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AFGHANISTAN

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FACT SHEET

Initiative to Promote Afghan Civil Society II (I-PACS II)

OVERVIEW

The Initiative to Promote Afghan Civil Society (I-PACS) encourages the development of a politically active civil society in Afghanistan. The program began in January 2005 and its second phase, I-PACS II, started in October 2010. Through the program, USAID has strengthened the role and viability of civil society by providing technical assistance, capacity-building, and grants to civil society organizations nationwide. While the goal of the original I-PACS program help Afghan citizens to participate in the political process effectively, I-PACS II will work specifically to improve civil society accountability, develop legal and regulatory frameworks, and increase citizen mobilization and policy engagement, with particular emphasis on gender.

ACTIVITIES

- Addressing regulatory issues in the civil society sector through dialogue mechanisms with the government, including a Working Group on Civil Society Legal Framework and Accountability
- Supporting a participatory process for an improved legal framework for civil society organizations
- Providing training, technical assistance, and grants to build the capacity of civil society organizations
- Educating citizens about the role of civil society
- Increasing public participation in governance through a nationwide community dialogue process
- Providing gender mainstreaming capacity building
- Disbursing \$5 million in grants per year to support community and civil society initiatives
- Providing support, including resource centers, mentoring, and on-the-job assistance, to civil society organizations through 19 Afghan partner organizations

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Created a multi-stakeholder Task Force on Private Giving, which fostered an active dialogue on how civil society organizations can leverage private funds.
- Lobbied for changes to nine articles of the government's proposed law on Non-Governmental Organizations. The proposed changes are being considered by Afghanistan's Ministry of Justice.
- Facilitated the process by which several I-PACS II partners became signatories to a Memorandum of Understanding between parliament and civil society organizations.
- Expanded the I-PACS II network to include 374 organizations (nearly half of which are run by women or focus on women's issues), seven partner Intermediary Service Organizations, and 12 Civil Society Support Centers.
- Reached 16,548 citizens, 4,531 of whom were women, through 804 community dialogues conducted in 31 provinces by core partner civil society organizations.
- Provided capacity building to 374 Afghan civil society organizations.
- Supported 25 civil society organizations managed by women in 32 provinces.