



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

August 16-August 31, 2010

HEALTH

New Regional Hospital Under Construction in Paktya:

On August 4, Paktya government officials held a cornerstone laying ceremony at the construction site for a 100-bed regional hospital to be built in Gardez City. The new hospital, built to international building code standards and able to withstand earthquakes, will house an emergency area, out-patient and in-patient wards, delivery and surgery theaters, examination rooms, and administration facilities. When completed in June 2012, the hospital will serve one million people from Paktya and the neighboring provinces of Paktika, Khost, and Ghazni.



A model of the 100-bed regional hospital under construction in Paktya Province.

PHOTO: USAID/CHEF

USAID's Construction of Health and Education Facilities project aims to raise standards of health care in Afghanistan. USAID and its partner in this project, the International Organization for Migration, are committed to providing quality construction in a transparent manner through this activity and others. In addition to the Gardez regional hospital, the project will build a 20-bed hospital in Paktika Province and three midwife training centers in Badakhshan, Bamyan, and Khost provinces. All these health projects combine the joint efforts the USAID, IOM, and the Government of Afghanistan for the benefit of the Afghan population.



A rebuilt segment of the Bamyan-Dushi Road.

PHOTO: USAID/AIRP

INFRASTRUCTURE

A Road Rises from the River: The Bamyan-Dushi Road reopened in late July following months of repairing damage caused by severe spring floods in Tala wa Barfak District. USAID's Afghanistan Infrastructure and Rehabilitation Project reconstructed an extensive length of the road. The final three kilometers repaired had been submerged under the river, necessitating that stretch of road to be rebuilt entirely above the water level. Rehabilitation of this critical transportation route to connect Baghlan to Bamyan provinces has permitted Tala wa Barfak citizens to once again travel to the provincial capital of Puli Khumri. Following the re-opening, on July 25, USAID representatives met with district officials in

Tala center as well as elders from 53 communities to discuss current dynamics in the district.



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New Wells in Khost Reduce Disease and Provide Potable Water: In Kapari Community in Khost Province, many area wells had stopped functioning, causing a desperate need for potable water. Residents were forced to walk long distances and collect water from rivers and streams. The unclean river water caused frequent illness in the community's young children, and a high portion of people's income was spent on medicine and medical treatment for their children.

To address this problem, USAID's Afghan Sustainable Water Supply and Sanitation (SWSS) project constructed 25 bore wells throughout Kapari that are currently providing potable water to 8,000 beneficiaries. Villagers are committed to maintaining their new infrastructure, which is very important for sustainability of the new wells.



Children stand in front of a new bore well constructed by USAID.

PHOTO: USAID/SWSS

SWSS seeks to increase access to potable water supply and sanitation services in poor communities, decrease the prevalence of water-related diseases through household hygiene interventions, and improve the sustainable management of potable water. The SWSS mandate is to build 1,800 wells throughout the country in its first year of operations to provide potable water to thousands of households that are currently suffering from waterborne diseases.



Minister of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock Asif Rahimi and U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry open the Kabul Women's Farm Service Center.

PHOTO: USAID/ASAP

AGRICULTURE

Kabul Women's Farm Service Center Opens:

Afghanistan's women farmers will have more access to seeds, supplies, and materials thanks to the opening of the Women's Farm Service Center in Kabul on August 16. The Kabul Women's Farm Service Center is one of seven Farm Service Centers currently operating throughout Afghanistan, but the only one tailored specifically for women farmers. These seven Centers are the foundation for opening a nationwide network of Farm Service Centers in all 34 provinces. Benefitting more than 43,000 Afghan households, the seven Farm Service Centers in Afghanistan have created more than 235 jobs, trained more than 15,000 people, and achieved \$24 million in

sales from March 2008 to June 2010.



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With a \$3.5 million U.S. Government investment through USAID's Afghanistan Farm Service Alliance program, this first women's farm service center will benefit more than 10,000 Afghan women. The center will serve as the prototype for several women's Farm Service Centers to be located throughout Afghanistan.

All the U.S. Government-supported Farm Service Centers offer high quality products such as seed, fertilizer, animal feed, tools, machinery, and greenhouse supplies. In addition, the store functions as an outlet for other female head of household enterprises, such as jams, pickles, honey, and handicrafts. "The United States of America is proud to support this effort and especially to assist dedicated women who are working to support their families, feed their children, and contribute to the overall growth and prosperity of the economy of Afghanistan," said U.S. Ambassador Karl W. Eikenberry at the opening ceremony.

ECONOMIC GROWTH

Foroshgah Shopping Center Reopens After January Attacks: On August 22, Kabul Mayor Mohammad Younus Nawandish, U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry and USAID Deputy Mission Director John Atteberry re-opened the Foroshgah-E-Borzorg Shopping Center in Kabul, which was severely damaged in a bombing by insurgents on January 18. The reconstruction of the shopping center began in February with the help of the U.S. Embassy and the U.S. Military.

In May, Mayor Nawandish and Ambassador Eikenberry also announced a grant distribution program for the Foroshgah-e-Borzorg shopkeepers. The grants were part of an assistance program through USAID to help shopkeepers at the shopping center restock their inventories after suffering tremendous loss due to the bombing. The U.S. Government provided 81 grants, ranging from \$3,000 to \$5,000 each, to the shopkeepers.

At the ceremony, Mayor Nawandish thanked the people of the United States for helping rebuild the shopping center to help spur economic and retail growth in the city. "The City of Kabul appreciates all the support from the people of United States in general," said Mayor Nawandish. "I am also thankful for the people of United States and their support of the Foroshgah Shopping Center at this critical time."



Kabul Mayor Mohammed Younus Nawandish and U.S. Ambassador Karl Eikenberry cut the ribbon to re-open the Foroshgah-E-Borzorg Shopping Center in Kabul.

PHOTO: USAID/ASMED



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Participants learn about trade issues at the Conference on National Youth Policy.

PHOTO: USAID/TAFA

Engaging Youth in Trade: The Ministry of Information and Culture (MOIC) hosted a “Conference on National Youth Policy” from August 7 through 9. A variety of governmental and nongovernmental organizations facilitated seven working groups with Afghan youth from 34 provinces to discuss issues of importance to the youth of Afghanistan and help the MOIC to develop policies to solve these issues.

USAID’s Trade and Accession Facilitation for Afghanistan assisted the MOIC to facilitate three working groups: Trade and Youth; Gender and Youth; and Security, Peace, Good Governance, and Youth. The working group on trade taught participants about international trade and how trade liberalization results

in increased employment opportunities for youth. The participants also learned about important trade agreements, including the Southern Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA) and the Afghanistan Pakistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA), and the benefits of these agreements to the Afghan people. Participants asked questions on a variety of subjects from the meaning of a free market and free transit to specific questions about Afghanistan’s trade with neighboring countries. Participants also received informational materials on trade in Dari, Pashto, and English.

STABILIZATION

Water and Sports Projects Open Hirat

Communities: Less than a year ago, government officials could not enter the Siawshan area of Guzara District, located only 25 km from downtown Hirat. Now, Siawshan students are competing with other Guzara students on the soccer field, thanks to four community development projects funded by USAID’s Local Governance and Community Development project.

Three projects focused on improving sports facilities for boys and girls at three schools in Siawshan, Zeyaratjai, and Wazir Fateh Khan. The improvements include leveling soccer fields, providing sports equipment and uniforms, and installing containers to hold sports equipment and serve as changing rooms. The fourth project extended clean drinking water to 114 households



A student soccer player in Siawshan, Hirat Province, is grateful for the new, USAID-provided sports facilities.

PHOTO: USAID/LGCD



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directly and 186 indirectly in Bahador Zayeeha Village. The local communities contributed labor for grading the playing fields and digging ditches for the water pipes.

On July 22, community members in Guzara District, Hirat Province celebrated the handover of the four projects. The Guzara District Governor, educational officials, coaches, soccer clubs, girl athletes, SCR-West, USAID staff, and LGCD implementers participated in the ceremony. Several students prepared speeches in English for the occasion.

EDUCATION

Afghan University Faculty Members Plan for the Future: Participants from universities across Afghanistan were proud to present their institutional plans to their colleagues at a conference in Kabul from August 3 to 5. The conference was the culmination of more than four years of hard work by faculty members to improve the learning environment for themselves and their students, supported by USAID's Higher Education Project (HEP).

Afghan universities were shattered by decades of conflict and often were empty shells with no equipment, books, or electricity. Students took exams outside and families were afraid to send girls to study because of lack of security. The remaining faculty members were struggling and did not know how to build the capacity of the institutes they had kept going throughout the Taliban years.

USAID introduced institutional development teams (IDTs) at the universities, which helped faculty members to determine their own futures by learning how to request funding and make plans for changes in the university environment. The changes have included buildings, professional development, the establishment of kindergartens, and sports facilities for students.

