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Evaluation of the USAID/Afghanistan Ambassador's Small Grants Program to Support Gender Equality in Afghanistan



September 2011

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by DevTech Systems, Inc., for the Short-Term Technical Assistance & Training Task Order, under Contract No. GEW-I-01-02-00019-00.

Cover Page Photo Caption: A scene outside the entrance of the Shrine of Hazrat Ali, also known as the Blue Mosque, in Mazar-e-Sharif.

Back Page Photo Caption: Detail of a tile from the Blue Mosque in Mazar-e-Sharif.

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ACRONYMS

ACG	Advocacy Coordination Grant (for ASGP)
ACSF	Afghan Civil Society Forum
ADWRO	Assistance to Defend Women Rights Organization
AOTR	Agreement Officer Technical Representative (USAID)
ASGP	Ambassador's Small Grants Program to Support Gender Equality in Afghanistan
ASMED	Afghanistan Small Medium Enterprise Development Program
AWAC	Afghan Women's Advocacy Coalition
AWEC	Afghan Women's Educational Center
AWESUM	Afghan Women's Empowerment through a Sub-grant Umbrella Mechanism
AWN	Afghan Women's Network
CDC	Community Development Council (developed by the NSR)
CDF	Capacity Development Facilitator (for the ASGP)
CDTA	Capacity Development Technical Assistant (for the ASGP)
COP	Chief of Party
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CSSC	Civil Society Support Center (I-PACS)
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
DoWA	Department of Women's Affairs
ECW	Education Center for Women
EPD	Equality for Peace and Democracy
EVAW	Elimination of Violence Against Women
FPO	Field Program Officer
I&GA	Institutional and Gender Audit (for ASGP)
I-PACS	Initiative to Promote Afghan Civil Society II (a USAID-funded program)
ISO	Intermediary Service Organizations
MISPA	Ministry of Women's Affairs Initiative to Support Policy and Advocacy (a USAID-funded program)
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MoWA	Ministry of Women's Affairs
NAPWA	National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan

NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSP	Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation Development National Solidarity Programme
PMIS	Program Management Information System (for ASGP)
QIG	Quick Impact Grant (for ASGP)
RPM	Regional Program Manager (for ASGP)
SDG	Service Delivery Grant (for ASGP)
TSG	Targeted Sustainability Grant (for ASGP)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASSA	Women Activities Social Services Association

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

USAID awarded a Cooperative Agreement to Creative Associates International (CAI) on June 22, 2009 for the Ambassador's Small Grants Program (ASGP) to Support Gender Equality in Afghanistan in the amount of \$26,300,000 in 15 provinces. At the request of U.S. officials in Washington and Kabul, in December 2009, USAID modified the program, reducing the award by \$6 million (to \$20,300,000), shortening the implementation period by eight months to November 1, 2011, and altering the program description. In May of 2010, in response to a CAI proposal, the award ceiling was increased to \$38,912,455 to support the program's expansion to include all regions of the country for ASGP activities.

The purpose of this evaluation, requested by the USAID/Afghanistan Mission, is to assess the effectiveness and design of ASGP's support for women-focused civil society organizations (CSOs), including more established Kabul-based groups and emerging local and village-based grassroots organizations in the provinces. This includes examining whether and how ASGP provided opportunities for gender equality and empowerment and reduced gender-related constraints through capacity-building, the development of plans and strategies, mechanisms and channels for women to access information and to network, and the participation of women in development as implementers and change agents. The Evaluation Team has provided specific recommendations that can contribute to future USAID program designs to promote women's empowerment and gender equality in Afghanistan through support to women-led and women-focused civil society organizations.

The Evaluation Team of two expatriate gender advisors and an Afghan gender specialist conducted extensive key informant interviews and focus group discussions to collect primary data from the targeted beneficiaries. The approach and methodology focused on understanding the perspective of the recipient CSOs and the potential for their sustainability as organizations that deliver services to women and/or advocate on behalf of women. The team applied basic tools of gender and organizational analysis.

Major Findings

ASGP has a high-level goal and eight expected program results. ASGP's goal of improving the status and quality of life of Afghan women by strengthening the capacity of women-focused civil society organizations has only been partially met to date.

At the results level, ASGP has provided institutional capacity development and advocacy support by providing financial and technical assistance, and supporting women-specific activities for CSOs. Larger and more well-established organizations were best able to take advantage of this assistance, and therefore they and their beneficiaries benefitted the most from ASGP grants. This evaluation was an opportunity to conduct, through focus groups and interviews, an analysis of the perceptions of the women's civil society organizations assisted by the program grants of the value and sustainability of ASGP-supported capacity-building and activities.

The original design of ASGP included a component to build the capacity of the Ministry of Women's Affairs. ASGP activities under this component were initially held in abeyance while

awaiting the formal appointment of the Acting Minister. Therefore, the program implemented limited activities with the MoWA that could have influenced policy at the national and sub-national levels.

The Evaluation Team found that there were weaknesses in the grant program design and implementation that undercut ASGP's ability to improve the status, well-being, human and legal rights, and livelihoods of Afghan women and girls. Furthermore, the baseline data to determine impact is not available in sufficient detail to provide for pre- and post-treatment analysis typically used in social science research.

Capacity-building of civil society organizations was a key focus of ASGP. As noted above, in the cases of the larger and more prepared organizations there is evidence of success. However, there were problems in this area, especially for new CSOs. These included:

- For the majority of the smaller grantees, the CSO selection process did not provide for sufficient women's leadership and empowerment.
- ASGP supported many of the same program partners of the Initiative to Promote Afghan Civil Society (I-PACS).
- Many of the grantees were not CSOs as is traditionally defined, but entities with mixed objectives that might include commercial and/or income-generation activities.
- Quick-impact grants did not sufficiently consider sustainability.
- ASGP's strengthening of CSO networks was focused on creating a new network (Afghan Women's Advocacy Coalition) and only engaged to a limited extent with existing CSO networks.

The operating environment in Afghanistan is challenging. ASGP made a laudable attempt to implement its program in all regions of Afghanistan, but might have been more effective had it concentrated on fewer areas and in greater depth in underserved, especially rural, regions. Other programs and donors have focused on Kabul and other urban centers because, as one respondent said, "donors like to work near roads where there is visibility for them."

Within this context, there were several challenges in the implementation process. These included:

- Delays in the approval process affected project success;
- Reimbursement and limitations on payments adversely affected the grantees;
- ASGP procurement policies and procedures were not well understood or well implemented; and
- Program management was affected by high staff turnover and the inability to track individual grants.

Conclusions

Based on the above findings, the evaluators identified a set of conclusions that suggest that while the program contributes to the overall development of a diverse and inclusive civil society in Afghanistan, the way the program is currently being implemented should be reconsidered.

In general, the evaluators found that short-term gains (getting grants out the door) impeded sustainability of the organizations and the ability of the grants to improve the sustainability of the grantee CSOs. In particular, the approach to implementation resulted in a creation of dependency. Based on focus groups with grantees and the data collected, ASGP grantees on the whole were not empowered by the funds they received. There may have been some successes, such as the adoption of new CSO policies, and the creation of new income-generating activities, but the process did not change women's leadership or empowerment.

The lack of sufficient baseline data made an impact evaluation impossible given the time frame and resources dedicated. It may not be practical in an environment such as Afghanistan to collect the necessary data; however, it is possible to put in place a better system for tracking the development of the organizations (CSOs, Departments of Women's Affairs, or DoWAs, and Ministry of Women's Affairs, or MoWA) served by the program.

Recommendations

The ASGP Evaluation Team offers several recommendations that apply not just to this program, but also to current or future USAID-funded programs promoting women's empowerment and/or gender equality programming in Afghanistan.

Despite the problems identified in this evaluation, the Team recommended that USAID continue to use a small grants program model, and continue to integrate gender. The duration of the program should be increased so the program can avoid the tendency to expect quick returns and short-term gains. In addition, future programming should begin with a needs assessment, and then emphasize transparency and accountability.

To transform the lessons learned from this project into future programming design, and implementation, a detailed analysis should be conducted to assess and learn from other small grants programs being implemented in Afghanistan. In addition, it is critical that better baseline data be collected. Such data should be collected before a program begins, and during and after its completion, to enable it to meet the specific needs of the communities it will serve, and to implement "course corrections" during the life of the program.

ASGP took important steps to work in the provinces and expand the assistance beyond the capital. Future programming should concentrate on the community level. Initiatives to strengthen women's participation in society in rural areas could be a key component of a strategic provincial and regional approach to the development of Afghanistan. Funding should be made available to assist women to develop skills and networks, and to benefit local women who have the potential to enter civil service or to run in district and municipal council elections.

