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AFGHANISTAN

CASE STUDY

Dialogue – a way to achieve needs

A regional policy dialogue with community members, stakeholders, and practitioners – Hirat



Counterpart's I-PACS II Community and Policy Engagement Director, presents community concerns to gathered stakeholders. June 26, 2011. Hirat, Afghanistan

CHALLENGE Afghanistan's civil society is still a newly functioning institution and still relatively unknown in terms of popular understanding. Popular conception in Afghanistan does not, therefore, allow for the idea that civil society actors can influence policy; and through these actors, communities can also have a voice in creating and forming policy.

INITIATIVE To address this lack of collaboration and provide opportunities for discussion, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and Counterpart International through its Initiative to Promote Afghan Civil Society phase II (I-PACS II) project carried out community dialogues on priority goals for policy action all over the country. These community dialogues were then analyzed and priority areas were re-addressed in a Regional Policy Dialogue (RPD). The RPD allowed key community members, provincial government officials, and other international development stakeholders to participate in a discussion focusing on how to learn about community needs and prioritize these needs into policy directives. The RPD in Hirat was largely heralded as the first opportunity that citizens felt they were able to interact with civil society practitioners and government officials together to express their opinions about policy action.

RESULTS In addition to providing an opportunity for citizens to voice concerns and opinions, the RPD also provided the grounds for different stakeholders to embark upon larger discussions related to immediate activities that could be undertaken to address community needs. Furthermore, this RPD along with the other 6 conducted by I-PACS II's partner organizations, will then be fed up in a presentation at a National Policy Conference that will be jointly facilitated by the I-PACS II project and its partners. This conference will take place in September and will result in a series of white papers that will be presented to the National Government as a series of recommendations for policy action.