The conference in Kabul was the occasion for more than one hundred members of IDTs across the country to present their plans to their colleagues, share successes, and get mutual support. They discussed how to present their development needs, build solid teams, and keep the progress going. One participant said, "this conference is very important because it allowed us to meet colleagues from all over the country, some for the first time, we were able to share ideas, problems and solutions."



Participants share their institutional plans with colleagues.

PHOTO: USAID/HEP



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Interactive Lessons for Medical Students: Medical students in Afghanistan can look forward to a more interactive and up to date curriculum thanks to a workshop run from August 1-5 by USAID's HEP. The ten participants from medical and nursing faculties traveled from Kabul, Khost, Kandahar, Kapisa, and Jalalabad to join colleagues in Hirat for the Training of Professional Instructors of Public Health. In addition, three staff members from the Hirat Provincial Health Directorate were invited to attend the workshop.

Years of conflict and economic devastation in Afghanistan have meant medical students do not have the facilities needed to train properly in modern techniques of medicine and patient care. Universities do not have a standard curriculum, and methods of teaching and learning and materials are often decades old.



Medical students and professors discuss needed improvements to the medical school curriculum.

PHOTO: USAID/HEP

The workshop focused on steps of developing a curriculum, content selection, teaching methodology, and assessment and evaluation procedures to document students' learning. Faculty members were prepared to incorporate materials they have discussed in previous HEP intensive public health courses. Participants were very enthusiastic about adapting new teaching methods to the Afghan context and were particularly keen on interactive lecture techniques, which will include students involvement in the learning process in classes which are still very large.

Techniques were discussed and put into practice very quickly and the participants were excited about introducing them into classes. Dr. Shafiq Ahmed Joya from the faculty of medicine in Hirat said, "During this course I learned how to make my lessons more interactive. I also learned how to develop a case study to be used in the classroom." Students in Afghanistan will definitely welcome the change.

The American University of Afghanistan Opens New Building, Welcomes New Faculty: The American University of Afghanistan (AUAF) is Afghanistan's only private, independent, coeducational institution of higher learning. Supported by USAID and private donations, AUAF provides an American-style, high-quality academic program to students from throughout Afghanistan.

In spring 2010, AUAF had its largest enrollment since its inception with 531 students. AUAF expects those numbers to increase for the fall term and to increase again in the spring of 2011, reaching 800 by the end of the academic year. Student registration is underway and classes began August 22.



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A record 21 new faculty members have arrived for the start of the new school year, bringing the total full-time faculty to 49 and maintaining a student/faculty ratio of less than 16 to 1, with small classes and individual attention to students. AUAF President Dr. C. Michael Smith and Dr. Sharif Fayez, former Minister of Higher Education and a founder of the university, welcomed the new staff. One new faculty member commented that the process of receiving and orienting new faculty was the best he had seen in ten years of experience working overseas.

To accommodate the new staff members and students, AUAF has opened a new building with 24 faculty offices. Construction began on June 15 and was completed in record time. The university took possession of the building on August 15 and faculty moved in the next day. The current campus now has seven main buildings, in addition to its maintenance shops and transportation offices. The new faculty members and new facilities support a full range of academic degree programs in business, computer science, and the liberal arts.

Afghanistan National Engineering Policy Workshop: From August 2 to 4, more than 100 engineers, faculty members, and policy makers from Afghan and international government institutions, universities, and non-governmental organizations attended a three-day Afghanistan National Engineering Policy Workshop at Kabul University.

The workshop provided a rare opportunity for Afghan and international partners to discuss strategic planning and the status of engineering education in Afghanistan. The Ministry of Higher Education reaffirmed the ministry's commitment to improving the quality of education. Representatives from eight Afghan universities discussed their engineering programs in detail highlighting the need to sustain recent achievements in facilities expansion, faculty development, engineering curricula, and student enrollment. Implementing partners from U.S. and international higher education institutions described their experience working with study abroad and technical assistance programs in Afghanistan.



Afghan faculty members and policy makers discuss a variety of topics including curriculum development and creating standards for engineering programs in Afghanistan.

PHOTO: USAID/AeQA

Workshop participants developed recommendations for selected issues in engineering education including creating a favorable work environment for university professors; developing partnerships between universities and the private sector; establishing guidelines, standards, and an approval process for specialized engineering curricula; establishing an Afghan national accreditation board for engineering programs; and developing a



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standardized, national core curriculum in engineering. At the end of the workshop, participants developed a list of action items and agreed to form an advisory committee to coordinate national engineering education policy with the Ministry of Higher Education. The increased coordination and planning will help improve the quality of engineering education at public universities throughout Afghanistan.