



COUNTERPART

Counterpart

**A Newsletter of Counterpart International – Afghanistan
Initiative to Promote Afghan Civil Society (I-PACS)**

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Issue 6

Counterpart Board Members and Senior Vice President Visit Afghanistan

In early November, Counterpart's Chairman of the Board, Robert J. Reynolds, International Advisory Council Member, Fred Brumbaugh, and Senior Vice President, Arlene Lear, visited Afghanistan. The three-day visit provided our distinguished guests with an over view of I-PACS and the opportunity to meet with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), various ministries and partners.

During a visit with Minister Zia of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), the visitors discussed Counterpart's current and upcoming program activities, the development of a vibrant civil society in Afghanistan and the role that different stakeholders play in its growth, as well as the role of I-PACS in the social and economic development of Afghanistan. The MRRD distributed 40,000 copies of the Afghan Constitution along with 40,000 illustrative posters on the Constitution to 24,000 Community Development Councils (CDCs) throughout Afghanistan, as well as to different ministries and government departments. The hardback volumes of the Constitution and the posters were printed by Counterpart for the MRRD.

In addition, Ms. Zohra Razikh, Director of the Office of Human Rights and Women's International Affairs of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, provided the visitors with an honest and sobering assessment of the general state of affairs in Afghanistan. Ms. Razikh and Counterpart lead the

effort to involve CSOs in monitoring and reporting on the Human Rights Conventions which Afghanistan has signed.



Counterpart Board members, Senior Vice President and I-PACS Deputy Chief of Party in meeting with Minister Ehsan Zia MRRD - Kabul

Study Tour to South Africa Helps Government and NGOs

ICNL and Counterpart organized a study tour to South Africa, from August 12-18, 2007, for 6 officials of the Afghan Ministry of the Economy and 3 representatives from the Afghan NGO coordinating bodies, including the Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief (ACBAR), Afghan NGOs Coordination Bureau (ANCB) and Afghan Women's Network (AWN). The goal of the tour was to explore NGO Law implementation and compliance issues in South Africa and to increase the capacity and expertise of the participants.

South Africa was selected for two reasons: 1) the country boasts a generally open, enabling legal environment, and thus will serve as a good model for Afghans, 2) as a transitioning country itself, South Africa struggles with many of the same regulatory issues as Afghanistan.

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Afghan delegation on a study tour to South Africa organized by Counterpart and ICNL

Partner Grant Making: Building Capacity and Helping Communities

Grant making by I-PACS partner ISOs and CSSCs has always been a key aspect of Counterpart's long term plans to build partner capacity as effective, sustainable support centers, and as a means of expanding the reach of Counterpart's grant program. Each I-PACS local partner is responsible for providing capacity building training and technical assistance to approximately 20 target CSOs, grassroots organizations which include traditional Shura/Jirgas, Community Development Councils, NGOs, and others. These target CSOs are a natural focus for partner re-granting activities, as the ISOs and CSSCs already have an established relationship with the organizations in their capacity as service providers.

In 2006, Counterpart began the re-granting process by conducting an assessment of the partners' financial, grant, and project management capacity. *(Continued on page 3)*

Editorial

Welcome to the sixth I-PACS newsletter. I-PACS successfully completed its third year and USAID awarded Counterpart a three year extension of the program. This is an appreciated recognition of Counterpart - Afghanistan and the efforts that the entire team has put into the implementation of the program.

During the past three years, Counterpart has fully met or exceeded the I-PACS targets. A Civil Society Sector Assessment was conducted and the findings were disseminated throughout the country via a public forum, 12 roundtables and meetings. The findings from the assessment and roundtable discussions guided I-PACS implementation in the years that followed and provided an invaluable resource for governmental and non-governmental decision makers concerned with the development of Afghanistan as a whole and the civil society sector in particular.

Our partner, the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law (ICNL), has worked with the Ministry of the Economy and other government offices and donors to revise the NGO Law and provide technical assistance to Ministry of the Economy officials and Civil Society Organizations (CSO) at national and provincial levels. Counterpart also selected ten local partners to assist in implementing the program: two Intermediary Service Organizations (ISOs) in Kabul and eight Civil Society Support Centers (CSSCs) located across Afghanistan. Through Institutional Support Grants and training and technical assistance, our 10 partner organizations are now providing training and technical assistance to 205 Afghan CSOs. In addition, Counterpart's grant program, coupled with capacity building, has provided the necessary financial resources to CSOs to implement community development and advocacy projects. Fifty-six percent of all grants have gone to women led or women focused Afghan CSOs.

In addition to the four core objectives, gender equity and media are crosscutting themes of I-PACS. Counterpart's Gender Team has integrated gender equity into our human resources and grants policies and procedures, gender sensitized all training materials and conducted important gender dialogues and activities with staff, partners, CSOs and government offices.

Our partner, Creative Associates International, developed a Communications and Public Outreach Strategy that has guided our efforts to get the word of a civil society to the far reaches of the country. Creative has also worked to build the capacity of our partners and media organizations to report on activities and events related to civil society and to build relationship between media, CSOs and the government in order to promote their organizational objectives.

We would like to thank USAID for their on-going support and for their flexibility in allowing us to adapt our models to the local context. Continuous support from Counterpart Headquarters has enabled us to incorporate valuable lessons learned from other countries and programs, for which we are truly grateful. Last but not least, we wish to thank each and every staff member of Counterpart – Afghanistan, and the staff of our partners. Our successes are due to their unrelenting commitment to promoting civil society in Afghanistan.

We wish you all a happy and peaceful 2008.

Empowered Women Support their Families

In July 2007, Counterpart awarded a \$92,575 community development grant to Badakshan Voluntary Women Association (BVWA) to empower vulnerable and

disadvantaged women in five villages of Jurm District, Badakshan Province, by raising their quality of life through structured interventions in livelihoods, health, and literacy.

Through the Counterpart grant, BVWA provided beekeeping training and bee hives to 125 females in Badakshan. The training enabled them to manage their hives efficiently and achieve a high yield of honey, which has become an important source of income for their families. BVWA is also providing literacy and health education training to 250 women from the province.

Naziya is a 30-year-old resident of Qala-e-Gonbad Village in Jurm District. Though she was the first person to volunteer for the program, initially the conservative culture of the area would not allow women to leave their homes. As a result, BVWA spent time reaching out to local communities to explain the program and establish trust, after which the women were allowed to join the program. Naziya said that attending the BVWA training and receiving a bee hive was a golden opportunity and that she will care for the bees like her children, because they have given her the ability to feed and support her family. As part of the program, she committed to give the next generation of bees from her hive to other women. "I want to help women in my village to support themselves – just as I have been helped." Naziya said.



Naziya checks her bee hive daily to make sure it is clean for optimum honey production.

Monitoring and Evaluation Team provides Technical Assistance on Geobase

Counterpart's Senior Program/Management Information System (MIS) Assistant provided technical assistance to 98 CSOs who received funds under the I-PACS grants program on Geobase reporting. Due to the technical nature of the report and format, CSOs were finding it difficult to compile the reports. However, with the continuous technical assistance provided by our M&E Department, all organizations were able to submit their Geobase reports.

Counterpart Donation to De-worm over 160,000 Afghan Children

Counterpart donated over one million dollars worth of de-worming medicine to Ibn Sina, a leading local health NGO. Over the next two years, Ibn Sina will distribute the medicines, Mebendazole and Albendazole, free of charge through schools and health facilities in Kabul, Laghman, Balkh and Bamyan provinces to over 160,000 Afghan children under five, pregnant women and school students. De-worming children is a national priority of the Afghan Ministry of Public Health (MoPH).

Dr. Anwar-ul-Haq Jabarkhail, Ibn Sina's President and CEO, said that the high quality medicines donated by Counterpart are very useful and that the gift will support Ibn Sina's efforts to assist the people of Afghanistan. Med Pharm, a US based non-profit charitable organization, donated the medicine through the Counterpart Humanitarian Assistance Program (CHAP).

During a recent visit to Afghanistan, Counterpart Senior Vice President, Arlene Lear, Chairman of the Board, Robert J. Reynolds, and International Advisory Council Member Fred Brumbaugh presented the medicines to Dr. Jabarkhail.

"We are honored to be able to help the people of Afghanistan with this much needed medicine," said Ms. Lear during the ceremony.

According to the Ministry of Public Health, lack of awareness about personal hygiene, a shortage of public toilets, poor water and sanitation systems, dense population, environmental pollution, improper waste management and high numbers of refugees and Internally Displaced Persons are some of the main causes of parasitic worms among the population.



Counterpart Senior Vice President, Arlene Lear, Chairman of the Board Bob Reynolds, Advisory Board Member, Fred Brumbaugh and I-PACS Deputy Chief of Party, Shehzad Mehmood, deliver over one million dollars in de-worming medicine to Ibn Sina - Kabul

Partner Grant Making (Continued from page 1)

After analyzing the assessment results, I-PACS ISO the Afghan Civil Society Forum (ACSF) was deemed to have sufficiently advanced internal financial controls and program management experience to be able to effectively steward grant funds and oversee grantee project implementation.

Given the low capacity of many I-PACS target CSOs, Counterpart then devised an integrated system of training and grant making that would be as user friendly as possible for these organizations—many of which had faced difficulties competing with larger Afghan NGOs when seeking donor funding. To address this need, Counterpart and ACSF

developed a training module called Community Problem Solving (CPS). ACSF then trained 10 of its target CSOs in this simple set of techniques which taught CSO staff how to bring a diverse cross section of a village or neighborhood together to reach a consensus on the key challenges facing their community and then to spend a day working together to develop a plan to solve the highest priority problems.

