



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AFGHANISTAN

SUCCESS STORY

Afghan Women's Associations Surge

Through technical assistance and training, Afghan civil-society organizations become more active and sustainable



WASSA Organization

WASSA is leading development in the western region of Afghanistan and is working to build internal capacity and core sustainability.

Since 2005, USAID, through its Initiative to Promote Afghan Civil Society project, has strengthened the role and viability of civil society in Afghanistan by providing technical assistance, capacity-building training, and grant support to civil-society organizations nationwide.

In January 2005, a majority of Afghan civil society organizations lacked the capacity to design quality projects and proposals or professionally liaise with donors. Take the Afghan Women's Educational Center for example. Although it was already in operation for 15 years, it was still managed like a new organization. There were no clear reporting lines and no long-term strategic planning to guide its activities. As a result, the center was implementing approximately five projects annually with an operating budget of \$500,000.

With USAID assistance, the center identified its weaknesses and strengthened the organization in several areas. By September 2010, the center had developed its own three-year strategic plan, a gender policy, an official communications strategy, and a human resources management policy and is now implementing 16 projects with an annual budget of \$5.7 million.

Raihana Jawad, who has worked with the center for three years, said, "During my time here, I have learned how to design projects and write proposals. As the center grew stronger, so did I, and I am proud."

The Women's Activities and Social Services Association in Hirat Province is another good example. Five years ago, the association did not have a clear mission statement, its capacity to secure core or long-term funding was low, and it struggled to have a long-term impact in the communities in which it worked. With USAID's technical assistance and training, the association has become a leading development body in the western region of Afghanistan. By signing a long-term partnership agreement with the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission in September 2010, the association ensured its own sustainability, legitimacy, and development work in Hirat Province.

"The association has become a very strong support center for civil-society organizations in Hirat and its surrounding provinces. [It] has also become our trusted partner in training communities in the area of human rights," said a representative of the Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission.