

ARTF RESULTS



Encouraging Skills Development and Musical Talent

Afghanistan
Reconstruction
Trust Fund



ENCOURAGING SKILLS DEVELOPMENT AND MUSICAL TALENT

Afghanistan Skills Development Project, aimed at developing the skills of young Afghans has assisted more than 1,000 young men and women gain managerial, accounting, and information and communications technology (ICT) skills. It has also helped more than 6,750 youth, destitute women, and marginal farmers from numerous provinces, including highly insecure areas, to pursue more productive lives through targeted skills training.



CHALLENGE

At the end of the civil war in Afghanistan, there was a huge shortage of skilled personnel in Afghanistan. The overall scene was fragmented, supply-oriented with zero quality control, and no motivation or autonomy, which could have led to improvements. There was practically no person with any accounting or managerial skills at the junior or junior-middle levels either in government or in the private sector. ICT skills were rare. Rural youth and destitute women, as well as marginalized farmers had no means of rising above desperate poverty levels. Most affected were the highly insecure provinces where insurgents continued to oppress any form of education or skills development. For most technical trades, government had schools, but the curricula were long outmoded, there were practically no workshops or equipment, and the quality of teaching, was poor. Private service providers mushroomed, with no check on what they were doing, and supplied ill-trained and equipped youth who then had no job opportunities.

APPROACH

The Afghanistan Skills Development Project (ASDP) project was designed to help create and support meaningful institutions that would work on the demand for skills, and assist in creating a framework for qualifications that would establish standards to which all skills training – whether provided by private service providers or the government – could be mapped. It also sought to provide training, through third party sources, to rural youth, destitute women, and marginalized farmers to impart productive life-skills, including personal business development skills. On the institutional front, the emphasis was on broadening school management to include business, on the creation of a whole new institution for management, accounting, and ICT, and on making the schools autonomous in stages. On the rural training front emphasis was on strict monitoring and evaluation to capture actual gains.

RESULTS

- ASDP has contributed to key outcomes between 2008-2011:
- 1,510 young men and women graduated from the newly-established National Institute of Management and Administration (NIMA) in its first year of 2011, of which 1,058 have been given Diplomas from the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. Importantly, 29 percent of the graduates were women. Eighty percent of the graduates obtained jobs within six-months of pass-out, and a new cohort has been inducted.
- Women now constitute an average 25 percent of graduates from all programs (including rural programs);
- The government has issued orders providing a degree of administrative and financial autonomy to all the project-aided institutions;
- Schools have broadened their management councils and have included industry representatives;
- A defunct institution, Afghanistan National Institute of Music (ANIM), has been revived and has already earned international repute. ANIM itself has reached several milestones, including creation of wide donor interest (ANIM has now received support in kind from US, Germany, France, Italy, India, Australia, and others) and the rehabilitation and integration of war orphans, who are a large section of the students. It has also implemented a concrete and workable model of decentralization and administrative and financial autonomy that has been ratified by the Ministry of Education and extended to other institutions. ANIM has also successfully integrated cultural pursuits with the goals of primary and secondary education, as it now has a fully-equipped school where classes are held between music sessions and musical practice.
- The ANIM orchestra, consisting of children between the ages of 11-to-20, has also been given a rare privilege – a night to perform at New York’s Carnegie Hall. Other sponsors are also coming forward to support this institution and this group of children.
- More than 6,000 rural youth, destitute women, and marginalized farmers have been trained in various skills including how to run their own businesses.

"Today, we have 24 street kids with us. Some were selling chewing gum, plastic bags, or boiled eggs in the street. Now, we give their families 30 US dollars to stay in school as a kind of compensation for their loss of income."
- Dr. Ahmad Sarmast,
Coordinator of ANIM

BANK GROUP AND ARTF CONTRIBUTION

The initial total project cost was estimated at US\$38 million, with IDA contributing US\$20 million, and US\$18 million coming from the ARTF. Of this, US\$29 million has been released and the Managing Committee of the Fund is now being approached to release the last tranche of US\$9 million. Of the US\$29 million, 16 percent was spent for training of rural youth and vulnerable groups, and 70 percent has been spent on development of vocational training institutions, including NIMA and ANIM.

PARTNERS

There is a strong partnership with other donors in the skills sector. The US Agency for International Development and Norway contributed the first US\$9 million through the ARTF. There is a regular and ongoing discussion of issues within the Human Resources Development Board, where all donors are represented. The Bank plays a major role in facilitating meetings, and contributing to the deliberations.

MOVING FORWARD

Of the 141 government institutions in the skills sector, the project supports six. Benefits have been clear and visible. It is important to extend project benefits to other institutions and it is proposed that additional vulnerable groups be brought under the rural training component of the project. NIMA itself needs close support by international partners for another three-to-four years to ensure institutionalization of academic norms. Support also has to be provided for further work on the Qualifications Framework and Qualifications Authority. The government is providing all revenue costs for the project. Lastly, given the success of ANIM, a scholarship program for deserving students and a program to further broaden the base of the institution will need to be considered. Funding issues will be addressed through additional funding requests as well as the next planned phase of the Afghanistan Skills Development Project. The expected release of the last tranche of US\$9 million from ARTF will considerably assist with these aims.



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