



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

December 16-December 31, 2010

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

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.



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 the 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)

December 16-December 31, 2010

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)

December 16-December 31, 2010

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)

December 16-December 31, 2010

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)

December 16-December 31, 2010



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



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

December 16-December 31, 2010

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)

December 16-December 31, 2010

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.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

December 16-December 31, 2010



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



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

December 16-December 31, 2010

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.



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

December 16-December 31, 2010

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, Urgan, 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,



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

December 16-December 31, 2010

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



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

December 16-December 31, 2010



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



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS (continued)

December 16-December 31, 2010

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