



WEERDP/MRRD



Based on the directives of H.E. the president of Afghanistan, MRRD for the promotion and development of rural products launched its first Grand Village Bazaar Exhibition at regional levels in Kandahar province. The exhibition was launched on November 26 in the Anyno Mina with the presence of deputy governor, heads of private sectors and members of the media. In the exhibition, 80 women from across the country showcased their village products such as handicrafts, food products, and jewelry.

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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 Mr. Shamsul Islam Yasir, who is Senior Regional Manager for Central Zone. Mr. Yasir holds a Master of Business Administration (M.B.A) from the University of Chester, United Kingdom. Mr. Yasir has more than 13 years of relevant professional experience, and he has been working with WEERDP program for 1 year. Since his employment with WEERDP, he has been an integral part of the program's development, management and coordination in the central zone, therefore, he is recognized as one of the most productive employee of the organization.

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

WEE-RDP'S BENEFICIARIES ATTENDED THE SECOND NATIONAL WOMEN'S ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUMMIT



20 beneficiaries of Women Economic Empowerment Rural Development Program WEERDP/MRRD participated in the second summit of Afghanistan Women's Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AWCCI). The main objectives of this event were to identify best women entrepreneurs, and the working challenges and opportunities for women in 12 provinces of Afghanistan. In the event, Ms. Spozhmai Wardak, Technical and Policy Deputy of Ministry of Women Affairs, Ms. Amena Ahmady, Director General of Revenue at Ministry of Finance, Ms. Shahrzad Hirji, Ambassador of Agha Khan, Ms. Nargis Nehan,

Former Minister of Mines and Petroleum, Mr. Abdul Qadir Bahman, President of ICC, Ms. Kamela Sediqi, Former Trade Deputy Minister of Industry and Commerce and Founder of Kaweyan Group of Companies, AWCCI Board of Directors, AWCCI Board of Directors and more than 200 businesswomen from different provinces of Afghanistan participated. The topics discussed in the event were market definition, marketing methods, human resources, and management. The representatives of various organizations delivered their presentation on the mentioned topic. During the ceremony, WEERDP/MRRD beneficiary from Bamyan province, Ms. Zahra Mohammadi won the Bibi Khadija award for the best women entrepreneur of the year. Bibi Khadija award is awarded every year to successful and accomplished women entrepreneurs by Afghanistan Women's Chamber of Commerce (AWCCI). This year, the award was awarded to 15 women entrepreneurs from 13 provinces.

AFGHANISTAN INSTITUTE FOR RURAL DEVELOPMENT WILL SURVEY OF VILLAGES SAVING AND LOAN ASSOCIATIONS (VSLAs)

Based on decree by the Honorable Ministry of rural Rehabilitation and Development, a survey of Village Saving and Loans Associations (VSLAs) of WEERDP is supposed to take place in five provinces of the country (Herat, Bamyan, Balkh, Nangarhar and Parwan) by Afghanistan Rural Development Institute



of MRRD.

In this survey form 500 VSLAs in 5 provinces, 175 VSLAs will be randomly and technically selected by the Department of Research and Survey of AIRD. It is worth mentioning, that a large number of work of WEERDP has been implemented in the mentioned five provinces and small number of work are in the process of being implemented.

ZUHRA SHUJA, A WOMAN WHO PAINTS SOCIETY'S PAIN AND ANGUISH

Zurha Shuja, a women who describes society's pain, sorrow and anomalous through her paintings. She is a member of Self Help Group (SHG) in the Women Economic Empowerment Rural Development Program (WEERDP) of Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD).

Ms. Zuhra and her group members in Asr-e- Awal village of Sar Jangal district in Herat province are glad to join the SHG, through which they could start up a small business and fulfill their daily needs.

In Asr-e-Awal village most of the women are making pickles some are busy with embroidery, sewing clothes, and some other are doing poultry that is sent to market for sale.

She said "an employee of WEERDP/MRRD came to our village in the November of 2018".

She saves 20 AFN in saving account of her SHG group weekly, and meets her group members once a week for better management of her group work.

Zuhra besides house chores, and activities in the SHG group do paintings too.

She added: "Even though, I did not have tools before, still I managed to paint and express the pain of my heart with the basic tools available".

Zuhra was upset for not getting the attention she needed when the passion of painting was born in her, no one helped her to prepare painting materials, and she did not have enough money to buy the tools.

She used to think that no one would acclaim her painting while she is alive and she was usually disappointed whenever she saw other painter's work being praised by people on the TV. As well as, she was always felt uncomfortable for not getting noticed by people for her work.

However, she became hopeful after WEERDP/MRRD initiated its work in their village. For the first time, she got a loan of 1000 AFN from SHG group not for painting but for making pickles. She prepared the pickles and sold it in the market with good return.

She further added: "the most important part of the business is the availability of the market, if there is the opportunity to sell our products in the market, we can prepare different types of pickle and earn great income".