Meaningful ways should be found to link USAID programs and to connect ASGP grantees and other USAID program partner CSOs to local government institutions. It is highly recommended that USAID/Afghanistan develop an internal process that would ensure collaboration among programs with similar goals and objectives, but avoid duplication.

Although it poses a significant challenge, the Evaluation Team recommends that USAID could best achieve its goal of empowering women and incorporating women into the development of Afghanistan by supporting the Afghan women's movement and women-led CSOs. Additionally,

monitoring and evaluation should include not just monitoring what grantees do, but monitoring the entire grant decision-making process, and conducting frequent evaluations of all components, including assessing the transparency, gender equity, and accountability of the mechanisms for implementing grants. A small grants program for women-led CSOs that uses an empowerment model to build a women's movement can contribute to improving the lives of women and girls in Afghanistan.

Despite ASGP's shortcomings, the Evaluation Team identified several lessons learned that, if applied to current and future programs, could potentially significantly enhance the role of women in Afghan society and more effectively incorporate them into the country's development.

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Description and Purpose of the ASGP

USAID awarded a Cooperative Agreement to Creative Associates International (CAI) on June 22, 2009 to implement the Ambassador's Small Grants Program (ASGP) to Support Gender Equality in Afghanistan in the amount of \$26,300,000 in 15 provinces.¹

In July 2009, the then-U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan, Karl W. Eikenberry, and Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues Melanne Verveer, announced a program to support Afghan organizations to help women secure opportunities and advocate for themselves. At the request of U.S. officials in Washington and Kabul, in December 2009, the award for ASGP was reduced by \$6 million (to \$20,300,000); the implementation period shortened by eight months to November 1, 2011, and the program description was modified.

In response to a proposal made by CAI, on June 3, 2010, USAID/Afghanistan approved a modification that expanded the geographic areas for ASGP to include the northeastern, eastern, southeastern and southern provinces, bringing the total to all 34 provinces in Afghanistan. This modification also increased the ceiling amount by \$18,612,455 (from \$20,300,000 to \$38,912,455), but did not extend the end date of the program.

The final ASGP overall program description included four components: 1) awarding sub-grants for technical and organizational capacity building of eligible organizations, including equipment, and for the activities of such organizations; 2) assessing organizational and technical capacity needs of eligible organizations and developing responsive interventions; 3) overseeing sub-grant implementation; and 4) developing and implementing a comprehensive communication plan and strategy to generate widespread interest in the sub-grant program among women-focused CSOs, developing and managing an information campaign, building a network of CSOs operating with unity of purpose, and assessing mechanisms for access to information by women.

The ASGP, facing delays, difficulties, and a very short timeline, appeared to have concentrated exclusively on its small grants program. The requirement to develop a communication strategy and information campaign to publicize the grants program and, more importantly, build a network of CSOs to create synergy for advancing women's rights and improving women's lives, was apparently dropped.

¹ The cooperative agreement that was awarded utilized many components or elements of a competition that was held for a program called Afghan Women's Empowerment through a Sub-grant Umbrella Mechanism (AWESUM). Created by the Gender Advisor for USAID/Afghanistan, AWESUM was to support a lead organization's provision of sub-grants for strengthening the capacity and increasing the effectiveness of Afghan local or national nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), community-based organizations, professional associations, and civil society organizations (CSOs) "led by women and working for women." The AWESUM program design included ongoing monitoring and evaluation, and the development of a comprehensive communications plan and information campaign to generate widespread interest in the sub-grant program among women's CSOs and other stakeholders. An organization would award sub-grants, much like a community foundation, to women-led local organizations for technical and organizational capacity-building and for activities addressing women's needs for three years. It would assess organizational and technical capacity needs of eligible organizations, develop responsive interventions, and oversee sub-grant implementation.

ASGP's overall goal is to improve the status and quality of life of Afghan women by strengthening the capacity of women-focused civil society organizations to contribute to the social, economic, and political development of women throughout the country. The program provides institutional capacity development and advocacy support through the provision of financial and technical assistance to support women-specific activities in the following areas:

- Implementing activities that improve the status, safety and well-being, human and legal rights, and livelihoods of Afghan women and girls
- Delivering services that directly address the social, political, and economic needs of Afghan women and girls
- Undertaking efforts to increase the participation of Afghan women in development as implementers, change agents, and beneficiaries
- Creating or strengthening mechanisms and channels by which Afghan women can access information, network, and take advantage of personal and professional development opportunities
- Contributing to building the capacity of the Ministry of Women's Affairs to influence policy at the national and sub-national levels

B. Evaluation Purpose

This evaluation was conducted to review and evaluate the USAID-funded ASGP, implemented by Creative Associates, to strengthen the capacity of women-focused CSOs in supporting and improving the status and quality of life of women in Afghanistan. The evaluation focused on assessing the effectiveness of ASGP's design and performance in achieving its program goal and results. The Evaluation Team studied the successes and weaknesses of ASGP in implementation. This report presents recommendations for potential follow-on program models to promote gender equality and the empowerment of Afghan women and girls.

C. Evaluation Methods

The Evaluation Team used a combination of document review, focus groups, meetings, site visits, interviews, and personal observations to gather information about the ASGP in particular, and the overall environment for CSO development programming in Afghanistan in general. The methodology of using focus groups and interviews was designed to gather qualitative data about the performance of the grants program to supplement statistical data from ASGP reports. These data were used to conduct an analysis of the perceptions of the women's civil society organizations assisted by the program grants and their internal capacity.

The Evaluation Team met with and interviewed dozens of people, including USAID/Afghanistan staff; Creative Associates/ASGP staff; ASGP grantee civil society organizations (CSOs) staff and beneficiaries; non-ASGP grantee CSOs and NGOs; people from other USAID-funded programs; MoWA and DoWA representatives; and others who had special expertise or insight into the international development context in Afghanistan. The Evaluation Team chose grantee organizations and beneficiaries to interview and to participate in focus groups based on input from USAID/Afghanistan staff and on the desire for diversity based on region, sector (advocacy, economic development, family/women's health, education/literacy, social/political), whether completed or ongoing, and in an attempt to have at least 50 percent of the grantee organizations headed by women represented. Grant recipients were contacted using these criteria, except in Bamyan, where the focus groups were organized by USAID staff.

During the focus group discussions, the Evaluation Team asked standardized questions developed from USAID's questions in the Scope of Work about the value of the grants program and how it was run. Focus groups were conducted in English and Dari. Many participants asked that we not attribute what they said, fearful of ASGP staff or the donor learning that they had criticized the program. The Evaluation Team stayed in Kabul City, but also traveled to carry out focus groups in Mazar-e-Sharif, Herat, Parwan, and Bamyan. A trip to Jalalabad was cancelled for safety reasons. No focus group was held in Kabul, but the team did extensive interviews with grantees from Kabul and other parts of Afghanistan, including Jalalabad, and made several site visits to grantees while in Kabul City.

The Evaluation Team strove to be as autonomous as possible in order to have candid discussions and gather accurate information. Except for the focus groups in Bamyan, the Evaluation Team invited focus group participants, held the focus groups in space provided by CSOs or DoWAs, and USAID and ASGP staff were not present. The Evaluation Team members made clear they were independent and were not USAID, ASGP, Creative Associates, or government employees; that they had no authority to give or withhold grant money; and that they did not know whether the ASGP would end, continue, or change.

The Evaluation Team had concerns about the data obtained from the Bamyan focus groups because three USAID employees were present, and the morning group participants were "hand-picked" ASGP success stories. However, information and experiences of Bamyan participants were very similar to those of participants in other provinces, so validated information was included in the Team's findings and conclusions.

An expanded section on the Evaluation Team's methodology can be found in Annex C. Focus group questions are found in Annex D, although not every question was asked in every group, and spontaneous follow-up questions prompted by the group discussion are not included.

2. FINDINGS

A. Program Goals: ASGP Results

ASGP has a high-level goal and eight expected program results. ASGP's goal of improving the status and quality of life of Afghan women by strengthening the capacity of women-focused civil society organizations have only been partially met to date.

At the results level, ASGP has provided institutional capacity development and advocacy support by providing financial and technical assistance to support women-specific activities by CSOs. Larger and more well-established organizations were best able to take advantage of this assistance, and therefore they and their beneficiaries benefitted the most from ASGP grants.

As the detailed findings will show, there were many problems with the grant program design and implementation, which undercut ASGP's ability to improve the status, safety and well-being, human and legal rights, and livelihoods of Afghan women and girls. Furthermore, there are insufficient baseline data to be able to determine if many of the expected results were achieved. For example, it is not possible to measure the effectiveness of the service delivery grants at improving livelihoods or increased access to information or networking.

