



Capacity is Development

Institution Building of the Deputy Ministry of Youth Affairs

Transforming Lives of Youths through Public-Private-Partnership

Keeping Youth away from Insurgency & Drugs



Zainab, a poor young girl from outskirts of Kabul, wanted to pursue a professional course after finishing her high school so that she could get a job and make herself a decent future. She visited various professional institutes in Kabul offering computer and similar courses but was disheartened as the cost of these courses was unaffordable to her. In another place in Faryab province, Moein a 15 year street beggar aspired to acquire employable skills so that he could leave begging and lead a respectful life by earning his livelihood. Unfortunately, like Zainab, Moein too was disheartened as he did not find a vocational training center in Faryab which could train him.

There are thousands of frustrated educated and uneducated youth like Zainab and Moein who are faced with the myriad problems of lack of opportunities in Afghanistan. The growing frustration among the youth leads to sad and serious consequences like their recruitment by insurgent groups or their illegal migration to neighboring countries. 85,000 young men illegally crossed the border to Iran in 2008, taking great risks, showing how desperate they were for opportunities¹ and also the fact that they had little or no hope from the Government of Afghanistan or the international community. In a situation like this, exploring ways of creating adequate opportunities for the youth is of great importance.

When CAP team started working in Deputy Ministry of youth Affairs (DMYA) sometime in early 2008, a key priority was to develop holistic strategies to address the complex set of youth problems. The very basic problem because of which the strategies had not yet been developed and implemented till now was lack of funds and low capacity within the ministry to formulate the strategies and mobilize the resources for the same. Though donors had been supporting some programmes, the support was sporadic and was not available on a sustainable basis.

One of the first issues on which the Deputy Ministry started action on, with active support and advise from the CAP team was to start engaging partners from the private sector in supporting government initiatives in the areas of professional and vocational training for poor youth. A dialogue was initiated with several potential private partners. During these interactions, the importance of the role of private sector in contributing to the development of youth and thereby national reconstruction was highlighted. Development of youth would result in promoting security and development of Afghanistan which would in the ultimate analysis be beneficial for the growth of the private sector. As a result of these focused and intense discussions held over a period of almost a year, the deputy ministry now has various partnerships in place. Under any partnership, the private partners provide the financial support and the Deputy Ministry provides access to its infrastructure and technical support to implement the Memorandum of Understanding (MoUs) which have been put in place to implement the partnership.

CAP team provided technical support at all stages: stakeholder negotiations, developing MoUs, designing the modalities of implementation, establishing processes & systems in the Deputy Ministry and conducting examinations for selection of youths for various programmes. Initially, due to low capacities in the ministry, CAP team played an active role in the forefront in most activities. However, simultaneously, the team also worked on developing capacity of the staff of the ministry to carry out these activities. The key technique used by the CAP team was that of coaching and mentoring i.e. on the job training. Coaching was provided to the concerned officials in relevant areas like resource mobilization, multistakeholder management, MoU preparation etc. Along with offline coaching, the officials were also involved in all stages of the ongoing actual partnership development process. As a result of the capacity development efforts of CAP team more and more officials of deputy ministry of Youth are today able to lead initiatives that improve the lot of the youth in the country.

The coordinated efforts of the previous year have resulted in implementation of several important initiatives. MoUs were entered between DYMA & University of Bakhtar and also DMYA & University of Maiwand for a period of 4 years to deliver benefits to the youth on a continued basis. Under the MoU, around 2000 poor youths are now enrolled in different private academic institutes and universities of Kabul for obtaining professional degrees in computer science, economics, law, engineering etc. These courses are provided either free of cost or with a discount of around 80%.

¹ Altai, ILO, UNHCR Research Study on Afghan Deportees from Iran - 2008



Signing ceremony for MoUs between DMYA & a private university and DYMA & Tanweer Investments

A similar MoU has been signed with ACTED and it will follow a two-fold approach, namely: (i) positive youth development & (ii) livelihood development under the Sustained Rural Development Programme for Faryab. 9 training centers dedicated to vocational & literacy trainings are being built along with sports facilities like football & volley ball courts. Around 70,000 youths like Moein will benefit by this programme in Faryab Province. All the assets and infrastructure created under the project shall be transferred to the Deputy Ministry of Youth Affairs after the programme is over and shall be used by the youth in the province.

MoUs have also been signed with Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and Tanweer Financial Investment. These also aim to provide training and facilitate employment to the youths.

The Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) is not new in Government of Afghanistan. It has been in place in various ministries in Afghanistan but in Deputy Ministry of Youth Affairs it has broken new grounds wherein systematic and sustained support is being received from the private partners through emerging relationships and strong partnerships. There is now a willingness to work together for transforming young lives in Afghanistan in a very cost effective manner. In less than six months, thousands of poor youths have received support from these partnerships. Poor youths like Zainab and Moein are now happy and hopeful about their future.

A direct outcome of such programmes is that it restores the faith of the youth in the governmental and international organizations. This in turn keeps them away from social problems like insurgency, drug addiction etc and they can directly contribute to the reconstruction and nation building efforts in Afghanistan.



Handing over of computer peripherals by CD, UNDP to DM, DMYA; Youth centre in operation; Inauguration of a youth centre by DM, DMYA

CAP project and UNDP are happy to have contributed to this very important initiative of the Deputy ministry of Youth, Government of Afghanistan.