



WEERDP/MRRD

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An MoU was inked between MRRD and DAB. Based on the MoU, DAB will open bank accounts for WEERDP beneficiaries, help transfer seed capital and conduct financial literacy trainings for program's beneficiaries that will have bank accounts in DAB.

About WEERDP/MRRD:

Women Economic Empowerment Rural Development Program (WEERDP), under leadership of Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) and in view of National Unity Government (NUG) goals and WEE-NPP objectives, was initiated in 2018 in continuation of Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Program (AREDP) for the purpose of social and economic empowerment of women in rural areas of all 34 provinces of Afghanistan with the financial aid of World Bank.

Through this program Self Help Groups (SHG), Enterprise Groups (EG), Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLA) and Small and Medium Enterprises (SME) will be established to develop local economy, and create income generation and job opportunities for program beneficiaries (80% female) in rural areas of Afghanistan.

THIS ISSUE'S ARTICLES:

- ◆ MRRD & DAB's MoU
- ◆ Kuchies Joined WEERDP
- ◆ Convened training sessions in Bamyan
- ◆ Training session on Islamic Micro Finance
- ◆ Fledgling Aspirations of Yasin
- ◆ WEERDP's Major Achievement

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH



This month's employee of the month is Mr. Zahir Popal, who is District Coordinator of Daman. Mr. Popal holds Bachelor of Science in Agriculture from Kandahar University.

He has more than 8 years of relevant experience in developmental project. Since his employment with WEERDP, he has been an integral part of achieving project objectives, therefore, he is recognized as one of the most productive employees of the organization.

We wish him all the very best in her future endeavors.

AN MOU BETWEEN MINISTRY OF RURAL REHABILITATION AND DEVELOPMENT & DA AFGHANISTAN BANK

The Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Da Afghanistan Bank to support the process of transferring USD 36 million seed capital to the program's beneficiaries in the villages.

H.E Mujib Rahman Karimi, Minister of Rural Rehabilitation and Development expressed his gratitude for sincere cooperation of Da Afghanistan Bank for providing banking facilities and financial linkages to the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development and its various programs. While concluding the MoU, He said "As a result of this agreement, 5000 bank accounts will be opened for each Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) established by Women Economic Empowerment Rural Development Program of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development at village level in the selected areas. In addition to the bank accounts, Da Afghanistan Bank will transfer USD 36 million to 34 province of the country." First Deputy Governor of Da Afghanistan Bank, Mr. Wahedullah Noshier said that the agreement is signed based on bilateral cooperation, and the fundamental element of the agreement is to raise the financial literacy of the villagers.



The Women Economic Empowerment Rural Development Program (WEERDP) of Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) is hopeful that by signing this MoU it will be able to achieve the set goal that is to increase social and economic empowerment of poor rural women in selected communities of Afghanistan and take a step forward in attaining sustainable economic development.

KUCHIES OF KANDAHAR, NOW UNDER WEERDP UMBRELLA



Kuchies are part of Afghan population that enjoy all rights to an adequate standard of living alongside a Kuchi lifestyle. Women Economic Empowerment Rural Development Program (WEERDP) cover Ku-

chies of Daand o Daman district mainly to exercise equal rights and equal opportunities fundamentals in its activities. In the initial stages of its activities, establishment of Self Help Groups (SHGs) and Enterprise Groups (EGs) are intended for them, as a result of which, access to finance and job opportunities will be provided to Kuchies. At the opening ceremony, Kuchies were briefed on the goals and objectives of the program and discussed its benefits, which pleased them. It is noteworthy that since the start of the program in Kandahar province, 415 Self Help Groups (SHGs) have been established in the province.

FLEDGLING ASPIRATIONS OF YASIN



Promoting Integrated Bamboo Based Enterprise Development (PIBBED) is the first ever project being implemented by Women's Economic Empowerment Rural Development Program (WEERDP) of Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) in Afghanistan. The project aims to promote Bamboo cultivation and its enterprise development for income generation and employment opportunities in the two provinces of Afghanistan, Nangarhar and Kandahar.

For bamboo propagation in Nangarhar Province, numerous awareness raising sessions and training programs have been conducted by the project staff for the potential farmers and among them 25 interested farmers have been identified as direct beneficiaries of the project, one of them is Mr. Yasin, a 43 year-old farmer living in Detar Balla village of Kama district, Nangarhar Province.

Mr. Yasin cultivate seasonal crops in his fields and use it for self-expense and selling it in the local market. The crops he cultivates during the year is mostly wheat, corn, and vegetables. He says agriculture inputs are the only source of income for his family.