Problem areas include the CSO selection process, numerous delays in grant approvals and program implementation, high staff turnover, inappropriate policies and procedures, poor communication and a lack of coordination and linkages with other programs, deficiencies in data collection, confusion about grantees' missions, the short duration of grants, and an over-reliance on consultants at the expense of capacity-building.

In addition, due to significant delays in the official confirmation of proposed ministers, including at the Ministry of Women's Affairs, opportunities diminished for ASGP to implement activities to strengthen the capacity of MoWA. This limited the ability of the program to influence policy at the national and sub-national levels.

B. Program Components and Results

This section summarizes the major findings in response to the questions in the statement of work related to the program components and results. These include findings about the ASGP program's work with MoWA, the grants awarded, and extent to which the organizational capacity of the grantees (CSOs) was strengthened. The component activities related to the communication plan and strategy were effectively dropped; as a result, there are no specific findings regarding them.

B. 1. Working with MoWA

ASGP has worked with MoWA in several ways. Representatives of MoWA and the Ambassador's Small Grants Program signed a memorandum of understanding to formalize the partnership between them at an event hosted by the Ministry in December 2010. This partnership supports information-sharing and joint support for Afghan Women's Advocacy Coalition (AWAC) (see Advocacy Coordination Grants below), enhances the Ministry's advocacy efforts, and promoted the launch of public outreach campaigns in support of national action plan goals.

During program implementation, ASGP assessed MoWA's capabilities with an Institutional and Gender Audit (I&GA), suggested new policies on planning and gender mainstreaming, and invited Ministry representatives to participate in trainings that were held during the summer of 2011. Based on interviews with individuals in the Ministry, the Ministry was not satisfied with ASGP efforts to build the institutional capacity, specifically related to the two new policies. One source indicated that she was disappointed that there were no significant changes, and very little was done to update or increase the usefulness of Ministry policies already in place.

ASGP was not the only USAID-funded program to work with MoWA on policy issues. USAID also supported the Ministry of Women's Affairs Initiative to Support Policy and Advocacy, or MISPA.

B. 2. Awarding Sub-Grants: ASGP Program Design

ASGP implemented the program utilizing eight regional teams and six offices located in Kabul City, Herat, Mazar, Jalalbad, Kunduz, and Kandahar. ASGP awarded four types of grants through its Small Grants Program:

- **Quick Impact Grants (QIGs):** QIGs were designed to help start women-led CSOs. These small grants, awarded for an amount of \$10,000 or less, were to help grassroots women's groups organize and perform activities for a short amount of time. QIG recipients received

assistance from ASGP Capacity Development Technical Assistants (CDTAs) with completing applications and budgets for grants activities and registering with the relevant ministry as CSOs². Registering with the Ministry of Justice was the easiest option for small CSOs due to a shorter waiting period and less expensive application fee; larger NGOs typically registered with the Ministry of the Economy. Advocacy, economic development, family health, education/literacy, and social/political activities were typically funded for a short period of time, which became increasingly shorter after the many delays in awarding grants, finally averaging only four months.

Grants for income-generating activities usually involved paying for equipment or supplies to start a livelihood or small business, such as handicrafts (embroidery, painting, and calligraphy), poultry farming, cookie baking, carpet weaving, bee keeping, and other traditional livelihoods for women. Sometimes the funding was used to conduct trainings on public health; for example, how to make the local water supply potable, how to take care of animals in a sanitary way, and personal hygiene. Many QIG recipients reported offering literacy classes, and many of the economic development activities contained a literacy component. Unfortunately, grant activities were of such a short duration that the literacy classes provided were probably not very effective. Since no baseline data was collected, it is virtually impossible to know. Advocacy and social/political grant activities focused on a variety of topics, such as the elimination of domestic violence against women, UN Security Council Resolution 1325, and the interpretation of women's rights under *Shari'a* law or religious texts.

- **Service Delivery Grants (SDGs):** SDGs were grants with higher ceilings, up to \$250,000, and targeted activities of more established CSOs or NGOs. Initially, the focus of these grants was to build the capacity of women-led groups regarding service delivery activities. During program implementation, this focus was expanded to include groups with women-focused service delivery activities. Activities funded by ASGP SDGs usually involved training for women for employment/income generation (handicrafts, television and radio work, animal husbandry, silk production, carpet weaving), or legal rights awareness, combined with literacy and/or computer classes.

The Institutional and Gender Audit (I&GA) was employed to identify organizational weaknesses in areas such as Human Resources, Finances, Fundraising, Data Management, Strategic Planning, Program Management, and Gender Mainstreaming. Consultants were used to write policies (or "manuals") in the areas where the organizations needed help. The I&GA, also used to assess most ACGs and the TSG (see below), yielded the main type of "baseline" data collected by ASGP; virtually all CSOs receiving SDGs were "audited" with the I&GA tool and had new policies written for their organizations. However, because of program delays and difficulties finding appropriate consultants, the audits and reviews took place any time during the grant implementation.

² There are two categories under which organizations may register as non-profits, either under the June 2005 Law on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO Law) regulated by the Ministry of Economy, or the Law on Social Organizations regulated by the Ministry of Justice.

- **Advocacy Coordination Grants (ACGs):** ACGs were provided to groups for advocacy activities and capacity building. Like SDGs, they were given to more established groups and ranged from \$80,000 to \$250,000. ACGs were generally used for public awareness campaigns to promote women's rights and anti-domestic violence messages.

ACG grantees were required to join a new coalition, the Afghan Women Advocacy Coalition (AWAC), as a condition of their grant. AWAC also invited other groups (and some individuals) doing advocacy work to join, including MoWA and some members of Parliament.

Based on interviews conducted, the creation of AWAC was controversial, as some interviewees felt it was trying to displace the Afghan Women's Network (AWN), a group that had served as the national platform for advocacy groups in Afghanistan for 17 years. Also, one interviewee claimed that ASGP management controls AWAC, by not allowing AWAC to have a meeting on its own and/or requiring that any action that a member wants the coalition to start must be done in consultation with management and all AWAC members. Yet, there were instances where ASGP took action without consultation. Based on the interviews, there was a perception of "no Afghan ownership."

Some members of AWAC are also members of AWN, and AWN is a member of AWAC. Interestingly, AWN is considered women-focused, and AWAC is considered to have a broader focus. The Evaluation Team attended a meeting of AWAC at which the main topic was whether AWAC should continue to exist if the ASGP closes. AWAC members voted to continue the coalition.

- **Targeted Sustainability Grant (TSG):** The TSG was designed to provide capacity-building and grants management training for an established local CSO so that the recipient would be ready and able to take over the small grants program from the ASGP when it ends. The sole TSG was awarded to the Afghan Women's Education Center (AWEC). Because of a difficult relationship between ASGP and AWEC, and AWEC's preference for working with I-PACS program and model (see B.3.b below), it is unclear whether AWEC will become the legacy organization for ASGP.

B. 3. Capacity-Building: Selection and Participation

In implementation, capacity-building of the CSOs began with the selection process. Below are several findings related to the selection process, overlap with other programs, and the potential for sustainability of the organizations.

a. CSO Selection Process Did Not Ensure Women's Leadership And Empowerment

During program implementation, potential grantees were invited by ASGP to apply on the basis of referrals from local authorities, including DoWAs, MoWA, and community leaders. While some groups were referred by DoWAs, most focus group participants either heard about ASGP from other groups or did not know why they received a phone call from ASGP staff soliciting their applications. Based on information gathered during focus groups and key informant interviews, the selection process, as implemented, created the perception of favoritism and nepotism among CSOs (both grantees and non-grantees). As far as could be determined from

these interviews, there was no competitive, transparent mechanism for recommending grantees, and no RFP/RFA process of announcing the availability of grants. This created resentment among the groups that were not chosen. This selection process created the appearance of impropriety and conflicts of interest, especially when recipients had personal or professional ties with staff associated with CAI.

ASGP was tasked to work with “women’s organizations” on “women-focused” activities, given the past and present constraints faced by women in Afghanistan. Until June 27, 2011, the number of grants awarded was 1,053 (of those, 47 were on hold at the time of the evaluation). Based on information provided to the evaluators, of 1,029 CSOs given ASGP grants, approximately 58% (593) are women-led groups, and 42% (436) are male-led groups implementing activities with female beneficiaries.

The Evaluation Team did not receive a clear explanation of why so many male-led organizations became ASGP grantees. Based on discussions with USAID, the number of male-led organizations receiving grants was probably linked to the challenges of working in certain geographic areas (a positive aspect of CAI implementation) and the paucity of women-led CSOs. Nevertheless, the Evaluation Team was concerned that little attention was paid to answering this very important question. For example, collecting and reporting on the number of women-led organizations receiving grants was not a feature of the monitoring system. Data were collected that included the name of the director, but ASGP cannot generate a report with this information disaggregated by sex without further work in the system.