Even though, she did not receive any formal education about painting, anytime she is distressed, she paints.

The income generated by selling pickle, she bought painting tools to prepare high quality paintings and express her thoughts well.



She says every week other women bring their handmade products to group meetings for showcase, I bring my paintings to show them and their praises and encouragement gives me moral.

She hope that with the help of SHG group and support of WEERDP she could get admission into a standardized painting class, in order to develop her painting work and be able to show her paintings in grand exhibitions.

Zuhra believes that painting is a great way of expressing the hidden pain: "one day I will hold a painting exhibition in Herat province and everyone will know Afghan women talent".

Zhura Shuja wishes that one day her painting will have visitors from all provinces of Afghanistan.

ESS KITS DISTRIBUTED TO BENEFICIARIES OF RED/WEERDP

Returnees Enterprise Development Project – RED distributed ESS kits among 60 beneficiaries which included carpet weaving clothes, trash can, belts and air purifying masks which will be used during the carpet weaving sessions to protect workers during carpet weaving process in Rural Rehabilitation and Development Directorate of Kabul province.

In addition to exposure visits, this project will help returnees to have access to the market and sell their weaved carpets. Thus, RED has allocated AFN 7.5 million for the provision of ESS equipment that the beneficiaries of the project will receive. The beneficiaries in Kabul were the first group of the returnees who received this package, in the near future, this scheme will be implemented in the remaining seven provinces as well.



It is noteworthy, that the RED project- WEERDP/MRRD has been officially active in eight provinces (Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, Nangarhar, Balkh, Kunduz, Baghlan, Laghman) since two years, and about 5000 looms were distributed to returnees, thereby providing employment to 15000 people in the carpet weaving sector.

THIRD SPECIAL COMMITTEE MEETING ON ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND EXPORT GROWTH IN KANDAHAR



Based on the directive of H.E president of Afghanistan, a special committee chaired by Afghanistan Airfields Economic Development Commission (AAEDC) was formed that prepared a plan for economic development and export growth of Kandahar which is endorsed by the president. In the beginning of this meeting, Nasrullah Sahebzada, acting chief of AAEDC secretariat, appreciated the committee's efforts shared the directives of the president with them. Deputy Ministers of Ministry of Urban Development

and Lands (MUDL), Ministry of Agriculture Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), Executive Director of Women Economic Empowerment Rural Development WEERDP/MRRD and other concerned organization also appreciated the efforts of the committee. Rahmatullah Quraishi, Executive Director of Women Economic Empowerment Rural Development Program talked about the five years of economic plan of the program and said "The program will create 1170 Self Help Groups (SHGs) in Dand and Daman districts of Kandahar province, thus the

program will cover 11704 people through economic and technical assistance, so far 4500 male and female have joined 560 groups. In addition to the plan of women's market, which is one of the key activities of the program, it will soon be implemented in six zones, including Kandahar, that is an effective step in marketing domestic products and enhancing women's economic capacity.

At the end of this meeting all the participants assured to work diligently and to maintain coordination and cooperation.

DISTRIBUTION OF 720 ENVIRONMENTAL SOCIAL SAFEGUARD (ESS) KITS TO THE BENEFICIARIES OF RED/WEERDP



Mohammad Sediqi, Director of Herat PRRD, WEERDP officials, Director of Carpet Producers and Export Union, Community Development Councils (CDC) Heads, representatives of villages and carporder to facilitate employment and income, and ultimately to grow and strengthen the family economy. et wavers/RED beneficiaries in Herat province participated in the distribution ceremony of 720 Environmental Social Safeguard (ESS) Kits worth of 1,184,608 AFN to vivid carpet waver of the RED project. 91 male and 629 female beneficiaries were selected form 25 different area of Anjil, Guzara, and Rubat-e-Sangi districts of Herat. These kits were distributed based on the beneficiaries' needs and ability for their use in the process.

The purpose of the support is to create a productive environment for entrepreneurs, especially women, in

It is worth to mention that 528 carpets, which measures 2305 square meter is produced by 720 beneficiaries of the project in Herat province. The total income generated was 904,000 AFN.

According to the program's procedures, the looms were distributed to the beneficiaries in the presence of councils and representatives of the villages to constantly use them for income generation purpose.

Since the program's obligation to prepare job opportunity was fulfilled, therefore, the safeguarding responsibility of the looms were officially given to CDCs and village representatives by the recommendation of WEERDP and approval of MRRD top management.

This program covers four districts in Herat province, benefiting a total of 360 villages. In these villages 2876 SHG groups, 360 VSLAs and enterprise groups will be created. The purpose of these economic associations is to strengthen the culture of saving and investment, to facilitate the access of rural people to more financial resources and to encourage more rural entrepreneurs' to use their resource to grow and enhance economic and productive activities. Many job opportunity will be created directly and indirectly in different parts.

At the end of the ceremony the ESS kites were distributed to beneficiaries.

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