supplies to Students in Wardak: In Wardak Province, as in many other provinces throughout Afghanistan, families often keep their children out of school because they cannot afford the cost of school uniforms, books, and other supplies. To enable more children to go to school, Wardak Provincial Governor Muhammad Halim Fidai worked with USAID to procure school supplies for more than 6,200 students in 14 schools. Supported by USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project, the school supply provision activity was requested by district governors in consultation with school headmasters, community members, and representatives from the Department of Education.



Wardak Provincial Governor Muhammad Halim Fidai distributes school supplies.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

The schools were selected because they are located in key recruiting areas for insurgents. LGCD is also supporting the procurement of 4,500 desks for 12 of these schools and office furniture and equipment for 60 school administrators. Through these activities, the Afghan Government is providing an incentive for students to attend schools more regularly and is simultaneously demonstrating its ability to provide improved education in Wardak.

During the handover ceremony, Governor Fidai stated, "If we want to bring stability to our country and to our province, first of all, we must support the education sector, because



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

October 16-October 31, 2010

education is the backbone of a society. If we don't have a proper education system, young people will join the insurgency, but with the help of USAID, the government can support our youth and our schools.”



The women of *Towalidat Banoo* receive training on the new fruit processing equipment.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

New Equipment Supports Women's Fruit

Production in Hirat: The women's group *Towalidat Banoo* has been processing and selling fruit in the Hirat Bazaar for six years. However, production came to a halt when anti-government elements stole their equipment last year. To ensure that the women would be able to return to business, women's councils in two local villages coordinated with the community development councils and the district development assembly (DDA) to request replacement equipment.

USAID's LGCD project provided new equipment to the women's group followed by a two-day training to develop the capacity of the women to use the new, more advanced equipment and to increase the quantity and quality of their products. At the closing ceremony, the Guzara District Governor and the head of DDA emphasized the Afghan Government's interest in creating job opportunities for women.

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

Parliamentary Journalists Learn the Art of Radio

Documentary Production: USAID's Afghanistan Parliamentary Assistance Project (APAP) is enhancing the capacity of the parliament's public relations employees to provide high-quality coverage of National Assembly events. A better flow of information will facilitate awareness of the parliament's activities among Afghans and encourage engagement between people and their representatives in parliament.



Afghan parliamentary journalists participate in radio documentary training.

PHOTO: USAID/APAP

Recently, APAP and Internews held an "Introduction to Radio Documentary Production" course for seven Department of Information and Public Relations (DIPR) employees. The DIPR's audio production line achieved significant improvements over the two-day course. Journalists, radio editors, and producers from both houses of the National Assembly of Afghanistan gained knowledge and practical experience in mind mapping, planning, selecting sources, drafting scripts, recording, and editing.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

October 16-October 31, 2010

“I hope the National Assembly will activate its own studio in the near future,” said Massom Hassan, 46, a DIPR radio editor. “I now have the ability to make a radio documentary as an institutional journalist, and I promise to start making documentaries soon.”

The radio training was one dimension of a larger APAP program that uses the radio to connect parliamentarians with their constituents, with formats including roundtable events broadcast from various provinces, talkback programs, and one-on-one interviews with parliamentarians.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Afghan Government and USAID Sign Water and Sanitation MoU: USAID’s Afghan Sustainable Water Supply and Sanitation (SWSS) Project and Afghanistan’s Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) are taking steps to improve project coordination and information sharing. On October 30, USAID and MRRD signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) that will lead to better cooperation on water supply, sanitation, and hygiene-education projects. The MoU also outlined that the SWSS project will continue to follow MRRD policy and implementing guidelines for rural water supply, sanitation, and hygiene promotion programming.

During the MoU signing ceremony, H.E. Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development Jarullah Mansoori noted, “Water is an essential and vital element for long life and survival of human beings. There are two major problems facing the inhabitants of rural areas in Afghanistan, lack of potable water and sustainability of water quality.” The minister also emphasized the need to promote a culture of environmental sanitation and hygiene education in rural areas.

“We are committed to continue supporting and providing villages with potable water, viable sanitation options, and creative means to mobilize communities,” stated U.S. Deputy Ambassador E. Anthony Wayne at the signing. “The USAID/SWSS project will strengthen community capacity to operate and maintain potable water supply systems and sanitation facilities.”



H.E. Minister Jarullah Mansoori of MRRD and U.S. Deputy Ambassador E. Anthony Wayne sign the MoU to improve coordination on sustainable water supply, sanitation, and hygiene promotion.

PHOTO: USAID/SWSS



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

November 1-November 15, 2010

AGRICULTURE

Bamyan's First National Park, Band-e-Amir, Featured in NBC Special: Richard Engel, NBC News' chief foreign correspondent, shot a segment for the Today Show on Bamyan Province and the Band-e-Amir National Park. The goals of the shoot were producing a high-profile positive story on Afghanistan and encouraging tourism in Bamyan. The shoot covered conservation efforts, including community outreach, and focused on Band-e-Amir National Park as an up-and-coming tourist hub and natural national treasure.



NBC correspondent Richard Engel speaking with a local community leader in Band-e-Amir.

PHOTO: USAID/Afghanistan, Abigail Sugrue

Band-e-Amir was officially declared Afghanistan's first national park in April 2009. USAID is funding the ongoing project to build the park and generate tourism in partnership with the Wildlife Conservation Society.

The NBC crew met with Governor Sarabi of Bamyan and explored the site where the two towering, ancient Buddha statues once stood before the Taliban destroyed them in 2001. They also captured the breathtaking natural terrain and local color of Band-e-Amir, including a buzkashi match – the national sport of Afghanistan. Engel interviewed a local Afghan community leader and a park ranger, and met with a family using a new fuel-efficient stove that is part of a pilot program.



With assistance from USAID, 14 representatives traveled to Malawi to observe and study emergency pediatric care where ETAT is further advanced.

PHOTO: USAID/Tech-Serve

HEALTH

Exchanging Ideas for Improved Child Health:

Prioritizing the very sick is imperative given the long queues of patients waiting to receive medical attention in hospitals around Afghanistan. Emergency triage assessment and treatment (ETAT) is an essential function of any hospital's emergency care, particularly when diagnosing and treating children. Since hospitals in Afghanistan lack the capacity and resources to properly prioritize patients' treatment based on the severity of their condition, many children die within the first few hours of their arrival.

Introducing this life-saving practice in Afghan hospitals is a joint activity implemented through USAID's Technical Assistance to the Central and Provincial Ministry of Public Health, and Basic

Support to Institutionalizing Child Survival projects.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

November 1-November 15, 2010

In the first week of November, 14 representatives from the Indira Ghandi Institute of Child Health (IGICH), the Ministry of Public Health in Kabul, and provincial hospitals in Hirat, Jalalabad, Bamyán, and Mazari Sharif traveled to Malawi to observe and study emergency pediatric care where this practice is further advanced. Before the study tour, Afghan participants completed ETAT training taught by trainers from Malawi. The Afghan delegation visited regional and district hospitals and observed the daily operations of the emergency, admission, inpatient, and intensive care departments in order to gain practical insights on successful triage, patient referral, and inpatient monitoring systems.

Back in Afghanistan, the Afghan study tour participants developed action plans to teach others about their new insights and initiate improvements in emergency pediatric care in provincial hospitals. The IGICH will serve as a learning center, ensuring the facilitation of future study visits within Afghanistan.

STABILIZATION

Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA)-sponsored Apprentices Receive Permanent Employment Contracts in Guzara:

Residents of Guzara District in Hirat Province recently celebrated the successful completion of an apprenticeship program at Guzara Industrial Park. The program trained apprentices in response to community requests for vocational training and supported local business in need of additional skilled employees but unable to afford the training.

A joint collaboration between USAID’s Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) and Afghanistan Small and Medium Enterprise Development (ASMED) projects, the apprenticeship program enabled previously unemployed, unskilled citizens to gain job skills and permanent job offers. LGCD paid the salaries for three months of capacity training apprenticeships in five factories for 160 laborers from Guzara, with 30 slots reserved for women and 30 for disabled persons. ASMED provided basic training on workplace behavior. At the end of the program, 159 interested participants received long-term employment contracts.



An apprentice receives his employment contract during the closing ceremony.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

High-ranking GIROA officials, including the Guzara District Governor, directors of the involved companies, and U.S. Government representatives attended the ceremony. To demonstrate GIROA’s interest in continuing to support its citizens, LGCD and ASMED will follow-up with the 159 apprentices in a few months to monitor their progress.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

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Bibi Jan, an elderly woman, was one of the recipients of a permanent job. Expressing her appreciation to USAID and the Afghan Government, she stated, "I am a widow without any source of income. I had to work as a maid in a stranger's house... Getting a long-term contract with a fixed salary, my concerns to provide an honorable life for my children are over and I can better concentrate on their education."

Re-opening of Women's Shahram Garden in

Kabul: The Shahram Garden for women in Kabul reopened on November 3 after decades of violent conflict had left it in ruins. Today, the rehabilitated eight-acre garden is an oasis of rose bushes, winding walkways, and fountains. The enclosure also includes a gym and sports classes, vocation training, literacy classes, and an area for the women of Kabul to buy and sell goods.



