



Community-based Enterprise Development training for Koochies

Background:

The Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Program (AREDP) endeavours to “improve employment opportunities and income of rural men and women, and substantially that of targeted local enterprises”. This will be achieved by enhancing participation of rural poor population in economic activities, supporting them through business development services, access to finance, improving market linkages, product development and value chains. This support also includes establishing and strengthening enterprise groups, individual entrepreneurs and market driven rural entrepreneurs facilitating their access to market, technical and financial services. Part of the mandate of the Program is also the incubation of new small and medium enterprises.

Community-based Enterprise Development (CED) provides knowledge-based and financial services to community based rural enterprises.

Objective

The training was conducted in Provincial AREDP with the following objectives:



Develop robust and understanding relationship with Koochies and Koochies with the Program



Elaborate key and basic concepts of enterprise development



Identify Roving facilitator among Koochy community

Facts and Figures:

15 members from Koochy community were selected to participate in 6 day tailored training on Enterprise Development. Upon completion of the training Roving Facilitator was selected from the participants.

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Context: Koochies are the most vulnerable and marginalized nomad community In Afghanistan. For decades, they have been subjected to war, insecurity, civil unrest, and years of drought and harsh winters. The destitution had severely disrupted their patterns of land utilization and behavior necessary for mitigating problems in already risk prone life-style. Need to work with Koochies become imperative because their livelihood is associated with livestock and its byproducts enterprises. Keeping in mind the objectives of the program, AREDP decided to design and implement a pilot livelihood and enterprise development project for Koochies.

In order to provide an appropriate and robust support “a person from the Koochy community needs to be identified who might be an Enterprise Facilitator (Roving Facilitator) on Business Development Services (training, consultancy, advisory services, marketing assistance, information technology development and transfer, business management, linkages and promotion) wherever Koochies entrepreneurs migrate”. Before starting with the activities, rapid assessment was conducted in Bagram district of Parwan province, which is considered secured to identify the most urgent needs of Koochies in terms of livelihood and enterprise development. The assessment threw up disturbing results that merits mention:

- Inability to meet demands in terms of quantity and quality of products
- Limited linkages to local and national markets, lack of marketing services and strategies
- Lack of designing skills and poor quality of produced products (design and color scheming of wool products, and quality techniques and technology for milk products) and lack of access to animal husbandry service providers
- Lack of education facility and basic health services due to their pastoral nature

Brief about the training: It is worth mentioning that Koochy community is largely illiterate that prompts an adoption of alternatives to traditional methods of teaching. The trainer used experiential learning methods comprising of visual aids, various case studies, group assignments like boat production for Personal Entrepreneurial Competencies, field visit, group presentation in mapping and picture game, etc. the participants were given the opportunity to learn from their own experiences.



It was first time in 35 years that I touched a pen and now I can write my name. (Lal Din)



The trainer explained difficult concepts through picture and bringing very simple and easy examples from our experiences. (Behram)

Before participating in this training I never kept spare tire and extra fuel. This habit caused me lost and I started losing my regular customers. I began to develop bad reputation in the market. During the training I have learnt to buy spare tire for 1200 Afz and get 5 liters of petrol in my gallon. Now I will only earn and drive my taxi as my business not as hobby. (Nizam ud Din)



Sustainability/Way Forward: The training aimed at contributing to vibrant and financially secured livelihood for economically distressed Koochies who are willing and able to achieve their goals with AREDP support. Community Enterprise Development unit, during the training identified a Roving Facilitator who would be as a mediator between AREDP and Koochy community. Roving Facilitator will support potential or existing Koochies entrepreneurs to start or grow their business and interactively work at the grassroots level to ensure that all concepts and initial interventions are anchored in communal reality.

“Commitment, conviction and optimism in achieving self-reliance through rural enterprise development”