After the CPS training, with Counterpart and ACSF support, staff from the 10 target CSOs participating in the re-granting facilitated CPS workshops with communities throughout Central Afghanistan, with each producing a concept paper outlining the problem in question and a proposed solution. ACSF submitted the final concept papers to Counterpart's Grant Review Committee. Following a thorough evaluation, nine concept papers—or 90% of eligible projects—were approved for development into full proposals, with Counterpart ultimately funding all nine projects.

To date these projects have helped approximately 36,445 people in areas like infrastructure rehabilitation and improved access to water. Moreover, target CSOs who participated in the process have gained valuable, practical experience in project design and implementation. This has translated into increased confidence and drive to continue helping their communities, with many applying for funding for new projects from other donors.

According to Mr. Naseem, a representative of Afghan Amputee Bicyclists for Rehabilitation and Recreation, "we are very satisfied with Counterpart's re-granting scheme as it provided our organization with the technical skills to conduct participatory community appraisals and knowledge in project design, proposal development and reporting. We hope that Counterpart and ACSF will extend this opportunity to other CSOs as it empowers them and helps them work effectively".

Overall, Counterpart's re-granting model has proved to be an enormous success, which Counterpart intends to replicate with more partners. As the I-PACS extension progresses, Counterpart will continue to provide additional partners with training and technical assistance to bring their internal financial and program capacity to a level where they too can steward funds for re-granting.

Study tour to South Africa (Continued from page 1)

The participants engaged in dialogue with their South African counterparts on a wide range of regulatory issues such as registration processes in South Africa and Afghanistan, the supervision of NGOs in Afghanistan and Non-profit Organizations (NPOs) in South Africa, the legal status of NGOs, funding resources for NGOs in South Africa, and the ways in which NGOs find projects for implementation.

The key outcomes of the tour were:

- The participants were able to compare the Afghan legal framework with that of South Africa and to more clearly identify the strengths and weaknesses of the Afghan system.
- The participants met with 7 government and non-government agencies. They included the Non Profit Consortium (NPC), the Department of Trade and Industry, the Non-Profit Organizations Directorate, the Tax Exemption Unit of the South African Revenue Services, a provincial department of the Department of Social Development – all governmental regulators – and with two NGOs, including the AIDS Consortium and a community-based organization.

SUCCESS STORY

I-PACS capacity building program focuses on creating a sustainable infrastructure to support the development of Civil Society Organizations throughout Afghanistan.



*I-PACS team visits
HEARO - Jalalabad*

I-PACS trainings helped HEARO learn a set of techniques to bring a variety of community members together to identify, prioritize and solve problems, and then to develop project proposals to address those needs.

Limited organizational capacity makes it difficult for smaller Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to acquire donor funding. Many face difficulties competing with larger, more established organizations.

Hewad Educational Agriculture and Rehabilitation Organization (HEARO) is a non-profit established in March 2005 in Jalalabad, Nangarhar by a group of enthusiastic individuals determined to carry out development work with community participation.

Based on its vision and mission, HEARO was selected as a target CSO by the Initiative to Promote Afghan Civil Society (I-PACS) program, implemented by Counterpart International and funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). The goal of I-PACS is to increase the role and viability of civil society by providing capacity building to Afghan CSOs. The primary means by which I-PACS strives to meet this goal is by building the capacity of its ten Afghan partner organizations (Intermediary Service Organizations—ISOs and Civil Society Support

Centers—CSSCs), with a focus on creating a sustainable infrastructure to support the development of CSOs throughout Afghanistan. Counterpart's two ISOs serve to provide advanced capacity building assistance to a network of eight Afghan CSSCs, located throughout Afghanistan. A cadre of trainers at Counterpart, the ISOs and the CSSCs are providing direct training to 205 grassroots CSOs—with each partner responsible for approximately 20 target CSOs.

Prior to its enrollment as an I-PACS target CSO, HEARO designed several project proposals for various donor organizations; however, it failed to secure funding for any of them due to a lack of understanding and skill in community needs assessment and project design and proposal writing. After becoming a target CSO, HEARO staff had the opportunity to participate in various I-PACS trainings, including Appreciative Community Appraisal and Planning, Community Problem Solving, and Project Design and Proposal Writing. These trainings helped HEARO learn a set of techniques to bring a variety of community members together to identify, prioritize and solve problems, and then to develop project proposals to address those needs.

Following these trainings, for the first time, HEARO conducted community problem solving exercises to identify community problems and priorities. HEARO staff used the results of these workshops to develop various project proposals, ultimately securing funding for 12 projects from the UN and other donor agencies. Some of their activities include providing training to 50 women in bed sheet knitting, constructing gabion walls for village flood protection, and constructing 12 schools and 2 hospitals. The knowledge and skills developed during these trainings are allowing HEARO to provide vital services to communities throughout much of Afghanistan, while also ensuring the sustainability of HEARO as an organization.

COUNTERPART INTERNATIONAL
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