Watermelon market in Bamyan

ASGP did not clearly define itself as either a women’s empowerment program or as a gender equality program. In spite of the official name of the program, the Evaluation Team never heard any reference to “gender equality,” gender analyses, or gender at all by ASGP staff or the ASGP grantees. “Gender” does not mean “women,” and those who promote and implement development projects should be clear on what gender is. “Gender” refers to socially constructed roles, behaviors, activities, and attributes that people or society consider appropriate for men and women and what is considered masculine and feminine identity. “Women” and “men” refer to the sexes of people, the biological and physiological characteristics that define female and male human beings. Examining an organization’s gender policy is not the same as gender mainstreaming. ASGP materials include some reference to gender, but the text is focused solely on women. As far as the Evaluation Team could tell, ASGP conducted no gender sensitization.

³ The data export provided to the evaluators did not include a column for the sex of the director (only the name); therefore, it was not possible to determine the percentage.

- Gender is a social construct that refers to relations between and among the sexes, based on their relative roles. It encompasses the economic, political, and socio-cultural attributes, constraints, and opportunities associated with being male or female. As a social construct, gender varies across cultures, is dynamic and open to change over time. Because of the variation in gender across cultures and over time, gender roles should not be assumed but investigated. Note that "gender" is not interchangeable with "women" or "sex."

ASGP aimed to build capacity among its grant recipients, including the female directors of its CSO grantees. However, at the SDG Evaluation Workshop held in July 2011, the Evaluation Team observed that out of 20 participants there were only four women, and only two of those women were directors or led the organizations they were representing. While it is possible that some women could not travel from other regions alone to Kabul without a male relative, such factors must be taken into account when planning trainings, and gender parity, at least, should have been a condition for attendance.

b. ASGP Overlapped with I-PACS

The Evaluation Team found that many CSOs selected to receive ASGP grants are also I-PACS grant recipients, but neither ASGP nor I-PACS had the exact numbers. In October 2010, USAID awarded Counterpart International a 36-month follow-on grant, I-PACS II, which will extend through September 2013. I-PACS includes partnerships with the International Center for Not-for-Profit Law, as well as two key local Afghan NGO partners, the Afghan Civil Society Forum (ACSF), a group of approximately 70 local NGOs, and the Afghan Women's Educational Center (AWEC), ASGP's sole Targeted Sustainability Grant recipient. The objectives of the USAID I-PACS II project (October 2010 - September 2013) are to improve the legal and regulatory infrastructure for non-governmental organizations and assist in the expansion of Afghan civil society with capacity-building and technical administration of small grants to CSOs.

The Evaluation Team found, as did the USAID Gender Assessment Team in 2010, that some of ASGP's grantees are the same CSOs working with other USAID programs, including I-PACS, I-PACS II, Local Governance and Community Development (LGCD), Accelerating Sustainable Agriculture Program (ASAP), Afghanistan Small and Medium Enterprise Development (ASMED), and Incentives Driving Economic Alternatives for the North, East, West (IDEA-NEW).

The I-PACS project uses a "cascade" structure, providing training and technical assistance to ACSF and AWEC in order to strengthen their role as Intermediary Service Organizations (ISOs), which provide advanced training and technical assistance to 12 I-PACS Civil Society Support Centers (CSSCs) that are located throughout the country. Within the 12 CSSCs and seven ISOs, I-PACS supports resource centers that assist individuals or organizations that seek technical assistance in core development skills. These resource centers also provide access to information on international development and free, public Internet access. I-PACS' organizational structure allows it to provide direct and constant support to its ISOs and CSSCs. These key partners' capacity building training and technical assistance are targeting initially 205 local Afghan CSOs (with a planned increase to 400 CSOs). Although the structures and approaches of ASGP and I-PACS are different, the goals of CSO capacity-building through targeted assistance are not.

Key organizations received both ASGP and I-PACS grants, and although grant activities may not have overlapped, both programs claim credit for building the capacity of their respective grantees. The Evaluation Team asked interviewees if there was duplication between ASGP and I-PACS, and received mixed responses. Grantees were reluctant to criticize a situation that had accorded them double support, and preferred to say there was “overlap.” Some stressed their different responsibilities under the two programs' regimens: I-PACS requires its ISOs and CSSCs, after their training, to be responsible for assisting 20 less-established organizations to build their capacity and become sustainable, while ASGP requires only that the groups improve their organizational infrastructure. Also, although I-PACS literature stresses the importance of gender, and states that the program “emphasizes” women-led or women-focused CSOs, I-PACS has no such requirement for its members. We were told by recipients that the I-PACS project's commitment to gender equity “has ebbed and flowed.”

The Evaluation Team questions the wisdom of two CSO capacity-building small grants programs operating in Afghanistan at the same time without clear structures for coordination. Although different programs (with different objectives), many of the same CSOs are grantees of both programs. ASGP was intended as a gender program and I-PACS as civil society development, but involvement by the U.S. Embassy and Washington in ASGP posed significant challenges. ASGP has a grassroots women's group development focus, which I-PACS did not have.

The concern about the two programs operating at the same time is that there has been relatively little communication between the implementers of the two programs or coordination of capacity-building trainings or activities. Although USAID and I-PACs actively tried to encourage links, based on the information gathered from interviewees and the available documentation, the Evaluation Team found no evidence that these efforts bore fruit. The Chief of Party and Country Team Leader for I-PACS went to ASGP several times to attempt to coordinate the two programs, or at least trade information to benefit their shared CSOs, but did not succeed. “There was no mechanism for coordination with ASGP,” she told us, “and the duplication was counter-productive for CSOs.”

c. Program Implementation Created Confusion About Civil Society Strengthening

Strengthening civil society organizations as traditionally defined was a challenge due to the legal framework in Afghanistan. A Presidential Decree in 2005 banned membership-based groups registered under the Law on Social Organizations from receiving foreign donor funding, putting them in the same category as political parties.

A consequence of that law was that many potential grantees, especially for service delivery grants, were entities with mixed objectives that might include commercial and/or income-generating activities. In some countries, these entities might be called social enterprises, although in the Afghan case there appears to be significant confusion. The Evaluation Team found that many of the grantees were more akin to small businesses that would not meet the traditional definition. The selection process during implementation did not directly address this issue or establish procedures to distinguish between a small business operating as a business entity and an entity with income-generating activities operating as a civil society organization.

d. Quick Impact Grants Did Not Build Sustainability

Although grantees were asked to consider the sustainability of their activities, no sustainability was built into QIGs. After the activities were approved, there was monitoring by ASGP in most cases, depending on the region, to see if the grant activities took place, but there was no mentoring, no linking of the products to a supply or value chain to help find markets to sell the products, or help developing a simple business plan. This was in spite of promises made in January 2011 by the Ambassador and other senior Embassy personnel, who agreed to assist ASGP CSOs to find expanded markets for their products (specifically, to connect the silk weavers association with tailors based in Kabul to appeal to a wider audience, and to introduce the bakery they were visiting to Kabul-based specialists in baking techniques and alternative flour types).

QIGs were designed to have periods of performance of four months or less. Such compressed timelines frequently do not yield anticipated results. Particularly when income-generating activities involve growing seasons or raising animals, it is unrealistic to expect sustainability based on such an abbreviated project time frame.

Sometimes the ASGP budget approval process compromised a sub-grantee's ability to succeed, such as the proposal to hatch eggs in an incubator, distribute the chicks to women to raise, to then distribute a portion of the next generation of chicks to other women to raise, and so on. One newly-formed CSO, established by a school teacher for a group of rural women, asked for grant money to buy eggs, an incubator, a generator (because the electricity was erratic in this area), and some chicken feed. The total amount requested was less than \$5,000. During the approval process, ASGP staff removed the generator from the proposal. Because the generator was necessary to generate electricity to keep the incubating eggs at a steady temperature, the project failed (through no fault of the new CSO).

e. Limited Success of Capacity-Building

SDGs and ACGs offered established organizations a better chance to build their capacity in order to sustain their existence and activities in the future. Those grants, which were larger and for a longer period of time, were given to groups that had already developed better institutional capacity and were at a level where they needed less help to continue or expand activities. They were more likely to have or to secure other donors and funding, to have financial systems in place, to understand how to get the information they needed, and to have paid staff with technical skills. SDG and ACG recipients in focus groups were more likely to mention that the capacity-building component of their grants had helped them become sustainable than the grant-funded activities.

