



WEERDP/MRRD



Women Economic Empowerment Rural Development Program (WEERDP) of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development had launched a Grand Village Bazaar exhibition, previously in Kabul, Nangarhar, Herat, Kandahar and this time in Balkh province on the occasion of Afghanistan's 100th Independence Anniversary.

THIS ISSUE'S ARTICLES:

- WEERDP covers Nomads of Daman district in Kandahar
- A training workshop was convened for Social Organizers
- Sad Gul, Women of Valor and Bravery
- WEERDP convened an exhibition to commemorate Afghanistan's 100th Independence Anniversary in Balkh Province
- A training workshop was convened for the newly recruited...
- The Executive Director WEERDP visited Kapisa Province to...

About WEERDP/MRRD:

Women Economic Empowerment Rural Development Program (WEERDP) is one of the key programs of Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) that aims to increase social and economic empowerment of poor rural women in 76 districts of 34 provinces across Afghanistan.

The program covers two districts in every province. WEERDP is envisaged to establish a total of 40,000 Self Help Groups (SHGs), 5,000 Village Savings and Loans Associations (VSLAs), 5,000 Enterprise Groups (EGs) and 500 Producer Associations (PAs) in order to develop local economy in rural areas, and create job opportunities for program beneficiaries (80% female) during five years through 6,250 Community Development Councils (CDCs).

EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH



This month's employee of the month is Ms. Freshta Hemmati, who is Communication Officer of WEERDP/MRRD.

Ms. Hemmati holds a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism from Kabul University. She has more than 4 years of relevant experience in news reporting with various media outlets in the country.

Since her employment with WEERDP, she has been an integral part of achieving project objectives in communication and information, therefore, she is recognized as one of the most productive employees of the organization. We wish her all the very best in her future endeavors.

WEERDP COVERS NOMADS OF DAMAN DISTRICT IN KANDAHAR PROVINCE



Executive Director of WEERDP, Mr. Rahmatullah Quraishi and Kandahar PRRD Director, oversaw the implementation of the program in Dand district of Kandahar province. The program has been operating in Dand and Daman districts for the past one year in Kandahar province, which has

established 569 SHGs, out of which 87 are male groups comprising 487 members and 487 are female groups consisting 3727 members. Daman district's nomads have recently come under WEERDP coverage and they are grateful for it. In the Pitawi village of Daman district, 29 SHGs have been established so far, out of which 23 are female groups with 154 members and 6 are male groups with 48 members.

It is worth mentioning that Women Economic Empowerment Rural Development Program (WEERDP) of Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) will establish 1170 Self Help Groups (SHGs) in Kandahar province during 5 years. In addition, 94 million AFN gratuitous assistance will be made through these groups that will benefit 11704 people directly and indirectly.

SOCIAL ORGANIZERS OF WEERDP RECEIVED TRAINING



A training workshop was organized in WEERDP main office for the central zone social organizers who are stationed in Bagrami, Estalif, and Chahar Asyab districts of Kabul. In this workshop topics discussed and taught were, establishment of SHG, book keeping methods, procedure to collect savings, giving loans, convening meetings and startup of suitable business through the loans member receive.

The total number of participants in the workshop was 11 people, out which 5 persons were female social organizers. In addition to above topics, Islamic banking and information technology was also discussed in the workshop. The purpose of the workshop was to teach the above matters to social organizers and convey it beneficiaries via them. It is worth mentioning that the workshop was for four days, from 27 September to 1 October 2019.

SAD GUL, WOMEN OF VALOR AND BRAVERY



Sad Gul is a resident of Shadi Barah village in Herat province. She had spent her sweet childhood and adolescence in a poor family, due to that she did not feel well. She was always looking for a good source of income for the women of her village and had brilliant ideas in mind, after having multiple discussions with women of her village they agreed to collect 20 AFN weekly and save it and be given as loan to women in times of need. Sad Gul said that in the beginning, no one was pleased with it, but they gradually came to grips with her arguments about the various benefits of it. Sad Gul and women of the Shadi Barah village raised about 20 AFN weekly. After several weeks of consecutive savings, these women were able to save up to 10,000 AFN.

According to Sad Gul, out of the saved money, 4,000 AFN was given to a member of their group who was ill and did not have enough money for treatment, which she repaid after her treatment on time. After observing the situation, women in the village realized the benefits of savings and were encouraged to participate in the process. Women Economic Empowerment Rural Development Program (WEERDP) of Ministry of



Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) came to their village, not long after they had formed a Village saving group. Their personnel explained the objective of the program to all women in the village and everyone felt more hopeful than ever before. Said Sad Gul.

She added, "Initially, men in the family opposed participation of their wives in the program. However, we tried to save regularly to meet small economic needs of our families, as well as, to lend our husbands a helping hand to satisfy the basic needs of our lives. Therefore, our village men also realized the effectiveness of this program in our lives, now, they do not oppose our participation in the program but encourages us to take an active part in the Self Help Group (SHGs) of this program. Since initiation of WEERDP in their village, Sad Gul has been the head of Shadi Barah Village Self Help Group and chairing consecutively group meetings. She has been successful in saving a total of 30,000 AFN. "I have great goals that I want to achieve with the help of this program and serve my family and people." Said Sad Gul with confidence and smile. Alongside Sad Gul, there were other women who had also begun businesses through the same savings and financial assistance of WEERDP. Some women had started farming, some livestock and some other handicrafts.

