



USAID
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AFGHANISTAN

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

February 16 – February 28, 2011

EDUCATION

School Managers Received Training on Better School Administration:

USAID's Building Education Support Systems for Teachers project has launched capacity-building training to improve school administration in Kabul. The three-day training was provided to 220 school administrators. Facilitated in close collaboration with the Human Resources Department of the Afghan Education Ministry, the training enhances the skills of school administrators and enables them to learn new and better ways of drafting their daily work-plans, develops a good educational environment inside the school among teachers and administrative personnel of the schools, and trains them to conduct performance appraisals of their staff impartially, and on the basis of their accomplishments.



USAID-BESST training workshop, Civil Service Institute in Kabul. Photo: USAID/BESST

Noorya Ragheb, principal of Maryam Girls' High School of Kabul said, "subjects discussed and described in this training workshop were very interesting and informative for us." Ragheb, who has seven years of experience in school administration added, "For a school principal it is very essential to know goals of planning, importance of planning, development of a work-plan, and what a work-plan should be based on, which we learned here. We also learned a lot in the areas of reporting and how to conduct evaluation of staff performance in a just and fair way."



AUAF students at the university's opening convocation for the spring semester. Photo: AUAF Communications Office.

American University of Afghanistan Sets Enrollment Record:

University officials announced on February 20, that the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF) has set a new record for enrollment, with 789 students enrolled for spring semester 2011, a 36 percent increase from the previous record of 579, set in fall 2010. AUAF's undergraduate enrollment jumped 31 percent, from 432 to 564, while enrollment in the college preparatory Foundation Studies Program leaped 53 percent, from 147 to 225.

"We are thrilled by this outstanding increase in overall enrollment, which we believe demonstrates a growing recognition of the quality of our programs and our commitment to educating the next generation of leaders

for Afghanistan," said Dr. C. Michael Smith, president of AUAF. "But we are even more pleased by the increase in the number of female students, which is a major accomplishment and for which I credit the hard work of our admissions staff and our Women's Enrollment Task Force."



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Female enrollment at the university this semester increased by 46 percent, from 111 in the fall to 162. Women now make up 21 percent of the overall student body at AUAF.

Ministry of Education Personnel Files Digitized: The Ministry of Education (MoE) employs more people than any other civilian sector of the Afghan government. Employees in the Ministry’s Human Resources (HR) Department are responsible for more than 200,000 personnel files, which have been exclusively stored on paper, creating an immense challenge. Several rooms are full of paper files, stacked from floor to ceiling.



Until now, more than 200,000 MoE personnel records have been on paper, accumulated over the years, and filling several rooms in the Human Resources Department.

USAID’s Building Education Support Systems for Teachers (BESST) project has assisted HR to meet the goal to digitize all their records. Last year, with assistance from BESST, the MoE began converting all employee records. Recently, BESST procured equipment to begin scanning all HR documents. BESST also helped MoE refurbish a room and install electricity, while the MoE contributed furnishings and personnel to scan documents and manage the digitization process. BESST provides ongoing oversight for this process.

In February, the MoE held an opening ceremony to inaugurate the new room and formally launch the process of scanning personnel files. The HR general director thanked USAID for providing the equipment for storing the personnel files in the HR database. He said, “This has a significant, lifetime value for MoE. USAID has responded positively to this initiative, that means so much to the MoE. Otherwise, all of our employee records could be destroyed with one match. This initiative and assistance will leave a legacy with lasting benefits.”



Community members use the new crossing just before completion. Photo: USAID/LGCD

STABILIZATION

Pipe Culvert Increases Access to Abu Al Fatah Bosti School in Nahri Sarraj District: USAID’s Local Governance and Community Development project and the Department of Education completed construction of a pipe culvert crossing to provide safe access to Abu Al Fatah Bosti School (the largest school compound in Nahri Sarraj District) for parents, children, and vehicles delivering supplies. The old and unstable bridge was a longstanding community grievance. Through these activities and the district governor’s active involvement, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is visibly demonstrating the ability to provide and maintain a viable educational infrastructure in Hilmand Province.