ASGP offered its grantees a number of workshops, which some interviewees mentioned as having a positive impact on their CSO's internal structure. The Evaluation Team witnessed two of these workshops, which included some small group work and interaction among grantees, and which were helpful to many grantees. Unfortunately, a review of the agendas of ASGP workshops showed the trainings were always led by either the DCOP or the Advocacy Grants Manager, never the CSO grantees themselves. Developing group facilitation and training skills at these sessions would have been a simple but valuable addition to building the capacity and confidence of ASGP recipients.

f. ASGP Created a New Network but Did Not Strengthen Existing CSO Networks

Despite creating the Afghan Women Advocacy Coalition (AWAC), during implementation ASGP did not succeed at one of its stated purposes to “build a network of CSOs operating with unity of purpose.” ASGP did not link its CSO grantees to other relevant programs, whether USAID-funded or otherwise. This was a missed opportunity to encourage the sustainability of grant recipients after the program ends, and to build collective momentum for the women’s movement in Afghanistan. While support was expressed for involving local DoWAs, those relationships depended entirely on where the CSOs were located. During the short period of time the Evaluation Team was in Afghanistan, the Team discovered several ongoing programs that would have provided natural linkages to grantee organizations and would have added strategic and continuing value to women’s CSOs if connections had been forged as part of the ASGP strategy or design.

C. Methodology and Management

The scope of work for the evaluation identified three main sets of questions to be answered related to the methodology of the program and the overall process of management. These three areas are: the process of awarding grants, activities to build CSO capacity, and progress achieved to date, through the grants program, to strengthen civil society organizations focused on women.

C. I. ASGP Implementation

The findings in this section are focused on areas that were problematic. As outlined above, the implementer has successfully awarded an impressive numbers of grants around the country. However, there were a series of problems (some of which were outside the manageable control of the implementer) that affected implementation.

a. Delays in Approval Process and Program Implementation Affected Project Success

Delays plagued program implementation from the outset. There was a significant delay (July-December 2009) immediately after the program was announced while the Embassy made revisions to the program design. This included allocating \$6 million of the original award for ASGP to a separate grants program managed by the U.S. Embassy’s Political Section. For four months in the next year (June-September 2010), no ASGP grants were approved, virtually halting program implementation, after which ASGP staff received 200 approvals in one day. This was probably caused by an overly-complicated, multi-step approval structure, with not only many steps within ASGP and USAID to gain approval, but the requirement that the U.S. Ambassador had to review and approve every grant personally, regardless of its size. A streamlined grant procedure was approved in December 2010 to allow the USAID contracting office to approve monthly grant rounds once grants were recommended, without waiting for the Ambassador’s approval. Despite the streamlined procedure, delays continued to impede grant approvals and hinder implementation. Grants were on hold again from the middle of December 2010 to April 2011, at least in part because of the departure of the ASGP Deputy Chief of Party at the end of December and the arrival of the new DCOP at the end of March 2011.

Delays in grant approvals and implementation occurred at all levels, from the Embassy and USAID to the grantees. The most recent former DCOP said that ASGP staff shared the blame for some of the delays, with excessive scrutiny and paperwork requirements for even the smallest

grants, security problems, staff without the technical expertise to do their jobs well, opaque and clumsy procedures, grantees that were unfamiliar with donor demands, and infrastructure issues (for example, we were told that the Bank of Kabul had been holding payments for up to two weeks before depositing payments into bank accounts). Because of the delays and the shortened duration of the program, the ASGP only had about 12 months of actual working time when the Evaluation Team arrived, with three months until program closeout. A new COP had just arrived, and the second DCOP left the program and the country the same weekend as the Evaluation Team.

b. Reimbursement and Limitations on Payments Policies Adversely Affected Grantees

The ASGP did not give any advances of grant monies to recipients. The program expected CSOs, including newly-formed groups with no prior experience with grants, to pay for grant activities out of pocket, and then get reimbursed. This policy generated complaints from every focus group CSO representative and recipient interviewee with whom the Evaluation Team spoke. When this policy was mandated, and why it was not changed in the face of the overwhelming negative response from grant recipients, is unclear. The grantees' difficulties and displeasure were regularly communicated to the Regional Project Managers as well as the main ASGP office in Kabul. Of all the ASGP grantees that the Evaluation Team interviewed or heard from in a focus group, none who had received funding from any other donor had ever been required to follow such a policy before, nor did the Evaluation Team hear about a similar practice being used by other donors.

For QIG recipients and beneficiaries, who by design were grassroots groups of women coming together with the goal of improving their lives in some way, the reimbursement policy was especially burdensome. ASGP grants provided equipment and supplies necessary to start activities and deducted these items from the groups' budgets. Any CSO cash expenditure was scrutinized and many forms had to be filled out and processed before they could be reimbursed. Some grantees had to submit forms over and over, up to seven times, before they could receive their meager reimbursement. This approach neither reflected the purpose of the program, nor the reality that most of the beneficiaries of QIGs had little or no income, some were illiterate, and while they had ideas, they were generally not able to front money for expenses. Several Parwan focus group participants said that the ASGP office in Kabul told them to have the shopkeeper come to the ASGP office to get reimbursed for a purchase, or to give ASGP the shopkeeper's bank information so that money could be deposited directly into that account, which is not the usual way of doing business and engendered suspicion.

The reimbursement policy was doubly burdensome on CSOs, given that ASGP also had a policy of not paying for any operational costs. This meant that rent, power, phone, internet, travel, and a percentage of salaries for permanent employees were not covered by ASGP grants. The consequences of these limitations were damaging and widespread. QIG recipients delayed activities for months because they could not afford the initial outlay of money. SDG and ACG recipients reluctantly borrowed funds from other donor-funded projects, or used personal funds. Because ASGP grants did not pay for the percentage of CSOs' space, administrative support, staff time, and operational costs actually used for the grant, other donors were forced to cover the cost of ASGP activities. "We knew that this was bad practice," one recipient told the Evaluation Team, "but we did not have any other option." Another problem was that grantee CSOs signed

ASGP contracts with budgets calculated in dollars, but were paid in Afghan currency (Afghanis, or “Afs”). With inflation and the declining value of Afghanis, long delays for reimbursements caused significant losses for many groups, which ASGP staff did not address.

The Evaluation Team discovered on a surprise site visit that one woman, whose group's grant activity was to provide young women who were not allowed to attend public school with English and computer classes, moved her family into their basement so the classes could be held on the ground floor of her home and in her garden, because the group could not afford to pay rent for a separate space for classes. This was a project that had been held up as one of the most successful by ASGP.

c. ASGP Procurement Policies and Procedures Were Not Well Understood

The ASGP procurement policy seems to have changed over the course of implementation, depending on either where the grant activities were located and/or when the grant was awarded.

The ASGP process of procurement may be singled out as the main administrative process that lent itself to the greatest perception of corruption and impropriety. Every focus group, as well as other grantee interviews, raised this as a critical issue. The ASGP was managed so that grantees would not receive any advance funds, as noted previously, and therefore could not purchase any equipment that was required for the startup of their project activities. Grantees often included specifications for the equipment they wanted in their budgets during the approval process, but often did not necessarily get what they asked for or what was approved. Sometimes they were asked for and provided quotes for equipment but then experienced months-long delays after sending the information to the ASGP before they got the equipment, which was sometimes of inferior quality or broken.



Female students learning computer skills

Grantees were not permitted to purchase equipment in nearby markets or shops in the grantees' regions. The ASGP Financial Officer told the Evaluation Team that it was more cost effective to buy, for example, office equipment and computers for several CSOs at once, and the policy seems to have been put into place to prevent fraud or theft by the grantees. However, in practice, this was often not the case. A Mazar focus group participant explained that the ASGP said it paid \$60 for anti-virus software, but he saw the same software for \$16 in the local market (this person was not asked if it were possible it was pirated software), and others agreed that their grant had been charged more for supplies or equipment than they would have paid had they bought it themselves. This procurement policy seems to have raised suspicions of fraud, or at least the appearance of impropriety, by ASGP.

Given the existence of corruption in Afghanistan, the ASGP grantees were suspicious of opaque procurement procedures implementing a policy that was not accountable to the grant beneficiaries. Focus group participants in Bamyan provided many examples of failures of the procurement process. In one instance, a woman told us that ASGP indicated that she should have photos to document her project activities, so she included a digital camera, including the specifications, in her budget. ASGP purchased a camera for her and deducted \$500 from her budget, but it did not meet her grant specifications, and it did not keep a charge. Upon taking it to the local market for repair, she was told that they couldn't fix it, that it was a cheap camera, and they would not give her 500 Afs (approximately \$20) for it. Another CSO member recounted ASGP buying agricultural equipment that she needed in Kabul, although she told them she could have bought it cheaper in the local market. Then the procurement office told her she had to ship the equipment for 25,000 Afs. The grantee was able to find a local shipper who could bring it to her for 17,000 Afs. The ASGP procurement department penalized her for obtaining the equipment from Kabul, although she would have preferred to get it locally.

