



AREDP Background:

AREDP is geared towards “improving employment opportunities and income of the rural men and women and substantially of targeted local enterprises. AREDP aims to achieve these goals by enhancing participation of rural poor in economic activities; supporting them through business development services, access to finance, improving market linkages, product development and value chains.

Component Objective:

The Community-Based Enterprise Development Unit (CED) facilitates and supports community-led rural enterprise development through organizing rural men and women around Saving Groups (SG), Enterprise Groups (EG) and mobilizing SGs to integrate themselves into village level organizations called Village Savings and Loans Associations.

Facts and Figures:

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Abdul Bashir in his shop

Context: The thirty years of war has affected people’s life in Afghanistan significantly; in particular it has left many people with physical disabilities. Currently, it is estimated that over 850,000 people in Afghanistan suffer from various forms of disabilities and most of them are deprived from access to job or any employment opportunities. Traditionally, people with disabilities have not been exposed even to basic education and many of them become burden for their families and communities. The Afghanistan Rural Enterprise Development Program (AREDP) is working with all segments of communities in rural areas and considers social inclusion integral part of its mandate. Therefore, in 2013 it initiated a pilot program focused on Koochi population and People With Disabilities (PWD). Through this program, AREDP selects potential entrepreneurs with physical disabilities and includes them in the incubation process. The incubation is unique business development process that supports and nurtures newly started entrepreneurs for certain period of time until they are mature.

Result: Abdul Bashir is one of the recipients of the program who has physical disability. Abdul Bashir comes from Big Mohammad Khil village in Bagram district of Parwan and he is the breadwinner of the family comprising of eight people. At the outset, Abdul Bashir had hard time to find a job where he can fit and earn income until he was selected as a member of a Saving Group (SG) in his village. Abdul Bashir was provided with training opportunity and given exposure to business skills and markets. He was also provided with support to establish his own grocery shop. Now Baser is earning 700-1000 Afghani per day. Similar is the story of Baryalay, a koochi from Bagram district, Parwan province. He lost one of his legs in explosion while he was farming on his small land holding, two years ago. Baryalay could not work anymore; he was very frustrated and lost all hope to live. Through the AREDP support, Baryalay was exposed to a number of Enterprise Development training and this was a turning point in his life. Inspired by what he learnt through the training, Baryalay along with his cousin, borrowed money from the SG and from a friend and established shop for vehicle spare parts in Qarabagh village. They bring spare parts from the bordering areas of Pakistan and sell them in Bagram market. Baryalay now makes almost 1500 Afghani per day. His face was shining when he said ‘I make enough to send my children to school and I even bought a motorbike to go home everyday to see my children’.

Way Forward/Sustainability: AREDP has brought hopes in the lives of other 65 PWDs in Afghanistan. The pilot project started in March 2013 with 20 PWDs and after its successful implementation, it was replicated in other target areas of AREDP. AREDP will continue expanding such interventions for sustainable livelihoods of women and women in the rural areas.