



USAID
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AFGHANISTAN

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

January 15 - January 31, 2011



Paktika Provincial Governor presents a toolkit to a trainee. Photo: USAID/LGCD

STABILIZATION

Paktika Provincial Governor Leads Closing Ceremony for Vocational Training:

Paktika is a remote province bordering Pakistan, where few employment opportunities exist for unskilled labor and there is limited arable land for agricultural production. The Department of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and the Disabled (DoLSAMD) requested support from USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project for three vocational training workshops in Sharana City for tailoring, small-engine repair, and generator repair. At the end of the workshops, representatives from DoLSAMD, USAID, LGCD, and the implementing partners granted the ten best trainees from each workshop supplemental toolkits. These included signs for

potential shops and additional supplies, in addition to the toolkits and certificates given to every trainee. This training to the beneficiaries of vocational training is meant to help them find employment and/or start their own businesses. On January 22, Paktika Provincial Governor Muhebullah Samim, led the graduation ceremony of over one hundred working-aged men from the workshops. This graduation ceremony was one of the highest-profile closing ceremonies ever held in Paktika. In Khair Kot Castle District of Paktika, 30 women graduated from tailoring training on January 19, during a ceremony led by the district governor. Through vocational training, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is helping to build the capacity of Afghans and improve economic growth.

Cash-For-Work Activity Rehabilitates Road in Jaji District of Paktya Province:

On January 26, the Jaji district governor and USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project held a closing ceremony for a cash-for-work road rehabilitation activity. The tertiary roads in Jaji District of Paktya Province are in severe disrepair due to its mountainous terrain, harsh winters, and remote location and development assistance in the district has been minimal. The poor road condition inhibits transport of goods to market, resulting in decreased income of farmers and other agricultural stakeholders. This rehabilitation will help improve commerce, sanitation, health, and traffic flow for local residents. Further, the winter months are an especially difficult time in agriculturally intensive areas, when many farmers are unemployed and idle. Seven kilometers of road were graveled and 12 drainage culverts constructed by employing 649 local residents, for a total of 8,582 verified person days of employment. Through this activity, district level bodies of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan demonstrated a commitment to providing targeted service delivery in even the most remote areas of the district.



Local laborers constructing a culvert for a road in Jaji District. Photo: USAID/LGCD



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Along the rehabilitated road, a community elder from Aryoub Village, described the importance of the activity: “During past years, if we had patients to bring to the hospital – especially pregnant women – many died on the way to the hospital because of the poor road conditions. Now this is the first time that cars and vehicles are coming to our village.”



The U.S. Ambassador and GIRoA officials cut the ribbon for the new clinic. Photo: USAID/LGCD

GIRoA Provides Health Services for Thousands of Workers in Hirat Industrial Park: As part of an initiative to provide increased service delivery in Hirat Province, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, (GIRoA), engaged community leaders and shuras and identified the construction of a health clinic for the Hirat Industrial Park as a community priority. Operated by the Department of Public Health, the clinic is designed to provide necessary health facilities for the estimated 8,000 workers in the park, as well as nearly 2,000 nearby families. The U.S. Special Operations Task Force (SOTF) Civil Affairs team undertook construction of the clinic. Due to funding restrictions, USAID’s Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project was asked to provide a site engineer to monitor construction progress

and provide regular feedback to the SOTF. USAID’s LGCD program also provided basic supplies and medical instruments to complete the clinic’s interior. U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry joined the Hirat provincial governor, municipal and line department officials, as well as USAID and U.S. Government representatives, firm owners and workers at the January 21, hand-over ceremony for the completed health clinic. Through this clinic, the Department of Public Health will continue to engage the local community, providing a clear demonstration of GIRoA’s ability to provide and maintain service delivery in Guzara.