ASGP wanted to centrally control the procurement process from its Kabul office (as it did with everything else in a seemingly regional program). But the grantee CSOs' perceptions are that they spent much more than necessary to purchase equipment. It seems that later in the program, an ASGP staff person would go shopping locally with the CSO representative for grant activities equipment instead of buying and sending it from Kabul, which avoided the long delays and other problems noted elsewhere.

d. Program Management Was Affected by Scale of Grant Tracking and Staff Turnover

Grant Tracking. For most of the life of the ASGP, there was no step-by-step tracking of individual grants. Consequently, there was no way to easily find out what had been provided to any particular CSO, (whether they received equipment or if monitoring had been done). Provincial managers were sent to any province that needed help, but were not responsible to any particular region. Data were not disaggregated by sex, so there was no way to determine if women or men were benefiting from the program.

ASGP program staff and administrative staff collected information during the grant implementation period and fed it into the online Program Management Information System (PMIS). The PMIS was developed to record and track the activities and achievements of the program grants. The PMIS is a valuable tool, and the Evaluation Team was told it was put in place primarily so ASGP staff could quickly respond to the many requests for information and so USAID/Afghanistan could easily access program and grant information. However, the PMIS was not meant to be, and was not used as, an internal management tool. It is difficult to show gaps, or comparative values, or to look at specific grants in detail over time with the PMIS.

The first Creative Associates ASGP DCOP for programs left at the end of December 2010. When the new DCOP took over at the end of March 2011, she discovered that in addition to the lack of management tools, there was no baseline data gathered, so there was no way to monitor progress from the start of the program. The new DCOP developed an electronic management tool, a simple Excel spreadsheet that showed milestones for every ASGP grant awarded – contracts signed, procurement paperwork, equipment delivered, etc. The development of this tool

was a positive step for ASGP grants management and human resources management, as previously the staff did not know exactly what they were responsible for at any given time for any particular grant. During this DCOP's tenure, the "burn rate" for the grants program went from \$300,000 per month to \$3,000,000 per month. However, data on grant selection and grant activities are still not disaggregated by sex.

Staff. Staff turnover was a constant problem for ASGP, as it is for many development programs in Afghanistan. Forty-eight ASGP employees, including eight international staff members, either quit or were terminated in less than two years. An additional 45 people left the program because they were always considered to be short-term, mostly project managers whose CSOs' grant activities were completed, translators, and other short-term consultants. In the first year of ASGP, staff responsibilities were not clear or were unrealistic. For example, Provincial Managers were sent to any province where they were needed, but they did not have an ongoing relationship or accountability to a particular CSO or group of grantees. CDTAs did not have the expertise to do CSO capacity-building and, with only two weeks of training, most became Capacity Development Facilitators (CDFs). The country was broken up into regions that had many large grants, and the Regional Managers had difficulty with the work load.

C. 2. Capacity Development

During implementation, ASGP utilized two types of tools for building the capacity of grantees: i) the I&GA tool to identify institutional weaknesses within organizations and ii) trainings on various issues (such as on working with the media on public awareness campaigns). Initially, the trainings were conducted by contracted consultants as part of the grant. It was not until later in the program that ASGP sponsored directly trainings or workshops.

At the beginning of the program, ASGP Capacity Development Technical Assistants (CDTAs), and later Capacity Development Facilitators (CDFs, most of whom were formerly CDTAs and rehired as CDFs) administered the I&GA tool, called a "self-assessment tool" in ASGP's revised Performance Management Plan (April 2010), to identify institutional weaknesses. However, it was acknowledged that CDFs did not have enough expertise for this job, so ASGP later relied on consultants to conduct these assessments. While the assessments may have been valuable, neither the CDFs nor the consultants taught the organizations how to use them to build their capacity to self-assess in the future. Outside consultants, a few chosen by the organizations themselves but most sent by ASGP headquarters without input from grant recipients, wrote "manuals" (also called "policies" by focus group participants) for the areas that needed strengthening, based on the I&GA findings. Early in the program, ASGP allowed at least some of its grantees to find their own consultants, but because of the difficulty of finding qualified consultants in some areas, it later chose two consulting firms that their grantees were to call for capacity-building consulting. The Evaluation Team was not able to talk to anyone in a management position at these firms.

The Evaluation Team heard of only one instance where a consultant taught the SDG recipient CSO staff how to use the capacity-building manual, and none taught organization staff how to write or update their own policies. A review of several of these manuals by the Evaluation Team showed that at least some of them were generic cut-and-paste policies, imported from U.S. organizations and inappropriate for an Afghan context, and written in English rather than the local language. However, some CSOs expressed appreciation for these policies; for example, the

deputy director of a CSO based in Kabul with activities in Bamyan complimented the gender consultant and was very happy with their new gender policy.

D. Program Design and Implementation Approach: Lessons Learned

This section responds to the evaluation questions on the lessons learned, and which interventions have been more or less effective. Specific recommendations are included in Section 4.

D.1. Lessons Learned

The scope of work includes several higher-level questions related to the validity of the program's development hypothesis and the extent to which ASGP met Afghan women's needs.

As detailed in the conclusions and recommendations, the quality of baseline data is limited, and as such it was not possible to fully test the validity of the development hypothesis. However, the working timeframe of the whole program was only two years, which is too short to have much effect on the development of the civil society sector in Afghanistan. There is little evidence to suggest that the majority of the grants will improve the probability of success for the grantee's projects.

There are several findings related to the strengths and weaknesses of the ASGP approach. They are outlined in the above section and summarized here:

Strengths

The ASGP approach, as implemented, had the following strengths:

- The referral model for grants was most effective when grants were given to established organizations. Of the four types of grants, the SDGs and ACGs offered established organizations a better chance for building their capacity in order to sustain their existence and activities in the future. For example, SDG and ACG recipients in focus groups were more likely to mention the capacity-building component of their grants helped them become sustainable than the grant-funded activities. They were also more likely to have or get other donor funding, to have financial systems in place, to understand how to get the information they needed, and to have paid staff with technical skills.
- The I&GA, although not administered to the best capacity-building effect, was still an effective tool to identify the weaknesses of the administrative infrastructure of CSO grantees. No one questioned or disagreed with the results of this audit tool, and some focus group participants were grateful for information it provided.
- Small grants to CSOs targeting areas that need improving and for advocacy or income-generation activities are effective in building the capacity of such organizations.

Weaknesses

The ASGP approach and staffing had several weaknesses that impeded the higher-level impact goal:

- The program staff and consultants could only provide technical assistance related to organizational development. They did not have sufficient skills to review the sustainability and probability of success of the service delivery and economic development grants. Staff also lacked expertise to review budgets for proposed activities,

which in hindsight is understandable. Each CSO application and budget was like a small business plan, requiring some business start-up acumen.

- The reliance on consultants prevented CSOs from learning to assess their own organizations and write their own policies. The second DCOP called the consultancy model “a disaster,” and fired the person in charge of CSO capacity-building on her first day at ASGP.
- The change in focus of grants being awarded that targeted women-led CSOs to many grants being awarded to male-led entities that offered “women-focused” activities, such as skills trainings for existing businesses, diminished opportunities to strengthen women leaders.⁴
- The opaque referral model depended on the contacts of a single person and was contingent on “who you know” rather than an objective assessment of capability and probability of success.

D.2. Successful Interventions

The most successful projects funded by ASGP were:

- Capacity-building included in SDGs and ACGs, in the form of an institutional audit used to identify organizational weaknesses in areas such as Human Resources, Finances, Fundraising, Data Management, Strategic Planning, Program Management, and Gender Mainstreaming, and ASGP trainings on working with the media and strategic planning
- Advocacy campaigns and other activities that built on previous work and experience of established CSOs
- The establishment and registration of CSOs for some income-generating training for poor, illiterate, or widowed women. Although not designed for sustainability, some women simply needed an opportunity to take an idea from its origin to realization, which empowered them to understand that it was possible, even if the ASGP activity is not sustainable in the long term.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The Evaluation Team identified four main issues in its conclusions.

A. Short-Term Gains

The Evaluation Team found that the ASGP strengthened the organizational capacity of some recipient women’s CSOs to use transparent systems of financial accountability, report on programs, and perform development activities (such as, income-generation, health education, literacy classes, and rights awareness). However, the short duration of the grants and the lack of ongoing mentoring made real improvements to the capacity of CSO grantees unlikely, except for a few organizations that were already at a level to take advantage of the resources that ASGP provided.

⁴ This change was most likely linked to the expansion of activities into new regions (many of which were insecure and for which providing grants to women-led organizations was a challenge), and the scale of the program (the number of grants to be awarded during a very short period of time after USAID approved CAI's proposal to expand the program).

B. Creation of a Dependency Model

Although the original idea of this program was to empower women in Afghanistan, the implementation followed a disturbing model that was disempowering and created dependency. The most egregious example of this was the ubiquitous use of consultants.