Attendees of the Women's Garden Rehabilitation opening event.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

The reopening ceremony included remarks from U.S. Ambassador Karl W. Eikenberry and Senior Afghan officials, including the Minister of Women's Affairs, Mayor of Kabul, Governor of Kabul Province, and members of parliament. The Shahram Garden was rehabilitated through USAID's Community Development Program and Local Governance and Community Development projects.

The Shahram Garden is not only a safe haven for the women and girls of Kabul to socialize and learn but a critical step forward for women's rights in Afghanistan. Fifty percent of the laborers who rebuilt the park were women. In his address, Ambassador Eikenberry noted, "Every day, the women of Afghanistan are proving that they can be on the frontline of Afghanistan's rehabilitation efforts."



The technical advisor talks with students at the Esa Baba School.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD

Improving Education in Paktika: Throughout the past month, USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project has supported the Afghan Government with a technical advisor (TA) who provides support and input to initiatives conducted jointly by the Department of Education (DoE), the Provincial Reconstruction Team, and other stakeholders in Sharana District, Paktika Province. The TA surveyed nine schools to collect statistical data, monitor education-related projects implemented by U.S. and international donors, and facilitate meetings with students, teachers, and



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

November 1-November 15, 2010

parents to ascertain educational needs in Sharana.

Limited access to education remains a significant community grievance in Paktika. The average literacy rate for males in Paktika is four percent, while female literacy is negligible. The technical advisor offers expertise to the Afghan Government and informs educational policy and strategy in this remote province. The director of the DoE has praised the TA's work, citing meetings where field data was presented to improve education service delivery in the province.

Schools Supplies Distribution Documented by Television Crew in Zhari District: Reporters from Radio Television of Afghanistan (RTA) documented the delivery of a large procurement of school supplies in the Zhari District of Kandahar Province this week. In close collaboration with the Kandahar Department of Education (DoE), community elders, and the District Governor, USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project distributed school bags, pens, pencils, blackboards, chalk, carpets, and notebooks in seven schools in Zhari internally displaced person camps. Overall, the supplies benefitted 1,810 male and female students in



Director of Education (right) and the District Governor (left) are interviewed by the media about the school supply distribution in Zhari.

PHOTO: USAID/Afghanistan

need of assistance. The provision of these items will encourage student attendance and improve the working environment for teachers and administrators. With this procurement, the Afghan Government has responded to the needs of communities in an impoverished area of Kandahar and enhanced the perception of the DoE as a provider of equitable access to learning regardless of a community's location. The director of the DoE commented on the importance of education development at this time and advised the students and teachers to take maximum advantage of the assistance they received.



Community members in Rege Kalacha hold a shura with Afghan Government representatives and members of the KPRT.

PHOTO: KPRT

Kandahar Shura Brings Together Community Members and Government: On November 5, the community of Rege Kalacha held a shura with representatives of the Afghan Government and members of the Kandahar Provincial Reconstruction Team's (KPRT's) Sub-district Stabilization Team. This shura was an important stepping stone in the stabilization of Kandahar City's Sub-district 2. Until the recent clearing operation in Malajat, the village was under Taliban control and local government officials were afraid to enter the area. Given the new



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

November 1-November 15, 2010

increase in security, the community elders of Rege Kalacha have been working with the Sub-district Stabilization Team to re-establish a relationship with the municipal government to bring resources and development projects to their village.

During the shura, the elders introduced their *wakeel* (representative), who was chosen by the community, including the religious leaders of all four mosques in the village. The *wakeel* will represent the community to the Kandahar City Municipality and will bring the concerns and needs of Rege Kalacha to the attention of the Sub-district Manager. Through this partnership, the *wakeel* will work with the municipal government to find grassroots solutions to development challenges in the village. KPRT's Sub-district Stabilization Team will support the municipality to facilitate these community-driven requests.

EDUCATION

Students Participate in Three-country Videoconference Highlighting Afghan History:

Students from Afghan history classes at the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF) had a unique opportunity to discuss their country's history with American and British students in a special videoconference on November 10.

The videoconference, sponsored by the British Council, focused on *The Great Game: Afghanistan*, an epic cycle of plays on Afghan history produced by London's Tricycle Theatre. The plays were performed in London and in selected U.S. cities in October.

AUAF's participation was made possible by the USAID-funded, state-of-the-art videoconference facility that AUAF uses in its distance-learning courses.

The term "the great game," coined by British author Rudyard Kipling, refers to the 19th and 20th century rivalries between the British and Russian empires for controlling influence in Central Asia. During the videoconference, students and faculty moderators from AUAF and California State University-East Bay and the Royal Holloway University in London discussed the plays as well as the "great game" theory of colonialism in Afghanistan.

"It was a wonderful opportunity for our students to engage with a distinguished panel of international scholars on a theme that is central to the history of Afghanistan," said Dr. Bahar Jalali, an AUAF history professor.



Afghan students participate in the November 10 videoconference.

PHOTO: AUAF Office of Communications



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

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Master's in Public Policy and Administration Student Extends Opportunities for Higher-Education Development to the Private Sector:

While the USAID-funded Master's in Public Policy and Administration (MPPA) program was designed to build the capacity of Afghan civil servants, some MPPA students are finding that their skills are also useful for development work in the private sector.

In 2009, Ziarmal, a mid-level manager at the Afghan Civil Service Institute and a student of the MPPA program, left the public sector to start his own consulting firm. As an independent consultant, Ziarmal provides policy analysis, strategic planning, human resources management, and monitoring and evaluation services to government ministries and international development organizations, including USAID projects in 19 provinces. In addition to consulting, Ziarmal also founded the Ajeer Business Management Institute, which recently signed a memorandum of understanding with George Mason University and the U.S. Department of State to develop a four-year bachelor's degree program in business management.

Ziarmal said, "My MPPA program has been very useful for my career development, and I hope other Afghans will benefit from the same opportunity through the new program." Approximately 1,000 students are enrolled at Ajeer Centers in Kabul, Badakhshan, and Kunduz provinces. By engaging with the private sector, Ziarmal is using his MPPA education to improve the quality of education and increase access to higher-education resources in Afghanistan.



Zabiullah Ziarmal will graduate from Kabul University with a Master's in Public Policy and Administration in December.

PHOTO: USAID/AeQA



A woman in her clothing shop in Jalalabad.

PHOTO: USAID/STAY Positive

Female Labor Market Study Finds Doors are Opening for Young Women:

Traditionally, Afghan men are the head of households. Young women, who typically have lower educational levels, fewer marketable skills, and limited employment opportunities, are economically dependent on the men in their family. However, traditional roles are shifting due to war, conflict, and the increased cost of living. In Nangarhar Province, women are increasingly contributing to family income. This shift in norms provides an emerging opportunity to invest in promoting female participation in the labor market.



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A recent USAID-funded study examined the female labor market in Nangarhar Province to identify ways to provide vital skills training and employment opportunities to female youth with low levels of literacy. The study identified market-driven opportunities in the formal and informal labor markets, including home-based production and income-generating activities. Findings showed that women are working not only in traditional fields of tailoring and embroidery, but also in areas widely reserved for men, such as construction. As a result, young women wish to gain literacy, numeracy, and business skills. Additionally, successful programs utilize apprenticeships and mentoring for practical skills application complemented with training in marketing.

One 24-year-old woman from Jalalabad said, “My husband’s income is not sufficient and I want to help him by earning an income. I think I can learn and do anything if I am taught well and have someone guide me in the beginning.”



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

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INFRASTRUCTURE

Water Supply in Ghazni Province: Helping People Get Safe Drinking Water: Repairing a pipe scheme in the Dayak District of Ghazni Province has helped provide safe drinking water to 8,617 beneficiaries. Inaugurated on November 8, 2010, the network now produces 16 liters per second for the community. After an assessment, the USAID-funded Afghan Sustainable Water Supply and Sanitation (SWSS) project started to repair the existing pipe scheme which had been constructed in 1999.



Resident of Robat community in Dayak District collects water from newly repaired water tap.

PHOTO: USAID/SWSS

Additionally, SWSS constructed a bore well to complement the repaired water system and to expand improved water access in the village. The newly repaired pipe scheme had not been functional for years, forcing people to collect water from long distances using donkeys and horses. For the handover ceremony, representatives from the provincial Rural Rehabilitation and Development Directorate, Community Development Council (CDC) and community residents were present. Dr. Abdul Satar, CDC representative called the project an achievement for the people, saying, "We thank all for their contribution in regard to this project, for sure it will solve all water related problems which the community has faced for years."



Digging a well in Noorgal District, Kunar Province.

PHOTO: USAID/SWSS

Water Supply in Kunar Province: Providing Potable Water to People Suffering from Lack of Safe Drinking Water: Kunar is a mountainous province in the east of Afghanistan well endowed with water resources, but lacking infrastructure and management structures to ensure proper access to potable water for the population.

On November 6, 2010, the USAID-funded Afghan Sustainable Water Supply and Sanitation (SWSS) project started the construction work of 27 bore wells in the Noorgal District of Kunar Province. The highest need for the population in this area is access to safe drinking water, which has been without hand pumps and has only had open wells in bad condition. The new wells which are now under construction in the communities of Mia and Patan will benefit an estimated 2,835 people. The construction of new wells commenced with an inauguration ceremony in which



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

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provincial Rural Rehabilitation and Development (RRD) representatives and community members were present.