PIBBED team by entering to Kama district, conducted several awareness raising sessions and

training programs on bamboo plant, varieties of bamboo, benefits of the plant, how to cultivate and the methods of propagation, Harvesting & its methods, type of products which can be produced from it and marketing of bamboo products. He thanked the PIBBED project team for conducting the timely and needed trainings for the farmers of Kama district. By attending the training programs, I learned how to cultivate bamboo plants, how frequently irrigate them, how to harvest and sell the raw materials in the market” He further added, “By understanding the cultivation & harvesting methods of bamboo and its increasing demand in the province, I will cultivate it in my field and will also ask other farmers & my relatives to do so. After receiving the trainings, Mr. Yasin also allocated one acre (Jarib) of his land for bamboo cultivation, he earns around 25,000 to 35,000 AFN during the year from cultivation of other crops. He says “On one hand, Bamboo is a useful plant and can be easily used as an alternative for other woods in Nangarhar province, and the other hand, there isn't enough bamboo fields, so, will try to increase my land for bamboo cultivation in near future”.

Mr. Yasin has also helped Promoting Integrated Bamboo Based Enterprise Development (PIBBED) project in spreading the idea of bamboo cultivation and its benefits, not only in his village of Detar Balla of Kama district but also in Lapoor and Goshta.

With the help of Mr. Yasin and people like him, bamboo cultivation is spreading in Nangarhar province and the project expect the required/needed amount of Nangarhar bamboo to be cultivated inside the province is enough to avoid importing it from other countries in the long run.

WEERDP/MRRD CONVENED TRAINING SESSIONS IN BAMYAN PROVINCE

These training sessions were launched from 16 September onwards in five districts of Bamyan province. Azhdar and Sorkhqul are comprised of 300 Self Help Groups (SHGs) that are among the first Community Development Council (CDC) to benefit from these training sessions.

The training sessions were organized for 800 Self Help Groups (SHGs) in five districts of Bamyan province, topics that were discussed includes Islamic Banking, how to become member of a SHG, and book keeping methods. It is worth mentioning that the training sessions started in Bamyan province after the official visit of Shams al-Islam Yaser in charge of the central zone of the Women Economic Empowerment Rural Development.

Earlier this month, he traveled to Bamyan to oversee the workflow and implementation of the program and, while visiting numerous districts in the province, addressed problems of field staff and



beneficiaries of the program and provided rational solutions.

Since the program's initial activity in Bamyan, 800 Self Help Groups (SHGs) and 30 Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs) are established and are operational.

TRAINING SESSION ON ISLAMIC MICRO FINANCE (IMF) HELD IN THE CENTRAL ZONE



The 2-days training session was held for 31 newly recruited village facilitators of Bagرامي, Estalif, and Chahar Asyab districts from 3-4 September in the PMO office. The participants were comprised of 20 female village facilitators and 11 male village facilitator. The fundamental topics discussed in this

training session were, Islamic Micro Finance, establishment and registration of SHGs, proper ways to convene meetings, techniques to keep saving books and methods of community mobilization. It is noteworthy that the village facilitators are the first and core link between Women Economic Empowerment Rural Development Program (WEERDP) and the people, working alongside social workers to mobilize the community.




WEERDP's MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS



The main objective of WEE-RDP is “to increase social and economic empowerment of poor rural women in selected communities”. WEE-RDP will cover 76 districts of 34 provinces in 5 years, until now, It has been operational in 37 districts of 11 provinces across Afghanistan. WEE-RDP has covered 260 new CDCs, formed around 2,256 SHGs which brings the total number of FSHGs to 1,853 FSHGs. The cumulative aggregated savings of 2,256 SHGs has reached to 10 million AFN, where 8 million AFN is saved by 1,853 female SHGs. Up to now, a total 4,516 loans were issued to 4,103 borrowers (84% by female SHGs) largely for productive purposes and starting income generation activities. MoUs signed with New Kabul Bank (NKB) and Pashtany Bank, as part of promoting financial inclusion and access to finance and facilitating opening bank accounts for female com-


munity institutions to receive seed grants. Thus far, WEE-RDP has formed 24 VSLAs from 194 SHGs and their bank accounts have been opened in Pashtany and Kabul Banks. Out of these 24 VSLAs, 10 of them have completed the criteria of maturity assessments and they would very soon receive first tranche of seed capital grant. In addition, WEE-RDP convened Grand Village Bazaar Exhibitions in seven regions of the country in summer season this year. It is worth mentioning that WEE-RDP intends to build women centric bazaars in the seven regions of the country. The Women Economic Empowerment Rural Development Program (WEERDP) of Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) is hopeful that through continued efforts and support to rural community, it will be able to achieve the set objective that is economic and social empowerment of


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