The ASGP/Creative Associates management staff must accept responsibility for the disempowering way this program was implemented. To the extent that the Evaluation Team could assess, grantee CSOs were not consulted or included in any decision-making from the time they decided to apply for a grant. During implementation in the field, new groups received help during the application process, but a majority of focus group participants complained that their applications were changed so many times that they couldn't remember what they had originally proposed by the time they received their approvals. Some told the focus group about the beginning of the grant process and being asked to come up with an idea for activities and a budget on the spot at the information session, and then of experiencing such long delays they could not remember what they had applied for. Several focus group participants told of attempts to explain and revise their modified proposals, only to be told by ASGP staff that "you don't know what you're doing" and "we know better than you." At least three CSO grantees interviewed by the Evaluation Team stated "we were humiliated by ASGP staff" when they sought to discuss their grant difficulties with the Kabul office.

Moreover, ASGP grantees were not really in charge of their budgets throughout the grant cycle, another example of a disempowering practice which undermined capacity-building. Service Delivery and Advocacy Coordination grants included line items for consultants' fees, but those services were paid for directly by the financial department of ASGP out of the CSOs' budgets. The CSOs never actually controlled grant money for consultants (or for equipment – see Procurement). It was simply deducted from their budget line items by ASGP financial staff after the proper paperwork was submitted and approved.

C. Lack of Baseline Data

Because of the lack of baseline and other data, the evaluators received no information on whether ASGP strengthened organizational, administrative, and functional capacities of recipient organizations to conduct needs assessments, design responsive interventions, monitor their activities, or write informative reports on their projects. Groups wrote monthly reports on their activities, for example, but because their activities took place over longer periods of time, it was difficult to show what they accomplished. Generally, CSOs effectively implemented their grant activities, given the time and financial constraints of the program. Based on the Evaluation Team's findings, the more established CSOs that received SDGs or ACGs probably knew how to administer their organizations and manage their program activities already, but they were able to update and improve their skills, and therefore improve their chances for effectiveness and sustainability, because of the training, information, and experience they obtained from this program.

D. Networking

Aside from AWAC, ASGP did not encourage or facilitate networking among recipient organizations, and there was no emphasis on increased access to information, improved communications, or knowledge management capacity within and between recipient organizations. Communications between grantees and ASGP were poor, and there were mixed

findings about ASGP's communication style, so it is unlikely that the program was able to model a responsive or participatory exchange of ideas for its grantees.

The creation of AWAC, although controversial, has probably improved the ability of civil society organizations to advocate for women. By allowing more and varied groups to participate in advocacy than were involved with AWN, a new coalition will invent and promote new ways to advance the official Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan agenda for improvements in women's status.

Unfortunately, no mechanism existed for grant recipients to come together to learn from the others' experiences, either by geographical area or by type of grant or activity. There were several media-related grantee organizations (radio stations, television station, Internet journalism), many groups training women on various aspects of animal husbandry (poultry, beekeeping, fishery, dairy products), small farming (vegetables, fruit trees, saffron, creating a nursery), and others teaching women handicrafts (traditional embroidery, calligraphy, macramé, wood art, carpet weaving, jewelry-making). Encouraging these grantees and beneficiaries to share information about markets, wholesale purchase of supplies, and competitors, as well as providing them a way to easily communicate would have been an investment in taking care of themselves. The only time ASGP grantees interacted during the program was when they were summoned to workshops, although some groups did take advantage of networking opportunities at those times.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

The ASGP Evaluation Team offers the following recommendations to USAID, based on findings from in-country focus groups, meetings, site visits, interviews, and personal observations of the ASGP. The recommendations apply to not just this program (should its timeline be extended), but also to other current or future programs promoting women's empowerment and/or gender equality programming in Afghanistan. These suggestions are made within the context of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy, the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA), the current U.S. Foreign Assistance Framework Objective No. 306-04 to "Provide Program Support for Programs to Achieve Strategic Development Objectives", and the U.S. Foreign Assistance For Afghanistan Post Performance Management Plan-2011-2015, Assistance Objective 1: Improved Performance and Accountability of Governance, IR 1.4: Increased development of politically active civil society.

Recommendation 1: Continue Using the Small Grants Program Model

Continue to provide small grants in Afghanistan. Small grants are more easily monitored, easier for new CSOs to handle, and more easily absorbed than large, multimillion-dollar awards. As organizations become better able to budget and implement activities, additional grants can easily be awarded. Reporting on discrete activities expending small amounts of money is also easier, as is measuring outputs. However, the way small grants programs are implemented matters, and with more emphasis on personal involvement and development of the recipients the type of mechanism utilized should be carefully considered. There are many successful and culturally-appropriate NGO models of small grants programs operating in Afghanistan that could be used as models for a women's empowerment program, some with the same recipients as USAID programs. USAID should provide funds to existing NGO programs that work well or create

complementary programs that include women's empowerment and/or gender mainstreaming to expand and link with successful programming (for example, programs run by the Aga Khan Development Network, CARE, the CIDA-funded Mennonite Economic Development Associates, or Action Aid Afghanistan).

When less money is available for large contractors and expensive programs, a small grants model could be the most effective use of USAID assistance in Afghanistan. As the USAID FPO in Mazar said of the flood of multimillion-dollar projects into the country, there has been "too much money spent on overhead for no return on investment." When done efficiently, "small aid" works. Assistance programs should include more rigorous mentoring and advisory services for women-focused grants projects, in addition to training and workshops. Programs should include



A NAPAWA diagram on the wall at the DoWA office in Parwan

components that focus on increasing women's skills in service delivery, constituency building, networking, and community outreach. Economic empowerment programs should target women's income-generating activities, but be wary of forcing women into labor where it is actually men (bosses, husbands, relatives) who benefit the most. The intended objective should be to support women-led businesses, with women in decision-making positions and engaged effectively in the supply chain, so the program must use a holistic approach (for example, women knowing how to

repair their equipment, and understanding where the markets are and how to access them, obtaining current pricing information, and buying their own supplies).

Recommendation 2: Continue Gender Integration

USAID/Afghanistan should continue ensuring that gender integration is carried out in all of its programs and that USAID/Afghanistan supports at least one women's empowerment program with its own funding. Gender integration includes a gender analysis of an organization or process, asking how structures and decisions affect men and women differently, and the attempt to include women in not just the decisions that are made, but also how decision-making is done, in structures and processes usually controlled by men. A women's empowerment project specifically targets women as beneficiaries in a male-dominated context in order to overcome discrimination or oppression of women and girls. Given the status of women and the barriers to equality in all regions of Afghanistan, both types of programs are appropriate and needed. It is important that USAID fund a stand-alone program on women's empowerment in Afghanistan. Donors and program staff generally do not understand how to conduct gender integration, with women's needs given short shrift. Women face so many obstacles that men do not, solely because of their sex. Development goals for Afghanistan are doubly difficult to meet for women, because they are at such a disadvantage compared to men in Afghan society.

Additional attention is needed to make any improvement in women's lives. There is a large body of evidence that demonstrates money spent on women's empowerment programs is more effective and offers a much greater value for donors than traditional male-focused development programs. To accomplish this, an empowerment model that applies participatory development techniques and activities should be used. A participatory model helps build women's leadership and competence and by definition includes women in decision-making positions in the political, economic, legal, educational, and social spheres of Afghan society.

For all programs the results framework should include gender-specific and/or gender-inclusive language. Indicators should be designed to measure any differential effect on women and girls compared to men and boys. Where culturally appropriate, indicators measuring program impacts at the household level should be disaggregated by carefully defined male-headed and female-headed households. For programs that support livelihoods or small businesses, individual and business-level indicators should be disaggregated to provide comparative data for both women and men as individuals and as owners or managers of businesses.

Recommendation 3: Use Lessons Learned from Other Programs

USAID is able to research lessons learned and what works and does not work well for women's empowerment and gender equality programs in Afghanistan and other countries.

USAID/Afghanistan should compare program models, good practices, and results across departments and sectors to find out what works best, and then create the conditions under which similar programs will succeed. Such a comparison would give USAID staff a better idea what goes into achieving positive outcomes on the ground to improve program oversight, avoid "reinventing the wheel" and duplication of unsuccessful efforts, and ultimately lead to better program implementation. This will help to meet more objectives, and achieve goals set out by U.S and Afghan governments for development and governance.

In addition to programmatic lessons learned, the Evaluation Team recommends taking greater advantage of new technology used by other programs to facilitate program management and administration. For example, an online approval system could reduce wasted time, delays, and paper. Moreover, Skype could be used to keep in closer communication, where possible. These are examples of good practices used in other USAID programs that could be adopted in Afghanistan.