At the ceremony, Ahmad Shah, a district RRD department representative thanked USAID/SWSS, saying, “We are really happy for the assistance of USAID to these communities and would like to request for more projects to be initiated and implemented.” Among the attendees at the ceremony was Ahmadullah, who is responsible for collecting water several times a day for his family. He stated, “I am very happy for this valued step, as we are really having problems due to lack of potable water and by getting a new well my time will be saved for other important life activities.” According to community elders, until now the lack of drinking water has created disease and affected the lives of many children under the age of five.

Water Supply in Ghazni Province: Creating Healthy Communities by Providing Potable Water:

Dayak is a district of Ghazni Province, which suffers from a lack of potable water. Most people in this district collect water from rivers, drains, and other unsafe sources. On November 8, 2010, the USAID-funded Afghan Sustainable Water Supply and Sanitation (SWSS) project completed the construction of eight bore wells and handed them over to the community of Sulimanzai. Households that suffered water shortage problems and long trips to distant water sources are now happy and say the new wells will save them time and reduce water borne-disease. Gul Rahman said, “I’m very happy having wells close to my house and everyone is satisfied with new wells. I would like to call upon all community residents to take care of these wells and keep them operating.” The new bore well will provide safe drinking water to an estimated 6,400 people. SWSS seeks to increase access to potable water supply and sanitation services in poor communities, decrease the prevalence of water-related diseases through household hygiene interventions and improve the sustainable management of potable water quality and quantity in project-assisted communities.



New hand pumps shorten the distance for residents in Sulimanzai Community of Dayak District, Ghazni

PHOTO: USAID/SWSS



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

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Ayub Khan High School receives refurbished and repainted classrooms.

PHOTO: USAID/DAI

STABILIZATION

GIRoA Engages with Community Leaders in Maywand to Promote Stability: The District Governor of Maywand engaged with community leaders in November to take the lead in promoting stability and development. At a bi-monthly Development Shura, representatives identified significant community grievances amongst their villages and presented potential solutions. The District Governor vetted the communities' proposals and appealed to USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project for assistance. Through the communities' cooperation with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA), USAID's LGCD anticipates providing stabilization grants to 15 different villages in

early December to rehabilitate community-based infrastructure, including karez, canals, sewage systems, roads, and bakeries. This increase in trust between communities and GIRoA comes as USAID's LGCD, in coordination with the Kandahar Department of Education, completed physical work this week on three activities to rehabilitate and equip the Ayub Khan High School, currently the only operational school in Maywand District. The school received new boundary walls, refurbished buildings and athletic fields, classroom supplies, and sports equipment.

GIRoA Minister and U.S. Ambassador Lay Foundation for Kabul Cricket Stadium:

On November 24, 2010, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) Finance Minister Omar Zakhilwal and U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan Karl W. Eikenberry laid foundation stones at the National Cricket Stadium in Kabul. The ceremony inaugurated USAID-funded renovations to bring the stadium up to international standards. USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project will provide 290 steel reinforcement bars to support the overall rehabilitation of the venue by USAID's Community Development Project-Kabul (CDP-K). In his remarks, Ambassador Eikenberry expressed appreciation for LGCD and CDP-K's successful collaboration, which also includes the rehabilitation of the Women's Park in Kabul and the ongoing renovation of sports facilities at Kabul University. The National Cricket Stadium initiative intends to promote



U.S. Ambassador Karl W. Eikenberry and GIRoA Finance Minister participate in groundbreaking to rehabilitate the Kabul National Cricket Stadium.

PHOTO: USAID/Jessica Boston, Courtesy



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

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stability through public works and the sport of cricket. Cricket became a source of pride for Afghanistan when the national team earned a spot in Division One of the International Cricket Council last year. With an estimated completion in July 2011, the stadium will seat 6,000 people and host domestic and international games.



School children at the Babrak School display their newly received backpacks.

PHOTO: USAID/DAI

USAID's LGCD Provides Supplies for Schools

across Paktya Province: Insurgent presence in several areas of Paktya Province has limited children – especially girls – from attending school. In addition, some parents choose not to send their children to school due to limited funding for school materials and classroom essentials. In collaboration with the Department of Education (DoE), USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project delivered "school supply kits" to 26 schools in eight districts across the Paktya Province. These kits included backpacks, notebooks, pencils, paper, and other materials. Providing the kits is intended to encourage parents to send their children to school. This sub-project also delivered tents to 12 of the 26 schools, where a shortage of classrooms has forced

students to study outside. The Paktya Provincial Development Council took the lead in prioritizing the schools in need of support, and the DoE coordinated the delivery of supplies with school principals.

The activity aims to improve the learning environment for an estimated 9,900 male students and 1,900 female students at the selected schools. Abudal Satar, the principal of Peeran Middle School in the Gardez District said, "I am very happy with the supplies that have been provided by LGCD to our school. Because of their families' economic situations, some students could not afford to buy backpacks for themselves to keep their books safe. These backpacks will increase the safety of the students' books and materials, so they can be passed to next year's students."



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

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Qazzaq Village Gets Back on the Road Again:

Earlier in the year, the road connecting Qazzaq village to Pashtun Zarghun District center deteriorated because of insurgent presence and subsequent clearing operations by Coalition Forces. With approximately 85 percent of the village's residents engaged in agriculture and livestock, the road represents an economic lifeline for those selling goods and services at the district's markets. In coordination with the Hirat Department of Rural Reconstruction and Development, USAID's Local Governance and Community Development project worked with the Qazzaq Community Development Council (CDC) to provide a community stabilization grant to rehabilitate 2.5 kilometers of gravel road connecting the village to the main road in Pashtun Zarghun District. The CDC is headed by a reintegrated former insurgent commander, and the community demonstrated ownership of the activity by contributing labor for the rehabilitation and donating houses and land along the road in order to widen it. The improved road is intended to serve as a tangible manifestation of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's presence in the area and to ease travel for an estimated 225 families in Qazzaq village to reach health services, schools, and markets at the district center.



Community members contribute their labor to repair the Qazzaq road.

PHOTO: USAID/DAI



Newly acquired publications for the ACKU collection proudly on display.

PHOTO: USAID/Asia Foundation

EDUCATION

USAID Helps Modernize and Expand Afghan's First Research Center:

The Afghanistan Center at Kabul University (ACKU) is the only in-country comprehensive collection of Afghan-focused research material. Given the increasing digitalization of knowledge, the modernization of the collection has been a critical priority for the center. To digitalize and preserve the collection, and facilitate greater global connections and capabilities, USAID is providing new equipment and expanded services for ACKU. What would be commonplace in most research centers is groundbreaking for Afghanistan. In addition, with USAID assistance, ACKU was able to purchase essential books and materials for the collection,

including rare books documenting the Taliban era. Two new scanners have expanded the capacity to digitalize the collection, doubling the daily output, and vastly improving the



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quality of the archives. Additionally, a higher speed internet connection and four new public computers facilitate operations and expand opportunities for international communication and networking. Catalogue officers are now expanding their services, uploading the newest materials and permitting ACKU clients to access digitalized materials for the first time. Utilization of library call numbers online will assure effective organization as the catalogue expands. Finally, to deepen transparency and accountability, a newly hired finance and administration manager will begin work to strengthen the ACKU financial system and financial reporting.

An online catalog custodian commented on the changes, "ACKU has extended its services through its website for its users by creating an online catalog system. This current catalog bibliography is a guide to ACKU's more than 20,000 titles, a total of 60,000 volumes."

The ACKU was originally established in 1989 in Peshawar, Pakistan, during the unstable period of the Soviet occupation in Afghanistan. It was transferred to the Central Library of Kabul University in July 2006 where it remains today as a foundational resource for Afghan students and academics. Kabul University and the Ministry of Higher Education have contributed funding and land for a new facility planned to open in May 2011.



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Women at work during the tailoring training in the Puli Alam Women's Center. Photo: USAID/LGCD

STABILIZATION

Training Enables Community Engagement at the Women's Center in Puli Alam:

Following the recent construction of the Puli Alam Women's Center in Logar Province, the Logar Department of Women's Affairs (DoWA) requested additional USAID assistance to establish activities to promote community involvement. In close coordination with community leaders and the DoWA, USAID's Local Governance and Community Development project supported three training workshops in bakery, the kitchen garden, and tailoring, and focused on promoting the facilities at the Women's Center.

Closing ceremonies graduated two women from the bakery training on December 2, and 40 women from the kitchen gardening training on December 8. Additional sessions provided bakery training to 18 men and women from Charkh and Mohammad Agha districts and kitchen gardening training to 15 women in Mohammad Agha. Tailoring training was provided to 42 women from Puli Alam at the Women's Center and approximately 100 women at centers in Charkh and Mohammad Agha, with closing ceremonies anticipated in the coming weeks. All three workshops taught culturally acceptable, marketable skills, while providing an outlet for socialization and engagement. USAID is currently working with DoWA and the Ministry of Women's Affairs in Kabul to plan and implement training for a Board of Directors to establish a self-sufficient and lasting operational system for the Women's Center.

Shahistah, a trainee, commented on benefits of the tailoring training saying, "My husband is working as a Health Cleric in the hospital and earns 3,000 Afs a month, which is nothing; also, we don't have agriculture land. I want to feed my children by tailoring work, so before the Eid's day came, I sewed about 25 clothes for women and I got from 150 Afs to 200 Afs wages for each piece."