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Tents for Temporary Classrooms Arrive in Paktika Province: USAID’s Local Governance and Community Development project delivered 277 tents to the U.S. Military at Forward Operating Base Sharan for eventual distribution to schools across Paktika Province. Reports indicate that 61 percent of schools in the province lack buildings for holding classes. The U.S. Military will coordinate with the Department of Education to distribute the tents to selected schools in Sharan, Mata Khan, Zarghun Shahr, Jani Khel, Waza Khwa, Yosef Khel, Sar Hawza, and Dila districts.



Representatives of the Paktika Department of Education receive tents for temporary schools. Photo: USAID/LGCD



Waiting Hall at Chardara District Clinic. Photo: USAID/CBSG

Construction of Waiting Hall Completed:

On February 23, construction finished on the new waiting hall for the Chahar Dara District Clinic in Kunduz Province. The clinic is one of only a few health facilities in the district, and is a heavily trafficked facility. This small-scale project, identified as a need by the community and financed by USAID’s Community Based Stabilization Grants project, attached a metal awning to the medical clinic to protect waiting patients from the elements, and provided chairs for their comfort. The project will strengthen the relationship between the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and the community,

and diminish its mistrust of the government.

USAID Supports the Parwan Provincial Government:

As USAID’s Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD) project prepares for closeout, on February 28 the program’s Parwan provincial office officially closed its doors. Rather than discard or sell the office’s furniture, LGCD transferred 173 items – including chairs, desks, tables, filing cabinets, heaters, and a variety of computer and IT equipment – to the Parwan provincial office of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA). The official handover ceremony took place on February 27. During the ceremony, Provincial Council Representative Abdul Zahir Salangi expressed his thanks for the transfer of goods to the governor’s office saying, “this property will facilitate



Parwan Deputy Provincial Governor receives a laptop from the closeout of LGCD’s Parwan provincial office. Photo: USAID/LGCD



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the different department activities of the governor's office." Since November 15, 2009, LGCD implemented 41 activities to support GIRoA efforts to enhance stability and lay the foundation for sustainable development throughout the province.



The Khost DAIL director signing equipment handover documents. Photo: USAID/LGCD

USAID Provides Property and Equipment to Khost Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock:

The economy of Khost Province is primarily based on agriculture. The majority of residents earn their livelihoods cultivating grain crops and raising herds of cattle and goats. By providing support to farm areas, the Khost Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (DAIL) is taking the lead in stabilizing the province's economy. Recently, DAIL partnered with the Provincial Reconstruction and Agriculture Development teams in Khost to provide veterinarian preventative care training to improve the health of livestock and build storage houses to protect grain crops from inclement weather. In support of DAIL's outreach, USAID's Local Governance and

Community Development (LGCD) project transferred the title and care of office property and equipment to DAIL. The LGCD project is scheduled to end in April, and the transfer of equipment was part of the Khost provincial office's shutdown. The office closed its doors on February 28. The transferred items included computers and office and guesthouse furniture. The items will assist DAIL in managing ongoing agricultural development activities and plan new initiatives, increasing DAIL's capacity to provide targeted services to foster Khost's agricultural and economic development.

Road graveling project breaks ground in Bytemor Village, Chimtal District:

On February 24, the district governor of Chimtal, representatives from the Balkh Provincial Directorate of Economy, members of Chimtal District Community Development Council (CDC), community elders, and religious leaders from Bytemor Village, and representatives from USAID's Community Based Stabilization Grants (CBSG) project broke ground on a new road-graveling project. Chimtal is the most insecure district in Balkh Province. CBSG is focused in implementing activities in these areas as part of its effort to stabilize vulnerable and recently secured districts. Lack of a proper road in Bytemor Village left this underserved community cut off from government services, leaving the village vulnerable to a return of insurgent influence. The graveling of 3.5 kilometers of road connecting the village to the district center was identified by the community as a priority request by local residents.



Groundbreaking ceremony for the Bytemor Road Graveling Project. Photo: USAID/LGCD