GIRoA Provides Cricket Equipment to Maydan Wardak Cricket Association: Since the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) founded the Afghanistan Cricket Board in 1995, the Afghanistan Cricket Team has made significant strides in regional and international competitions, sparking a renewed interest in the game throughout the country. In Wardak Province, youth established the Maydan Wardak Cricket Association (MWCA) in 2007, which now consists of six teams and over 60 members, including three players from the national team. The MWCA won the Kunduz Cup tournament in 2007 and placed fifth at the 2009 Cricket Tournament. The MWCA organizes cricket tournaments throughout the year at the school, club, district, and zone level; however, they do not have sufficient equipment to continue these efforts and previous requests



MWCA members receive new cricket equipment at the ceremony. Photo: USAID/LGCD



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for assistance went unanswered. In cooperation with the Department of Information, Culture and Youth and the Olympic Director, USAID's Local Governance and Community Development Project provided the MWCA with 60 cricket kits including bats, batting pads, helmets, training shirts, caps, wicket sets, kit bags, and other cricket equipment. The kits were handed over at a ceremony on January 6, which was attended by provincial GIRoA representatives. Through this activity, GIRoA is using service delivery to support a grassroots organization and contributing to the development of cricket, and national pride, in Wardak.



Meeting before the project implementation. Photo: USAID/CBSG

CBSG Teams Conduct End-monitoring Visits of Abdul Kabir School Furniture Provision Project in Namak Ab District of Takhar Province:

In collaboration with the Department of Education of Takhar Province and funded by USAID's Community Based Stabilization Grants (CBSG) program, desks and chairs were procured for the Abdul Kabir School located in Taqcha Khana Village of Namak Ab District. This is a state-run institution that has 640 students, including 250 girls.

The Ministry of Education built the school building but due to lack of funds, chairs and desks have not been provided to the school so far. The furniture was procured from the local market by the community when the CBSG

grant was received. The community's active participation in the project was visible, which shows that the residents of this area are very eager to assist the local government institutions in implementing future projects. Besides providing better education facilities for students, the project has brought the community and the local government closer to each other. The project has also built trust between the community and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, and motivated the local people to assist their local government in maintaining stability and development.

Completion of the Murdyan High School Rehabilitation Project:

On January 29, 2011, the rehabilitation of Murdyan High School, located in the center of Murdyan District of Jawzjan Province was completed. This school was constructed by UNICEF in 2002, but the building incurred damage due to lack of maintenance driven by limited funding allocated to the line department of the Ministry of Education (MoE) in the province. Therefore, the rehabilitation of the school was identified as a top priority by the community in collaborative meetings with the provincial line department of the MoE. The community rehabilitation project was funded by the Community Based Stabilization Grants (CBSG) Program.



Murdyan High School before the project implementation. Photo: USAID/CBSG



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Inauguration of Juye Zhwandon Road Graveling Project. Photo: USAID/CBSG

Inauguration Ceremony of Juye Zhwandon Road Graveling Project: On January 30, 2011, a ceremony was held to inaugurate the Juye Zhwandon Road Graveling Project in the center of Aybak District in Samangan Province.

The ceremony was attended by local government officials, community development council (CDC) members, local people, and the Community Based Stabilization Grant (CBSG) Project staff. This small-scale project will include the graveling of a 1.5 kilometer stretch of road and the construction of five culverts. The project was identified by the community, in coordination with the provincial line department of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation.

Third Round of Capacity Building Training for Members of the Potato Cooperative Begins: On January 27, 2011, the third round of capacity-building training for the members of four potato cooperatives was led by the provincial line department of Agriculture and Livestock in the provincial center of Bamyan Province with trainees receiving instruction from six local trainers from the provincial line department of Agriculture. The training has 32 trainees and will continue for 20 days.

The community prioritized this training in order to help mitigate agricultural issues in conjunction with the line department.

It is expected that the trainees will learn new and improved methods of planting and processing potatoes which will in turn improve the economic situation of the inhabitants of this area who are mostly dependent on agriculture.