LGCD Completed Initial Projects in Volatile Chak District of Wardak: Starting in August 2010, USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project, in collaboration with community and district leaders and in response to the U.S. military clearing actions, engaged communities in the remote and volatile Chak District of Wardak Province for the first time. Through this endeavor, a community stabilization grant (CSG) to rehabilitate a 100m protection wall of Bahadar Kodai Village, was completed successfully and without delay on October 30. In previous years, seasonal floods had washed away



The LGCD DSO surveys the completed protection wall. Photo: USAID/LGCD



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

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much of the wall and damaged households every spring. The wall rehabilitation assisted the community efforts to protect itself from future flooding, while addressing issues with unemployment by providing over 500 person days of work. A second CSG, funding a canal and culvert reconstruction in Kodai Village, was completed on December 6. The CSG supported community efforts to repair damage suffered during the severe flash floods of August 5, and provided 353 person days of community labor. These activities directly followed the U.S. Military's counterinsurgency push in the district and demonstrated GIRoA's ability to respond to community needs in even the most isolated and insecure areas of Wardak.

"Through the construction of this protection wall, Badahar Kodai Village could be safe and protected from the hazards of the flood, and also this protection wall can protect the canal in which leads the water to the electricity company," said Sayad Muhammad, a village elder from Bahadar Kodai.



Arghandab district governor oversees the furniture delivery. Photo: USAID/LGCD

GIRoA Promotes Professional Government Office Space in Zabul: As part of its effort to strengthen district-level governance capacity, GIRoA worked with USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project to install 16 solar panels, 12 high running batteries, one inverter and two charge controllers in the Arghandab District Office and also provided a variety of office furniture. The Arghandab district governor previously received four laptop computers, one UPS, two printers and one stabilizer from USAID. These improvements to the Arghandab offices follow installation of solar lighting and procurement of IT equipment to the district government offices in Shahjoy and Tarnak wa Jaldak

in recent months. The Arghandab solar power activity specifically arose from discussions between the Zabul PRT and Arghandab's district governor. The district governor provided direct support by consistently monitoring progress and personally transporting the materials along the often dangerous road from Qalat to Arghandab. All of these efforts clearly highlight the continued work of GIRoA to establish and legitimize its presence in Zabul by establishing fully equipped and furnished professional district government offices, while working to improve relations with local communities.

Arghandab District Governor Afzal commented on the improvements saying, "It was my high priority to get my office equipped with furniture, therefore I am grateful to LGCD/USAID for this support."



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

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District Governor Helps Link Village to the Gardez-Khost Road: The estimated 250 families of Shagi Qalay Village in Nadir Shah Kot District rely on a local tertiary road network to access the USAID-funded Khost-Gardez road, which connects the village to the district center and government services, such as schools, bazaars, health clinics, and security. However, the road network had fallen into disrepair and the community requested assistance from the district governor, who took the lead in bringing the community’s grievance to the attention of the Provincial Development Council and international donors. Through the district governor’s initiative, USAID’s Local Governance and Community



Ongoing construction of one of the Shagi Qalay Village culverts. Photo: USAID/LGCD

Development project re-graveled two kilometers of road and constructed seven culverts to improve the road’s durability in winter and the rainy season. The district governor was actively involved in implementation throughout, working with tribal elders to resolve a dispute over the road’s width. This activity has provided a tangible demonstration of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan’s ability to both maintain infrastructure and to provide services that directly address community grievances.

At the inauguration ceremony for the Shagi Qalay Village road held on December 8, the district governor spoke of this activity’s importance to the community: “This community had many grievances, but the road was the key one, because the community had faced problems with transportation. People could not properly transfer their agricultural products to the cities, and patients had difficulty getting to hospitals.”



Laborers receive their pay during the weekly disbursement ceremony in Delaram. Photo: USAID/LGCD

Delaram Trash Pick-Up Activity Builds Stability through Economic Opportunity: The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) and USAID’s Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project have teamed up in the Delaram District of Nimroz Province to continue a trash pick-up activity that ran from February to October and employed nearly a quarter of Delaram’s unemployed citizens. On December 4, the second phase of the Delaram trash clean-up activity officially began and now gainfully employs 45 working-aged men, including two supervisors, one manager, two truck drivers, and 40 laborers to clean-up the area around the Delaram Bazaar. This cash-for-work



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

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activity is aimed at alleviating the unemployment that affects approximately 200 working-aged males in the city center of Delaram. In a community that has been plagued with intimidation from anti-government elements, the visible influx of GIRoA-supported short-term labor will illustrate the government's commitment to increasing stability through economic opportunities. In addition to providing living wages to 45 laborers through the end of December, the activity also provides a vital community service by improving the health and sanitation of the Delaram Bazaar, Delaram's largest commercial and cultural institution. Furthermore, as the only non-military donor in Delaram, USAID's partnership with GIRoA is vital to building community engagement with local government entities and officials and combating the influence and propaganda of anti-government elements across the province.

Khost Department of Education Leads Refurbishment of Education Infrastructure:

Cultural restrictions on access to education for girls in Afghanistan often have a negative impact on their social and economic participation later in life. The Khost Department of Education is consequently taking the lead in improving the quality of education available to female youths in the province. This week, at the Bibi Halima Girl's School in Khost City, the deputy director of the Department of Education presided over USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project's delivery of desks, chairs, cupboards, and carpeting, as well as the unveiling of newly plastered and painted walls, doors, and windows. These refurbishments and supplies are intended to benefit the estimated 4,525 female students attending the school. The Khost Department of Education has played a similarly proactive role in the planning, implementing, and monitoring of the procurement of school supplies and sports equipment for 16 additional schools in the Mandozai, Tani Shamal, and Nadir Shah Kot districts. Further, the refurbishment and provision of supplies to the Bibi Halima Girls' School follows a grant from LGCD, which helped provide 1,500 books as well as library furniture to the school in August of this year. The Department of Education's active role in improving educational infrastructure throughout Khost demonstrates the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's ability to maintain service delivery in the province.



The director of the Department of Education presides over the closing ceremony. Photo: USAID/LGCD



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

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Representatives from Anasari-AAA travel out to interview community members. Photo: USAID/LGCD

Re-sourcing Water in Shindand: Lack of information about water resources has resulted in many water disputes and complaints among the local communities concerning water access, quantity, and quality in the Shindand District of Hirat Province. These disputes have impeded community cooperation with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) and Coalition Forces. In response, the Department of Irrigation requested that USAID’s Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project commission a water accessibility survey to ascertain the precise number, location, uses for, and perceived quality and quantity of, available water in all five buluks of

Shindand. On December 1, the provincial governor of Hirat formally presented the survey documents to the Directorate of Water Management during a handover ceremony at the Department of Water Management in Hirat City, attended by representatives from USAID, the Department of Economy, LGCD, and the implementing partner, Anasari-AAA, as well as members of Shindand’s District Development Assembly. Focused on community perception and not quantitative data collection, commissioning the survey demonstrates GIROA’s interest in engaging with the community and more effectively planning service delivery.

Expressing his appreciation to USAID and GIROA, Amanuulla, head of Shindand’s District Development Assembly, underlined the importance of the survey. He felt the data was vital in helping the government understand and address community needs when planning future development activities in Shindand.

Women Benefit from Continuing Family Healthcare Training in Tarin Kot: On December 5, USAID’s Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project and Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) officials held the opening ceremony for a family healthcare training for women in Tarin Kot. The ceremony was led by Director of Social Affairs Hajj Qoudos Khan, and attended by the Administrative Officer for Tarin Kot’s Department of Economy. Eighty women from Tarin Kot will be trained in family healthcare using curriculum approved by the Ministry of Public Health. The training aims to improve the willingness of the women to use GIROA health facilities and to promote GIROA involvement in preventative family healthcare training, and in basic sanitation and



Opening Ceremony of the Women's Healthcare Training in Tarin Kot. Photo: USAID/LGCD



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

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hygiene. It was implemented following a government request to USAID's LGCD after the success of a similar training completed in late August. The five-week training will emphasize household and community best practices, and includes modules on personal and home hygiene, safe food, safe water, and treatment for diarrhea using the Ministry of Public Health Community Health Worker health and hygiene curriculum. Both the developed curriculum and the training, targeted at women in an underserved community, illustrate GIRoA's focus on promoting family healthcare in Uruzgan, as well as effective service delivery.



Meeting with Charbolack district governor and CDCs. Photo: USAID/CBSG

New Projects in Charbolak District, Balkh Province: On December 4, a Community Based Stabilization Grants (CBSG) project Community Development Fund team visited Charbolak District to meet with the district governor and heads of the Community Development Center (CDC). Eight new projects were requested in the meeting, which were prioritized, by the district governor and CDCs to be implemented in key villages of the district. The CBSG team in Balkh Province is currently processing the requests and will send the same to CBSG headquarters after all necessary procedures in the field have been completed.

Grant Agreement for Palez Wali School Surrounding Wall Project: A grant agreement was signed for a school wall project in Palez Wali in Chemtal District of Balkh Province on December 5. The Community Based Stabilization Grants project field team has started the activities and asked the Community Development Center to open a bank account and prepare quotations for the purchase of construction materials. The surrounding wall will further improve the learning environment and contribute to student security.



