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SNAPSHOT

Creating Jobs and Reconstructing Communities

USAID-funded Regional Afghan Municipalities Program helped the municipality rebuild



Locally-hired day laborers work to clean mud and other debris from Sar-e-Pul canals.

Because of USAID's support of post-flood reconstruction projects in Sar-e-Pul, returnees from Iran were able to find work helping to protect their community.

USAID/RAMP UP North

Sayid Hamrah fled Pesta Mazar Village, Sar-e-Pul Province to Iran from the Taliban. "They killed my brother in-law and looted my harvest including 700 kg of wheat and barley," said Hamrah.

Life in Iran was very difficult for Hamrah and other Afghan refugees who worked hard to earn a meager living. Hamra returned to Sar-e-Pul from Iran earlier this year, but feared it would not be long before he goes back again, not because of the Taliban, but because he could not find work. Fortunately he heard about a short-term cash-for-work job for unskilled workers, and was fortunate enough to be selected by the municipality to do so.

The job involved cleaning the Sar-e-Pul canal that provides irrigation and washing water for 20,000 families in Sar-e-Pul and surrounding villages. Due to a devastating flood earlier in the year, the canal had become blocked and was full of mud and debris. The flood also caused extensive damage to roads, bridges culverts and houses. Since May, Sar-e-Pul municipality has been working hard to restore the damaged areas and it reached out for international support.

USAID-funded Regional Afghan Municipalities Program for Urban Populations (RAMP UP) team visited Sar-e-Pul and developed a plan to help the municipality rebuild. The municipality is now working on several projects to repair the damage caused by the flood, including canal cleaning, road graveling, vehicle bridge construction and footbridge construction.

Because of USAID's support of post-flood reconstruction projects in Sar-e-Pul, Hamrah was able to find work helping to protect his community. The canal cleaning project not only created short-term job opportunities for IDPs and returnees, it has also restored the gardens and farming lands destroyed by the flood, stopping farmers from becoming IDPs and migrant workers in Iran.

Hamrah is happy to have found work in Afghanistan and is proud of the work that is being done. "We are cleaning it really thoroughly," said Azam. "It has not been properly cleaned for the past 30 years!"