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SNAPSHOT

Afghan Girls Go Into Politics

USAID-funded project brings together municipal officials with young constituents to discuss their key concerns in the community.



Young women persist in trying to understand how the municipality will deal with their concerns

USAID/RAMP UP - West

Mahjooba Herawi Girls High School students raise quality of life issues during a briefing from Herat municipal officials.

During a recent “Youth and Municipality” seminar in Herat’s Mahjooba Herawi Girls High School students listened attentively as Herat’s Revenue Manager, Provincial Environment Director and Administration Director discussed municipal budget and GIRoA’s approach to environmental issues. Following the presentations, Administration Director Abdul Ahmad Khan opened the floor to questions.

The young women raised thoughtful questions about an exceptionally broad range of issues and were persistent in their desire to understand the municipalities’ response to their concerns. Several of the students brought quality of life issues related to drainage, cars blocking sidewalks in market areas, waste collection, cleanliness of buses and public toilets to the Administrative Director’s attention. Others asked perceptive questions about preserving the old city, registering properties, recycling waste, and municipal employee staff training.

With a high level of courtesy and self-assurance, the young woman who raised the question about drainage suggested that the businesses should be required to keep the drains clean in front of their locations. Another proposed that waste collection should be scheduled at a time when students are not walking to school since the trucks often spew garbage on the street and block the sidewalks. She quizzed the Administration Director about the type of training employees received on packing the trucks and driving.

The Administration Director encouraged the students to bring such issues to the attention of municipal officials and assured the students that the municipal government was working on the preservation of the old city, numbering and registering all houses by the end of 2013, and improving its maintenance services for toilets and buses.

In an effort to increase municipalities’ accountability to their constituents, USAID-funded RAMP UP Project brings together municipal officials with youth to discuss key issues in the community.