Surrounding wall will improve the learning environment. Photo: USAID/CBSG



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

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Priority needs of schools are surrounding walls. Photo: USAID/CBSG

Monitoring and Evaluation Visit to Mangajik School Surrounding Wall Project: On December 4, a Community Based Stabilization Grants project monitoring and evaluation (M&E) team visited Mangajik District to receive the latest update on the progress of the school surrounding wall project. The visit revealed that approximately 25 percent of the project work is complete. A request was made to speed up the construction process due to cold weather that will affect the construction process.

In addition, the M&E team met with the head of the Community Development Center and school principal. Both affirmed that project activities are going forward as planned and that they are trying to speed up the work progress in order to complete the project based on the grant agreement timelines.

Monitoring and Evaluation Visit to Maradyan School Rehabilitation Project: On December 5, the Community Based Stabilization Grants project monitoring and evaluation team visited the Maradyan Boys High School rehabilitation project to get the latest update on the progress. Approximately 10 percent of the project work is complete. The team met with the head of the Community Development Center and school principal. Both affirmed that project activities are going forward smoothly and that they are trying to speed up the work progress in order to complete the project within its period. The rehabilitation will contribute to stability in the district and encourage students to attend school more regularly.



Monitoring visits help make sure the work is in progress. Photo: USAID/CBSG



CBSG team monitoring the work progress. Photo: USAID/CBSG

Monitoring and Evaluation Visit to Aqcha School Rehabilitation Project: On December 6, a Community Based Stabilization Grants project monitoring and evaluation team visited the Aqcha Boys High School Rehabilitation Project to get the latest update on the progress of school rehabilitation. Approximately 10 percent of the project work is complete. It was a good opportunity for the



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

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monitoring and evaluation team to meet with the head of the Community Development Center and school principal to discuss the project. The work schedule will increase in order to meet the completion date determined in the grant agreement.

Project Selection in Kohistanat District: On December 5, a Community Based Stabilization Grants (CBSG) project technical team visited Kohistanat, an insecure district in the Saripul Province. During the visit, the team met with Community Development Council members and community elders. The district governor and Community Development Centers were familiarized with CBSG and its policies and practices. They were asked to identify new projects in key areas of their district. At the meeting, road-gravelling projects were proposed in eight districts of Sari Pul Province, which will improve transportation links. The projects will benefit the large numbers that travel to the district capital and enable proper access to health services, especially in winter when the roads are unusable for motor vehicles.



Discussion to identify priority projects. Photo: USAID/CBSG



Sayad residents in need of protection wall and a bridge. Photo: USAID/CBSG

Survey Team Visits Sayad District: On December 7, a Community Based Stabilization Grants project technical team surveyed two project sites identified by the District Development Assembly and district governor. The projects are a retaining wall of 150 meters long and 2-meters high, as well as a bridge with a length of six meters. Implementation of these projects will ease transportation for all neighboring communities and improve travelling to the district capital and access to health centres for their 51,600 residents.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

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Takatoe Payeen 3-Kilometer Road Gravelling Activity Survey: On December 2, a Community Based Stabilization Grants (CBSG) project team received a pre-proposal for a three kilometer road gravelling activity in Takato-e- Payeen village in Ayback District of Samangan Province. They conducted a site visit on December 4, to collect the information for the grant application. They met with the head of the Community Development Center and community elders and familiarized them with the CBSG project. The road-gravelling project will solve transportation problems experienced in all seasons and enable the residents to have improved access to markets and basic services.



Road gravelling is top priority in most communities.
Photo: USAID/CBSG



Cold weather and snow disrupt work progress.
Photo: USAID/CBSG

Monitoring and Evaluation Visits to Karti Sulh and Shorabak School Surrounding Wall Projects: On December 7, a Community Based Stabilization Grants monitoring and evaluation team visited Karte-Solh Village of Samangan Province to obtain the latest updates from an ongoing school surrounding wall activity. The visit revealed that 20 percent of the work is complete and work is progressing according to plan. In the same day, a site visit was conducted to the Shoraback School to evaluate the surrounding wall ongoing activity. Twenty percent of the work is complete but delays have been experienced due to snow and cold weather.

CBSG Visits Kahmard District: A Community Based Stabilization Grants (CBSG) project technical team visited Kahmard District and met with the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan officials and the District Development Assembly members to introduce the CBSG project. They were briefed on CBSG policies and practices and asked to identify their priority activities.



Meetings for project identification. Photo: USAID/CBSG



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

December 1-December 15, 2010



School furniture projects advance education opportunities. Photo: USAID/CBSG

Abdul Kabir Primary School Procurement Activity:

On December 7, 320 chairs and desks for students, six desks for teachers, 10 chairs for teachers, one seat couch, two bookshelves, and 30 meters of carpet were handed over to the Abdul Kabir Primary School to benefit 640 students. The procurement has contributed to an increase in the number of students enrolled and encouraged parents to send their children to school.

Meeting with Field Program Officer (FPO) in Kunduz:

During the reporting period, a provincial meeting was held between the Kunduz FPO and the Afghan Development Association (ADA) Provincial Manager at the ADA Kunduz office. During the meeting, they discussed the progress of projects ongoing in the province and the development of new pre-proposals. The FPO expressed his satisfaction on work progress and agreed on holding meetings of a similar nature in the future. All agreed that regular meetings would provide opportunities for solving problems and keeping projects on track during their implementation.



Meetings provide the opportunity for better coordination. Photo: USAID/CBSG



Counterpart Chief of Party signing agreement with AVEC Director (I-PACS ISO). Photo: USAID/IPACS

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

IPACS II Launch Event:

On December 9, 2010, Counterpart officially launched the Initiative to Promote Afghan Civil Society (I-PACS) II project. During the event, Counterpart and its partners introduced the three-year I-PACS II project to representatives from government, donors, civil-society organizations, and I-PACS key partners. It was a great opportunity for all to learn more about the I-PACS II project, its objectives, activities, expected results, and partnerships. In addition, institutional support grant agreements were signed between Counterpart and its seven Intermediary Service Organizations, namely: Afghan Civil Society



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

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Forum Organization (ACSF), Afghanistan Center for Training and Development, Association of Defense for Women Rights Organization, Afghan Women Educational Center, Basic Education and Employable Skill Training, Education Center for Poor Women and Girls of Afghanistan, and Women Activities and Social Service Organization.

Through these sub-grant agreements, I-PACS awarded approximately \$841,000 to these seven organizations. These grants will enable I-PACS partners to advance their organizational development, support their resource centers, enable key staff to be directly involved with the implementation of I-PACS II initiatives, and allow I-PACS partners to plan and implement trainings and technical assistance that are tailored to their specific needs, which may include gender action planning, monitoring, and evaluation of programs, or conducting community outreach work.

Engineer Aziz Rafiee, ACSF director, stated, “We are here, celebrating a partnership which is fruitful for the people of Afghanistan. As Afghanistan and our people are in a very tough situation, it seems like everything is a priority. And this partnership with I-PACS does contribute to the nation-building process, by strengthening civil society, so we are happy to continue this work.”

Afghan Women’s Advocacy Coalition (AWAC) Launch: The Afghan Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA) and Afghan civil-society organizations, together with the Ambassador’s Small Grants Project (ASGP) to Support Gender Equality, launched the Afghan Women’s Advocacy Coalition (AWAC) on December 12 at MoWA. AWAC is a group of twenty women-focused Afghan civil-society organization partners of the ASGP, which will engage in efforts to support the National Action Plan for Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) goals. MoWA’s H.E. Husan Bano Ghazanfar also signed a memorandum of understanding, which will formalize the relationship between MoWA, AWAC, and ASGP and promote the development of the civil-society advocacy coalition, enhance MoWA’s advocacy efforts, and promote public education and advocacy on women’s rights. This is the first formalized agreement of cooperation and coordination between Afghan civil-society organizations and MoWA. This agreement contributes to the Afghanistan National Development Strategy and NAPWA priorities for formation of partnerships with relevant institutions involved in furthering gender equality. The event concluded with a question and answer session directed at selected participants of the panel discussion.

Grant Information Workshop: USAID with the Public Affairs (PAS), Pol-Mil, and the Interagency Provincial Affairs sections jointly held a Grant Information Workshop at the Afghan Women’s Network (AWN) office on Tuesday, December 14. Information on U.S. Government civil society small grants projects was provided to the 71 invited AWN member organizations in two sessions. The presentation of funding opportunities through the U.S. Embassy (i.e. Afghan Women’s Empowerment, Quick Response Grants, PAS, International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs, the Ambassador’s



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

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Small Grants Program, Governance Annual Program Statement, and the Initiative to Promote Afghan Civil Society) was followed by a session on writing grant proposals for nongovernmental organizational participants.

Afghanistan Media Development and Empowerment Program (AMDEP): USAID supported Salam Watandar, the national independent news and analysis radio network, was recognized for its work this week with a gold medal from the Wolesi Jirga. The satellite news network and three of its reporters received recognition of its exemplary coverage of Afghanistan's first post-Taliban Parliament. Nearly a hundred journalists and dignitaries attended the ceremony, including Minister of Information and Culture Sayyid Makhdoom Raheen, Head of RTA Anzoor, and Secretary of the Wolesi Jirga Ghulam Hasan Giran. Salam Watandar has provided comprehensive coverage of Parliament, including daily news, live talk shows, and weekly programming such as "Your Representative," since its inception in 2005 and is one of only four local media organizations to have a full-time reporter based at Parliament.