We asked Sad Gul how she started her business and she explained:

"We made 70,000 AFN of profit from the 30,000 AFN savings we had collected in our group and I thought it was a good time to start a business. I took a loan of 30,000 AFN and made a 60,000 AFN profit." Sad Gul purchased some fabric for embroidery work with the borrowed money. She designed and sewed the fabrics

and sent it for sale to market. Now, she gives fabrics to the other women in the village to sew designs on fabrics for small wage. Subsequently, she sold those pieces of work to the shopkeepers in the market. Similarly, she would later buy sewed fabrics and give it to women of the village for sale. Sad Gul told us one of her terrible memories that was unforgettable for her.

She says when our group savings amounted to 10,000 AFN. One of the women in the village asked me for a loan to buy a sheep, and at the same time another woman asked me for a loan for medical treatment. She explained that the women had cancer and insisted for the loan. Sad Gul had been discomfited by her story, and without hesitation she gave the collected money to her for treatment.

Sad Gul smiled during her words and continued: "Later on, I was in severe anxiety, thinking, what if she doesn't repay the money and my apprehension was growing day by day because that was not my personal capital. In case of failure to repay, I would be the only one accountable to the group members, so I decided to pay it off no matter what happens. This issue had become a major mental concern for me, however, one day the women came to my house and repaid the loan."

Sad Gul says she was pleased with the repayment of the loan, after that day she had gained the trust of the village women. In her last words she said that "Now, I think I am self-sufficient and not dependent on anyone, I am grateful to Women Economic Empowerment Rural Development Program (WEERDP) of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD) which has made a big difference in my life with its technical and financial assistance.

WEERDP/MRRD CONVENED AN EXHIBITION TO COMMEMORATE AFGHANISTAN'S 100TH INDEPENDENCE ANNIVERSARY IN BALKH



Women Economic Empowerment Rural Development Program (WEERDP) of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development had launched a Grand Village Bazaar exhibition, previously in Kabul, Nangarhar, Herat, Kandahar and this time in Balkh province on the occasion of Afghanistan's 100th Independence Anniversary. The exhibition ceremony was attended by government officials in Balkh, WEERDP staff, civil activists, media mem-

bers, and a group of businesspeople and residents of the province in the Rabia Balkhi Market. The purpose of the exhibition is to provide equal opportunities to rural women in the northeast and northwestern provinces so they can dramatically increase their incomes and gain better market access. Abdul Wafi Nayeibzai, head of communications at WEERDP, said in a statement at the opening ceremony of the exhibition that "Women Economic Empowerment Rural Development Program has convened this exhibition to embrace the rural women of the north in this imperative matter. This reflects the high level of cooperation between partners and stakeholders that work together for the economic empowerment of Afghan women. Women entrepreneurs from Balkh, Samangan, Jawzjan, Faryab, Kunduz, Badakhshan, Takhar, Baghlan and Sar-e-Pol provinces attend the exhibition and showcased their products in 50 booths.

NEWLY RECRUITED EMPLOYEES OF WEERDP/MRRD OBTAINED TRAINING



A training workshop was convened for 90 newly recruited employees of Women Economic Empowerment Rural Development Program

(WEERDP) from regional offices to main office in Kabul.

In addition to explaining the objective and goals of the program, topics such as, small Islamic loans, establishment and registration of SHGs, proper ways to convene meetings, techniques to keep saving books and methods of community mobilization were discussed too.

These employees contain 13 women who are newly hired for the positions of Village Facilitator, Social Organizer, and Enterprise Development in 26 provinces of Afghanistan. It is worth mentioning that the workshop had begun 13 November and continued for three days.

WEERDP'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR VISITED KAPISA PROVINCE TO OVERSEE PROGRAM'S IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS.



A high-level delegation of Women Economic Empowerment Rural Development Program (WEERDP) led by Rahmatullah Quraishi visited Kapisa province to oversee program's work.

Mr. Shamsul Islam Yasir, central zone manager, and communication team were the companions in the trip. On the first day of the visit, they met with Mr. Mohammad Younus Mamozai, Kapisa PRRD director and discussed some key issues. In addition, they also talked about the objectives of the program

and briefly discussed the achievements of the program since it's initiation in the province.

Mr. Mamozai assured PRRD's comprehensive cooperation for better implementation of the program in Kapisa and promised further assistance.

After the talks, Mr. Rahmatullah Quraishi along with his associates visited newly established male groups in the villages of Dangar khail and Khanan in the province and spoke to the members about the goals and objectives of the program and the mobilization of the people in these groups.

Kapisa PRRD Director and WEERDP Central Zone Manger in an exclusive meeting with the WEERDP staff in Kapisa province discussed the difficulties and challenges they face during implementation of the program in the province. As a result, the recommendations and opinions of these employees were heard and practical actions begin.



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