Capacity building training in Bamyan. Photo: USAID/CBSG



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Participants at work during the training. Photo: USAID/LGCD

Khaki Jabbar Youth Receive Job Skills from Carpentry Training: On January 17, district-level officials of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) and community elders from several villages attended the closing ceremony of carpentry training in Khaki Jabbar District, Kabul Province. All 30 male trainees were between 18 and 35 years old, a demographic which is especially vulnerable to anti-government element (AGE) recruitment efforts when economic and education opportunities are scarce. Although USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) Project funded this activity, the activity itself was identified by community leaders and designed to give trainees skills which could be used in finding gainful employment. During the training,

participants learned how to make doors, windows, desks, tables, and shelves. The district governor distributed completion certificates to all trainees, along with toolkits which included hammers, saws, hand drills, chisels, and other carpentry equipment. Participant Sayed Bashir said, "We are illiterate; there was no other opportunity for us, but now this carpentry training will be highly beneficial. We are gaining new techniques and new lessons, and a new profession through which we can feed our families and ourselves."

Vulnerable families in Hirat and Badghis Receive Aid for Winter:

USAID's Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) Project provided local governors' offices in western Afghanistan with 2,000 winterization kits consisting of food, cooking oil, and blankets. Kits were distributed to 850 beneficiaries in Muqur District and to another 850, in Qadis District of Badghis Province, as well as 150 beneficiaries in Guzara District and 150 in Injil District of Hirat Province. These areas have seen a high level of military operations following the release from anti-government element (AGE) control, but low levels of development assistance. They also suffer from limited employment opportunities during the freezing winter months. One beneficiary, a widow who is supporting her son after her husband was killed by the Taliban, said,

"Thanks to this material, we will have enough food to see us through the winter. My son will not have to work outside this winter in the harsh weather - instead, he can stay home and study after school." This humanitarian assistance is a high-profile method of publicizing GIROA's presence and commitment to assisting vulnerable families in these communities.



Beneficiaries in Muqur line up to receive their kits. Photo: USAID/LGCD



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Completion of Bazar Kami Road Graveling Project: On January 16, 2011, USAID's Community Based Stabilization Grants program (CBSG) completed the Bazar Kami Road Graveling Project in Sayad District, Saripul Province. Local government representatives and community leaders proposed this activity to CBSG as a means to solve the day-to-day problems of local residents. Due to a lack of security and basic road availability, government officials and services have been unable to reach the people of Sayad District, and Afghan National Security Forces were limited in their ability to conduct security patrols. The newly graveled road not only allows government and ANSF officials to travel to Sayad District, but also provides Sayad residents with access to markets and economic opportunities, health centers, schools, and the district center.



Mayor of Takhar Province gives information to the media about Takhar Grain Market. Photo: USAID/ASMED

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Inauguration of Takhar Grain Market: On January 20, provincial, district, and local officials from Takhar Province and representatives celebrated the opening of several new pavilions inside the Takhar Grain Market. Funded through a \$15,000 Marketplace Development Grant from USAID's Afghanistan Small and Medium Enterprise Development project (ASMED) and built by an Afghanistan construction company, the pavilions provide improved storage for agricultural products and sanitation within the market. The project also led to the creation of 30 new permanent jobs and increased commercial activity within the market. The Takhar mayor, provincial council director, and other government officials attended the ceremony.

Legal Education Unit: Thirty law professors and 50 law students from across Afghanistan recently gathered in Kabul for the first day of an intensive five-week Academic Legal English (ALE) program. Sponsored by USAID, this one of a kind program is designed to help Afghan legal professionals obtain advanced law degrees abroad so that they can return to Afghanistan and impart their knowledge to the next generation of students, lawyers, and judges. This year's entering class is among some of the country's best and brightest legal minds. The 50 law student participants were chosen from a pool of over 200 applicants and successfully underwent a rigorous written exam, as well as a panel of interviews. Without the intensive education and training



Participants of USAID's Academic Legal English program (ALE) gather in Kabul for an intensive five-week training session. Photo: RLS-F



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this program has to offer, most of these students would not be in a position to compete for highly selective and prestigious international scholarships. During his remarks to the entering class, Nekmatullah Khostwal, a recent graduate of the program, spoke of his experience stating, "I remember sitting where you are just a few years ago and how much my life has changed since I took this course. This program has opened doors for me that would not have otherwise even been an option. It allowed me to cross almost insurmountable borders and barriers to travel to the United States so I could get my LLM."