The Afghanistan Sub-national Governance Project Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW) Roundtable Discussions: Saba Media Organization (SMO) and Educational and Training Center For Poor Women and Girls of Afghanistan (ECW) organized a series of three roundtables in Kabul, Balkh, Hirat, and Kunduz provinces on the implementation of the law on EVAW on December 8 and 9. The discussions were filmed in each province by SMO and ECW, and will be broadcast in 22 provinces via radio and television after December 17 (on four Friday evenings).

Performance Based Governors Fund (PBGF): On December 15, the Asia Foundation submitted the needed information for a \$2.5 million, four-month cost extension to the PBGF. Once approved, the extension of the current agreement will continue through May 30. This amendment to the current project assures provincial officers job security while plans are being made for PBGF's next phase. Concurrently, the Office of Democracy and Governance submitted a status update to the front office with the timeline for the next phase of PBGF and action items and due dates during the next 90 days.

Kabul City Initiative (KCI): KCI staff began implementing the Organizational Management Assessment of the Kabul Municipality. The assessment will surface priority needs for improved systems, procedures, and management skills. Recommendations from the assessment will be ready on or about January 22, 2011.

USAID responded to the ambassador's service request received from citizens in District 16 through a meeting between KCI and the mayor to discuss the repairs to drainage and floodwalls. KCI and the mayor will work next with the U.S. Army Corp or Engineers and the PRT to look at options to resolve the problem in coordination with the District 16 manager. (Note that the mayor was appreciative that the KCI staff informed him of this



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

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request but also wanted to make sure that future requests from the districts are sent directly to him for action.)

Afghanistan Parliament Assistance Project (APAP): While the Wolesi Jirga (lower house) is in recess, pending inauguration (expected by January 21), APAP focused much of its efforts with Parliament staff, civil society, and the Meshrano Jirga Committees. APAP presented the budget report to the Meshrano Jirga (Senate) Budget Committee in preparation for the committee's receipt and consideration of the Afghan national budget in early 2011. APAP also made a presentation on the content and impact of the transport sector policy to the Meshrano Jirga Communications and Transportation Committee.

Afghanistan Parliament Assistance Project (APAP): APAP trained the Department for International and Public Relations staff on basic journalism skills. APAP also provided Afghan journalists with training on budget and economics reporting as they relate to the national budget consideration. Moreover, APAP's outreach effort instructed a pilot group of civil-society organizations on how to effectively engage Parliamentary committees during meetings to productively explain their issues and raise their concerns.

Kandahar Field Visit: Office of Development and Governance staff conducted a field visit this week to Kandahar Province to look at the next phase of the Regional Afghan Municipal Program for Urban Population - South. In the coming year, substantial implementation is expected for additional activities in the south and southwest. Simultaneously, meetings related to the Rule of Law Stabilization-Informal sector took place to prepare for follow-on activities.

COMISAF Sub-National Governance Briefing: Office of Development and Governance and Stabilization Unit staff presented USAID's projects supporting sub-national governance efforts to General Petraeus on December 12. The Regional Afghan Municipal Program for Urban Population (RAMP UP), the Afghanistan Social Outreach Program (ASOP), and the District Delivery Program (DDP) as well as other stabilization projects were explained within the context of stabilization and development. Regular ASOP, RAMP UP, and DDP update briefs will be offered in future ISAF morning stand-ups.



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ECONOMIC GROWTH

Inauguration of Qaderi Plastic Recycling Company:

As part of the continued effort to encourage growth in the Afghan small and medium enterprise sector by ensuring that domestic industry potential is maximized all along the value chain, USAID's Afghanistan Small and Medium Enterprise Development (ASMED) project recently inaugurated a significant investment in small and medium enterprise growth in RC-North. On December 29, the Qaderi Plastic Recycling Company inaugurated its new equipment, which it purchased through a \$55,000 ASMED value-chain improvement grant. Qaderi, which began operations in 2006, is the only company providing recycling services in the northern region of Afghanistan.

The company receives and recycles plastic from northern region provinces, and then sorts the collected plastic according to color and quality. Prior to the grant, the company sent the collected plastic to Pakistan for processing. Now the company is able to recycle the plastic waste in Mazar. Qaderi is committed to establishing additional collection centers throughout the five northern provinces.



The company owner Ezatullah Qaderi explaining its products to entrepreneurs. Photo: USAID/ASMED



EGGI's Eric Strong congratulates a CAO auditor for successfully completing "Principles of External Auditing." This is the first of a six course series EGGI will deliver to build auditing capacity of CAO staff. Photo: USAID/EGGI

Central Audit Office (CAO) Training: USAID's Economic Growth and Governance Initiative (EGGI) project recently delivered the first of six foundational auditing courses designed to promote a standard auditing methodology across the CAO and educate the CAO's staff on the fundamentals of auditing. The first course, "Principles of External Auditing," provides an in-depth overview of the external audit function, including audit objectives, differences between internal and external auditing, phases of the audit, and internal control concepts. The course will provide the CAO's staff with foundational knowledge to further develop and build advanced auditing skills. The six courses in the foundation-level series will be delivered

over the coming months to the same group of handpicked auditors. The purpose of delivering training to the same cohort is to train a core group of CAO staff so that they are equipped to train the rest of the CAO with limited USAID assistance. This train-the-trainer approach is designed to promote sustainability in the education and training of CAO staff. EGGI has begun developing the remaining five basic-level courses and is currently focused on completing the second and third courses, which provide more in-depth coverage of the first two-of-four phases of the standard audit. Hands-on training and direct technical assistance on key audits will support all classroom training provided to the CAO staff across the CAO audit program. The education and training program will help to provide CAO with



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

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the foundational knowledge necessary to support transparency and fiscal responsibility across the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.



Attendees at the Trade and Economic Press Club launch. Photo: USAID/TAFA

Trade and Economic Development Press Club

Launch: On December 18, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, in collaboration with USAID's Trade and Accession Facilitation for Afghanistan (TAFA) project, launched the Trade and Economic Press Club. The club will meet on a regular basis and bring together journalists from Kabul and other provinces, as appropriate, to discuss trade and economic issues, share ideas and develop economic stories. One goal of the club is to raise awareness about trade and economic issues and promote reporting on them in the Afghan Media. TAFA has been working with journalists across the country to develop trade reporting skills and enhance their understanding of

specific trade-related topics including SAFTA and APTTA. Almost 50 Afghan journalists have been trained thus far by a former BBC journalist. A second club goal is to create an environment where journalists can learn about trade and economic issues in greater depth and receive assistance in order to report on them more effectively.

Modernization of Customs Facility at Kabul International Airport (KIA):

Work has commenced in modernizing the customs facilities at Kabul International Airport. A major priority was the removal of all goods that had amassed over the last year in the customs area. A joint team comprised of representatives from the Afghan Customs Department and the Trade and Accession Facilitation for Afghanistan documented and moved 600 pallets of un-cleared goods from a makeshift outdoor storage area. This resulted in an area more than 1,000 square feet cleared in preparation for hard standing concrete to be laid. Work is underway to identify the owners of these abandoned goods so they can be either customs cleared, destroyed, or sold at auction.



Clearing of the customs site at Kabul International Airport. Photo: USAID/TAFA



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

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INFRASTRUCTURE

GRANT FOR GHAZNI WATER DEPARTMENT: A USAID Commercialization of Afghanistan Water and Sanitation Activity (CAWSA) project grant of \$18,831 to the Ghazni Water Supply Department funded the construction of an important shelter for the generators that power the main water pumps, to protect them from damage caused by weather. CAWSA provided training for the water department engineers and technicians so that they could design and supervise the construction themselves. The project was completed and the contractor handed the facility over to the water department on 30 December 2010. During this period, CAWSA assisted with on-the-job training in project inspections and quality control.



USAID grant funded shelter for generators in Ghazni. Photo: USAID/CAWSA



USAID's CAWSA project grants fund new boundary wall. Photo: USAID/CAWSA

GRANTS TO GARDEZ WATER SUPPLY DEPARTMENT: USAID's Commercialization of Afghanistan Water and Sanitation Activity (CAWSA) project provided a grant of more than \$63,000 to the Gardez Province Strategic Business Unit to construct a boundary wall that is 680 meters long. This project started in September 2010. The CAWSA team accompanied the head of technical department and the water supply engineers on regular quality control inspections to monitor progress and compliance with the design specifications.

As of November 30, 2010, the

project was 85 percent complete but, due to property boundary disputes, the alignment had to be modified. The grant is being augmented to complete the project by January 30.

A CAWSA grant of \$ 6,228 funded the rehabilitation and cleaning of a karez (an ancient type of water-supply system developed and still used in arid regions of the world) that provides water for approximately 300 Gardez Province families. The recently completed project increased the daily water production from 11 liters/sec to



Gardez worker enters access shaft for karez cleaning. Photo: USAID/CAWSA



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

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20 liters/sec. This project reduced the unit cost of water and made more water available to customers while also increasing water supply service to these customers from six hours of water service per day, to 24 hours service.



CAWSA provides technical training. Photo: USAID/CAWSA

The CAWSA team conducted a training program in Gardez Province to improve the job performance of the water department technical staff. Field maintenance crews, pump operators, and customer care personnel learned along with other staff of the Ghazni Water Supply Department. The 13 participants learned: safety and protection of pump panel-boards and high voltage equipment, safe use and servicing of general electrical equipment, and operation and maintenance of water supply network (Tips to keep the water supply network active and reduce downtime).

