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## Afghan Women Gain Job Skills through Engineering Internship Program

**KABUL, AFGHANISTAN** – Four women graduated from the United States Agency for International Development’s (USAID) Afghan Women Engineering Internship Program, becoming the fourth group of qualified engineering interns who have strengthened their chances of landing a job in their chosen field.

The program, which began in 2011, provides opportunities to intern at a USAID partner’s engineering firm, empowering women to excel in the field of engineering. Sixteen female interns have completed the program, subsequently finding employment with agencies like the Afghanistan Ministry of Energy and Water, private engineering companies, or furthering their education.

USAID Mission Director Herbert Smith said the U.S. government is committed to gender equality, and this program gives women access to opportunities that were previously not available.

“The Afghan Women Engineering Internship Program is the perfect example of how to promote higher education and gender equality in Afghanistan,” Smith said. “These opportunities help create a strong, resilient community of women ready to contribute to the country’s development and serve as role models to future generations.”

“This internship program had a big impact on my life,” said Zurwa Farhad, a former intern and now manager of the program. It allowed me to find my strengths, trust my abilities, and take part in the development of Afghanistan.”

Different project management trainings are held for the interns during the internship period to develop not only their engineering capacity, but their financial, administrative and management skills. Interns are given practical knowledge through software training, labs, shadowing activities, personal instruction from professional engineers, and site visits. Through these hands-on activities they gain the skills and knowledge to compete for jobs when they graduate.

The United States Agency for International Development created the Afghanistan Engineering Support Program to provide architectural and engineering services, as well as training to Afghan government ministry staff and technicians working in the energy, transportation, water, sanitation, and communication sectors.

*The American people, through the U.S. Agency for International Development, have provided economic and humanitarian assistance worldwide for more than 50 years.”*



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