Public Latrines and Clean Water Reservoirs: The USAID funded Afghan Sustainable Water Supply and Sanitation (SWSS) project has been addressing persistent hygiene and sanitation challenges in Afghanistan. In December 2010, the project started construction of 12 public latrines and 9 clean water reservoirs in Takhti Istalif community of Istalif District in Kabul Province.

During the site selection ceremony for the projects, Istalif District Agriculture Manager Mr. Nabi Khan said, “Construction of public latrines and water reservoirs will offer safer and more hygienic disposal of human waste and provide people with clean drinking water to reduce mortality and morbidity rates in children under 5, resulting from water borne diseases.” He further added his appreciation for the efforts and initiative of USAID/SWSS in providing potable water and facilitating improved environmental sanitation and hygiene. The project is expected to benefit approximately 1,500 beneficiaries among the current three hundred households.



Istalif District agriculture manager with SWSS team, selecting sites to construct public latrines. Photo: USAID/SWSS



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

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Hand pump mechanic explains different parts of a hand pump to community trainees in December, 2010. Photo: USAID/SWSS

Mechanics Work With Communities to Ensure Well Sustainability: The USAID-funded Afghan Sustainable Water Supply and Sanitation (SWSS) project has been striving to address persistent water supply challenges in order to provide rural communities with potable water. In December 2010, the SWSS project conducted a six-day district hand-pump mechanics training in Parwan Province. The trainees are now equipped with tool kits for the maintenance of approximately 147 bore and dug wells in Shinwari, Nijrab and Surkh Parsa districts of Parwan and Kapisa provinces.

The workshop trainer, Mohammad Painda, said during a practical exercise with trainees that the training has imparted new techniques and knowledge to the trainees in order to extend the sustainability of wells with hand pump in the region. He stated, "Projects without sustainable maintenance have short lives and durability." Sustainability of water and sanitation investments is one the core objectives for the USAID-funded SWSS project.

EDUCATION

Students in Community-Based Primary Classes Complete Government Exams: The month of November marks the end of the school year in cold-climate provinces of Afghanistan. For almost 30,000 primary-grade students in classes established and supported by USAID's Partnership for Advancing Community Education in Afghanistan (PACE-A) project, it is a busy time of intense concentration. Students in lower grades sit for math and language exams, while students in grades 4-6 also include science, history, and geography in their exam lineup.



Concentrating hard on their government exams: Fourth-grade girls in Balkh province. Photo: USAID/PACE-A

In remote areas that remain beyond the reach of the Ministry of Education system, PACE-A expands educational opportunities by training teachers, providing school supplies, and helping communities to establish committees to actively support the classes. Students follow the government curriculum, and PACE-A assists in registering their annual exam results with Ministry authorities. This helps ensure that community-based students are eligible to pursue further education in the formal education system.

Most community-based students are the first generation in their family to read and write, and they are full of ambition. Jeena from Kapisa Province spoke about the great opportunities



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ahead, “I am very pleased that I reached grade six, and I am very keen to continue my education and become a doctor in the future. Establishment of a community-based education school in our village was a golden chance for us, and we have to pay full attention to our education and use this chance for the betterment of our future.”



*Mohammed Mojtaba Salem delivers a lecture on AUAUAF's orientation and registration processes, with recommendations on how it can be improved.
Photo: AUAUAF Communications Office*

University Students Offer Ideas to Redesign Registration and Orientation Process: Students at the American University of Afghanistan (AUAUAF) gave a presentation on the university's registration and orientation system, focusing on possible improvements to enhance the process. USAID is the major supporter of the AUAUAF.

Led by business student Mohammed Mojtaba Salem, the presentation focused on areas where the process might be confusing to newly enrolled students.

“The system is fine on paper, but having gone through the process before and analyzing it from a time-saving perspective, there are definitely areas where it could be improved,” Salem said. “For

example, while the student is waiting for the admissions office to confirm financial statements, the process of creating student e-mail accounts and student IDs could begin.”

University administrators were attentive to the presentation and cited their willingness to investigate the timesaving recommendations that would require only minor changes to the system. “The recommendations of this group will definitely be implemented and should make the process easier for new students,” said Dr. Pamela Hunter, AUAUAF's registrar. “We had no idea that some of the steps involving other departments took so much time or were confusing to students.”

“We invite these students to go through the process again this coming spring, and let us know if we have improved the system,” she added. The presentation comes at a helpful time as AUAUAF is preparing for its largest intake of new students in the coming spring semester.

Training planned for 6,000 Afghan School Managers: Achieving access to quality education is an important element in efforts to foster stability and development in Afghanistan. School principals play a key role in recruiting and managing teachers, and in shaping the learning environment in schools. Continuing education of principals will help them to learn how they can best support teachers' professional development and administer schools effectively.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

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USAID's Building Education Support Systems for Teachers (BESST) project collaborated with the Ministry of Education (MoE) to design in-service training for school principals and head teachers. The first round of training took place in 2008 for more than 3,000 principals across 11 provinces of Afghanistan. Since then, principals have voiced a desire for further in-service training.

In response to this demand, USAID/BESST and the Teacher Education Department of the MoE recently completed the curricula for the second round of School Manager Training based on the MoE's Competencies for School Administrators. The eight-day training is designed to be held in district-based clusters in Pashtu and Dari languages. For continuous professional development after the workshop, principals will meet with their peers to review and reflect on the content presented in the workshops.



School Management trainers engaged in small group activity to prepare to deliver in-service training to more than 6,000 principals. Photo: USAID/BESST

In December 2010, 95 trainers from USAID/BESST and MoE learned to conduct school manager workshops in the districts. The participants gave very positive feedback. In an interview, one school principal from Ghazni province described the changes he has seen in his professional practice. "In the past we understood a school principal to be someone who sits behind a desk and gives orders. Now we know that we as principals should be active in order to lead the school staff properly. We should have consultations with our team and we should continuously monitor and evaluate their activities," said the principal. "Before, I did not know about active administration, teamwork, and time management. Now I think I have all the capabilities to train and mentor other principals with the proficiencies and skills I have learned from BESST."

Beginning in January 2011, the trainers will conduct eight-day school manager workshops for more than 6,000 school principals, head teachers, and community members across 11 provinces. The MoE will gradually expand the school manager training to all provinces.

DEMOCRACY AND GOVERNANCE

Launching the Afghan Women's Advocacy Coalition: For the first time in the history of the Afghan women's civil society movement, the Ministry of Women's Affairs and twenty Afghan civil society organizations have joined together to establish clear objectives of how to move forward for the women of Afghanistan. The challenges faced by women are clear, but the critical step is how to move forward toward an effective and sustainable positive change.



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The Minister of Women's Affairs, ASGP, and key civil society stakeholders lead the launch of the Afghan Women's Advocacy Coalition. Photo: USAID/Creative

Supported by the Ambassador's Small Grants Program (ASGP) and the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA), the Afghan Women's Advocacy Coalition (AWAC) is a group of more than twenty women-focused Afghan civil society organizations and individuals who have formed a nationwide coalition to advocate for women's rights throughout Afghanistan. AWAC is developing a comprehensive strategy to conduct advocacy campaigns and initiatives to further the goals of the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA). Through campaigns and strategic initiatives that will reach across the country, AWAC is committed to achieving lasting change in three core areas: women's political participation and leadership, education, and access to justice and human rights. Five

leading coalition members are coordinating the development of a charter, by-laws, and a viable action plan.

The AWAC was formally launched in December 2010, at a milestone event hosted by the Ministry of Women's Affairs. At the event, MoWA and ASGP signed a memorandum of understanding to formalize the relationship and partnership between MoWA, AWAC, and ASGP. This is the first formalized agreement of cooperation and coordination between Afghan civil society organizations and MoWA to date, a historic achievement for the civil society movement. This agreement contributes to the Afghan National Development Strategy and NAPWA priorities for the formation of partnerships with relevant institutions involved in public education and advocacy on women's rights.

The partnership between MoWA and AWAC will foster added support for the advocacy coalition, enhance MoWA's advocacy efforts, and promote the launch of campaigns in support of NAPWA goals. "It is about time to reach out to women across the country through a coalition like this," says Roshan Siran, an AWAC member. Since its inception, AWAC has already expanded to include additional individuals and civil society organizations, including two female members of Parliament and the Afghan Women's Network, the largest network of women-focused organizations in Afghanistan.

STABILIZATION

Wali Jan Village Collaborates with Municipal Government to Improve Roads: In collaboration with the Kandahar municipal government and USAID's Local Governance and Community Development project, residents of Wali Jan Village in sub-District six of Kandahar City, overcame insurgent threats and engaged in a successful road gravelling activity aimed at alleviating flooding, granting access to markets year round, and improving road safety. The road gravelling rehabilitated 180 meters of road, and included the construction of 25 concrete slabs and a 200-meter drainage canal. The community was originally reluctant to engage with



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government officials, but became more invested in the idea after witnessing the positive impact of a series of successful activities that rehabilitated drainage and road systems in the nearby villages of Haji Malang, Ghondai, Haji Gul Mohammad, and Zahir Aka Kalacha. Despite insurgent threats and the planting of two landmines near the project site, the community remains invested in the pursuit of additional development activities in collaboration with the government. This activity is a tangible demonstration of municipal service delivery and community engagement with local government entities, facilitated through support to the provincial government's *Hamkari de Kandahar Lepara* initiative.



Laborers gravel the road in Wali Jan Village of Sub-District Six in Kandahar. Photo: USAID/LGCD

Referencing previous struggles with transportation such as potholes and flooding, mud, and unsanitary conditions during the rainy season, Baryalai Jan, the head of local community said, "We will not have all those problems again and we will continue to do other development activities in our community."



Unloading the equipment at Shaheed Ludin Hospital in Mohammad Agha of Logar Province. Photo: USAID/LGCD

Building the Capacity of Hospital Facilities in Mohammad Agha: On December 29, 2010, provincial and district government representatives participated in a handover ceremony recognizing the provision of much needed basic health equipment to Shaheed Ludin Hospital, the only hospital in Mohammad Agha District of Logar Province. The hospital was built more than ten years ago, and provides services to approximately 100,000 people living in the district. However, due to inadequate facilities and lack of equipment, patients were often required to seek medical treatment in Kabul, incurring the burden and associated costs of added travel. At the request of members of the Provincial Development Council (PDC) and the Director of the Department of Public Health (DoPH), USAID's Local

Government and Community Development project procured 250 waiting room chairs, 50 beds and mattresses, five water dispensers, and two vacuum cleaners for the hospital. Members of the PDC, the DoPH director, the provincial governor of Logar Province, the director the Department of Education, the district governor, the hospital director and other hospital staff, and community elders attended the ceremony. By properly equipping this visible symbol of government services, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has demonstrated its commitment to building the capacity to deliver improved health services.



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Repaired Visitor's Dormitory Facilitates Community Representation in Paktika Province:

The office of the provincial governor in Sharana City frequently hosts community leaders from across Paktika Province in order to mediate local conflicts and secure community buy-in for development interventions. At the request of the provincial governor, USAID's Local Governance and Community Development project coordinated with the office of the governor to rehabilitate the visitor's dormitory. The dormitory's new windows, walls, plastering, painting, and plumbing have created a safe, dignified, and professional location for community



The rehabilitated government visitor's dormitory in Sharana City of Paktika Province. Photo: USAID/LGCD

leaders to reside while they engage with the provincial governor and strengthen the connection between their communities and Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA). Community leaders from Gomal, Urgun, and Khair Kot Castle districts used the dormitory during a recent peace council in Sharana. The rehabilitation of the dormitory will also boost the morale of government officials through the ability to offer hospitality. Further, accommodating community representatives in the dormitory during community engagements with GIROA officials will improve perceptions of GIROA's effectiveness.

The Executive Director of the Office of the Paktika Provincial Governor expressed his thoughts on the implementation saying, "GIROA, especially the Governor has been involved in all stages of the activity from start to finish. The communities are very pleased, because they previously experienced difficulty in staying at the hotels when they would come to visit."



The new desks receive a trial run during the handover ceremony in Kart-e-Boland Village. Photo: USAID/LGCD

Engaging Communities through the Education Sector in Guzara:

The Kurt-e-Boland Ab Primary School in Guzara was built in 2007 through the National Solidarity Program in the hopes of making education more accessible to the local population. However, due to years of instability in the adjoining Seywoshan Valley, the building was never equipped with basic supplies and furniture, making it unfit for proper use. After the community identified the school as a key priority, the local government requested USAID's Local Governance and Community Development project to provide desks to the more than 300 students and teachers in school along with other basic furnishings, including carpets and cupboards. At the formal handover ceremony held on

December 28, 2010, which was attended by the district governor, the head of Guzara's Department of Education, USAID representatives, community elders, and a number of students and teachers, representatives of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) highlighted the role of education as an investment in the community's future. In turn,



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teachers and students expressed their gratitude to the government for the timely response to their needs. This activity provides a tangible symbol of GIRoA's commitment to addressing this rural community's grievances through targeted service delivery.

"Seeing the young students sitting on the ground made me sad every time I passed by the school," said, Ahmad Shah, one of the community elders, "I feel proud of my government for providing chairs, tables, carpets and windows, demonstrating its sincere interest and support to people living in rural areas."

Paktika Province Entrepreneurs Receive Follow-on Small Business Training:

Currently, the U.S. Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT) in Sharana District provides engineering skills development for working-age men from across Paktika Province. Although the trainees are gaining practical skills, they often lack the knowledge to manage a business and turn their expertise into income. In close coordination with the PRT and the Paktika Department of Economy, USAID's Local Governance and Community Development project provided training in basic finance and management for 30 recently graduated trainees of the PRT's engineering skills development workshop. Designed to complement the PRT's engineering skills training, LGCD's training seeks to improve the student's ability to find follow-on employment and/or start their own small businesses. The activity resulted in 275 confirmed person days of training. This activity aims to build on the PRT's efforts to strengthen and broaden Paktika's economic base, where approximately 48 percent of the rural population derives income from non-farm labor due to the limited availability of arable land. This training is an example GIRoA's ability to work with multiple international donors to increase the impact and benefit of capacity development activities.



Prospective and current entrepreneurs during the training in Sharana. Photo: USAID/LGCD

Ahmad Rahim and Ghulam, beneficiaries of the subproject, said, "A few months ago we had our own shops, but we didn't properly manage these businesses. We are very excited to participate in this training and hope we will successful resume our businesses after the completion of this training."

Solar Lights to Improve Safety in Nad Ali and Gereshk: In Nad Ali District of Hilmand Province, the district governor, the mayor, and the district stabilization team, in close consultation with community members, emphasized the need for increased lighting in Nad Ali – indentifying the illumination of streets and bazaars during the night as an efficient and effective municipal enhancement. With support from USAID's Local Governance and Community Development project, 50 lights were installed in five key locations around the district. In a similar endeavor in Gereshk, the district center of Nahri Sarraj, installation of 120 lights running along



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The solar lights installed in Loy Bagh area of Nad Ali. Photo: USAID/LGCD

Highway One through to the town centre is nearing completion. Further, two local individuals in each district are receiving maintenance training to provide long-term maintenance. Nad Ali and Gereshk have reached security tipping points in the past six months and the municipal enhancement will help build the momentum towards long term security. In Gereshk, the illumination of the highway is also contributing to improved road safety along this busy main route. These illuminated areas during the night restrict insurgent activity, enhance the local security environment; and allow businesses to stay open later, providing economic benefit. The installation of these lights is a tangible demonstration of

district and municipal service delivery.

Communities Receive and Give Training on Good Hygiene Practices:

On December 18, 120 women from six villages in Kabul Province graduated from hygiene training workshops, which were supported by USAID's Local Governance and Community Development project. The workshops were part of the Ministry of Public Health's Community Based Health Care 2009-2013 policy initiative to emphasize training, education, and community outreach as key tools of healthcare intervention. Forty women each from Dih Sabz, Khaki Jabbar, and Kabul City participated in 13 days of training led by skilled female trainers, and received toolkits, which included soap, nail cutters, gloves, toothpaste, toothbrushes, and other materials. In Serkai Village of Dih Sabz, 60 women started coming to the center for the training, which was designed for only 40 women. As a result, the *Mali* of the village arranged for the remaining 20 women to receive training, expanding the impact for additional families within the community. Through this project, USAID facilitated Afghan government presence in isolated areas while empowering communities to manage a basic but serious public health concern through training and capacity building.



Women attending the hygiene training in Kabul City. Photo: USAID/LGCD



The furniture for the Guzara Youth Association. Photo: USAID/LGCD

GIRoA Supports Guzara Youth Association with Office Space and New Furniture:

Guzara District, in particular the Zeyaratja Valley, remained non-permissive and under anti-government influence, with local youth being particularly affected by the instability. The Guzara Youth Association is a nascent youth organization



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formed to serve as a link between young people and local level bodies of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA). The association seeks to represent and articulate the interests of local youth. The local community and GIROA had supported the association by providing them with an office. However, they could not supply office equipment and furniture. In coordination with GIROA, USAID's Local Governance and Community Development project provided the Guzara Youth Association with furniture and office supplies including chairs, desks, tables, stationery items, carpet, and cupboards. Abdul Rashid, Head of the Association, accepted the equipment on behalf of the organization at a ceremony held on December 27. Equipping the Youth Association is a step towards helping the organization present itself in a professional manner so it can better engage with local government and aid organizations. It is also a key demonstration of GIROA's willingness and ability to support grassroots community engagement.

During the ceremony, Abdul Rashid recalled, "We began our work unofficially in Ziaratja School three months ago without any resources or facilities. The community did not take us seriously." He continued, "This equipment will help us to better organize and gives us a professional venue to conduct business allowing us to reach out to more youth and organize more activities in Guzara."

School Furniture Projects in Badakhshan Province:

USAID's Community Based Stabilization Grants project recently completed two school furniture projects in Badakhshan Province. Three schools each in Warduj and Zebak districts received school furniture they had lacked since opening, such as chairs, desks, blackboards, couches, and teachers desks. Due to limited resources, the government had been unable to provide the schools with necessary facilities and equipment, which affected enrollment and caused the local population to doubt the government's ability to provide services. USAID worked with local government officials and community leaders to identify this area of need, and to help fund the furnishings. The project will ensure stability in the community, remove mistrust towards the local government, provide students with a proper learning environment, and help parents to be comfortable with sending their kids to schools.



School furniture in a school in Badakhshan Province. Photo: USAID/CBSG