Recommendation 4: Focus on the Community Level

USAID should focus women's empowerment programming at the community level, with grant activity funds and services channeled into villages and districts rather than urban centers.

Initiatives to strengthen women's participation in rural society could be a key component in a strategic provincial and regional approach to the development of Afghanistan. Funding should be made available to assist women to develop skills and networks, and benefit local women who have the potential to enter civil service or run in district and municipal council elections. While the activities of the MoWA may be valuable, there is a huge difference between the attitudes of people in urban and rural areas about women's abilities and rights.

USAID should focus on fewer areas and create more depth of focus in underserved regions. Although ASGP made a laudable attempt to implement programs throughout Afghanistan, the Evaluation Team observed that this effort had less to do with the needs of service delivery and

more to do with the goal of covering all regions. Activities did not seem to be linked to need, since a large percentage of the grants were only in the three urban areas of Herat, Mazar and Kabul (see Annex G, which provides the number and value of ASGP grants broken down by province). This is also true for other programs and donors. As one respondent said, “donors like to work near roads where there is visibility for them.” While it is important to look at equitable distribution across different provinces, security and sustainability in insecure provinces must also be considered. Projects in places like Zabul or Uruzgan may not work in the long run because of security concerns and a lack of local women’s organizing capacity. Also, there is widespread sentiment in Afghan civil society that “badly behaved” provinces have been rewarded with more aid, while secure provinces are “punished” by being ignored. For instance, Daikundi is a relatively safe, Taliban-free province. But because it has no PRT and no insurgency activity, there is no aid and conditions for women are quite severe.

For sustainable change, programs must work at both the city and community levels, but implementing programs in rural and remote areas is difficult and expensive, and is often ignored, delayed, or short changed. Communications and access to basic services can be difficult. The program must hire either local people who may need extensive training, or find staff members willing to relocate; the former is preferable, as communities may not trust “outsiders,” but finding willing candidates may be time-consuming. Also, security may be a problem. Rural communities are often conservative and require long-term relationships rather than short-term projects to show results. However, money tends to go farther in more isolated areas, and many are hungry for the improvement the people know is happening around them. True development cannot happen only in the cities. The Evaluation Team recommends that a needs assessment be conducted to determine in which regions to provide funding. If USAID were to fund existing women-led CSOs and programs in under-served regions they would not need to “reinvent the wheel” and could create leverage based on the successes of longer-term local projects already operating (see Recommendation 5 below).

Recommendation 5: Promote Linkages with Other Programs and Avoid Duplication

Meaningful ways should be found to connect ASGP grantees and other USAID program partner CSOs to local government institutions. USAID/Afghanistan needs to develop an internal process that would ensure collaboration among programs with similar goals and objectives, and to avoid duplication. The Evaluation Team encountered several similar USAID-funded programs that did not know about each other. Given the fiscal realities of program cuts and smaller budgets, it makes sense to ensure more efficient, effective, and collaborative programming.

Creating linkages among programs and between grantees and local government institutions would be a strategic way for women to increase confidence, develop networks, share information, and build on the work their activities and other programs have done. This would create momentum for change, increase the capacity of organizations and individuals, and improve the sustainability of USAID programs, at very little cost.

One promising possibility is for USAID program grant recipients to partner with the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development National Solidarity Programme (NSP). The NSP was created to develop the ability of Afghan communities to identify, plan, manage and monitor their

development projects through voluntary, elected Community Development Councils (CDCs). The NSP works at the local level to enhance the competence of CDC members in areas such as financial management, procurement, technical skills, and transparency. CDCs' attempt to include women and mainstream their concerns is a ready-made opportunity for rural ASGP program beneficiaries. Building the capacity of women in CDCs could greatly contribute to the goal of gender equality in rural areas. Women in CDCs could be part of the decision-making regarding public needs and infrastructure – irrigation, wells, roads, schools – and this could strengthen women's political and public participation in their communities, as well as alter men's perceptions and interactions with them. In the next phase of the NSP, CDCs will also focus on peace-building and conflict resolution, areas where women need to play a central role. Such strategic program development by USAID would clearly maximize its donor investment and should produce positive results in women's empowerment in rural areas.

Donors need to coordinate their development aid programs to improve connections and leverage skills training. The Evaluation Team was told that there is a Gender Donor Coordination Group, but heard from various sources that it is not active or effective. The Coordinator of this Group (UNWomen) would not meet with the Evaluation Team and a representative stated that she had no knowledge of the Ambassador's Small Grants Program. A formal or informal Afghanistan-wide platform for sharing what donors are doing and how programs might effectively build on each other, could be extremely effective in creating linkages and building momentum to create sustainable change in women's lives.

Recommendation 6: Work to Strengthen the Women's Movement in Afghanistan

Based on the Evaluation Team's research, meetings and, in some cases, personal relationships with many of the key women, youth, CSOs, NGOs, and "first ladies" of the Afghan women's movement, the Team recommends that USAID could best achieve its goal of empowering women and incorporating women into the development of Afghanistan by supporting the Afghan women's movement. Specifically, USAID support should provide a strategic and long-term plan to support women's organizations working for women's equality in Afghanistan. Rather than try to figure out what women in Afghanistan need and give it to them, a better approach is to strengthen the women's movement and let it decide what it needs and how to obtain it.

This is not to say that USAID should take on the role of "queen-making" by choosing individuals or organizations that should be promoted and those that should not. The women's movement in Afghanistan, like elsewhere, is fractured and contains rivalries that donors may exacerbate with funding. The creation by ASGP of the AWAC coalition had the unintended consequence of increasing existing tensions among advocacy groups. Such coalitions should develop organically from the local women's movement. The women's movement in Afghanistan should be strengthened, with consistent support for the resources it needs. For example, USAID could offer the space and expertise for team-building and networking. By helping to find ways to build bridges and cooperation between the older generation of women (and their allies) who struggled for women's rights during the Taliban years, and the young, educated feminists currently graduating from university, USAID would be helping the women's movement grow in an "organic" Afghan way. Also, USAID could turn its attention to building the capacity of young feminist organizations now active in Afghanistan, which work with both women and men. By bringing together activists from the cities and rural areas who struggle in their conservative districts, and designing programs that provide activist women with the opportunity to share their

strategies and discuss priority activities with other activists in similar situations from other countries, USAID could make an enormous contribution to strengthening an Afghan women's movement without leaving itself open to charges of importing Western values.

Recommendation 7: Use a Participatory Model for Monitoring and Evaluation

Monitoring and evaluation of a small grants program should be incorporated into the program from the beginning, and carried out in a participatory manner throughout the life of the program. This means not just monitoring what the grantees do, but monitoring the entire grant process, and conducting frequent evaluations of all components, including assessing the transparency and accountability of the entity implementing the grant. For any program such as the ASGP, this would mean that program staff throughout Afghanistan, as well as the grantee CSOs and beneficiaries, would be encouraged to offer input into the design, implementation, and periodic evaluations of the project.

The participatory approach to monitoring and evaluation, like all methodologies, has its pros and cons, but the benefits can far outweigh the difficulties. For example, mobilizing larger on-the-ground evaluation teams every year, made up of program participants and staff, would require a higher budget than sending out one small two-person team at the end, but would almost certainly result in a higher participant response rate and produce specific, targeted program recommendations that could be implemented to improve the program while it was in progress. This would make the project more effective, and create local ownership of the project and results. In other words, it would be both effective and empowering.

Members of the Evaluation Team have found that in nearly all cases in which an ongoing participatory method for monitoring and evaluation has been used, participant feedback has been very positive. For example, a former participant in a project in Armenia said in an interview, "This collaboration . . . provided added support, efficient responses to all our [local staff's] questions, and our comfort level." She added that being an active participant reduced the feeling of a hierarchy and increased the full understanding and respect of other partner organizations. She also cited the importance, especially in a post-Soviet setting, of considering other people as equal and able to actually contribute to the program and to provide useful feedback. This kind of capacity-building is needed in development programs in Afghanistan.

Recommendation 8: Ensure Baseline Data Collection

All USAID programs, especially capacity-building programs, should begin with the collection of baseline data in order to assess conditions for women and men in each community covered by the program. It is also important to document circumstances that limit women's participation (for example, their inability to travel to certain places or venues or times, or their extra duties in the private sphere), so that these factors are taken into account when designing the program and activities. Programs should be designed to accommodate women's varied conditions across provinces and communities, and be tailored accordingly. Baseline data should be collected whenever possible before a program begins, during, and after its completion, to enable a program to meet the specific needs of the communities it will serve, and to implement "course corrections" during the life of the program. This increases the likelihood of a program achieving its objectives.

Recommendation 9: Increase Scope and Duration of Funding

Women's empowerment programs that use a small grant CSO capacity-building model should provide financial support for the grantee CSOs' operational costs, not just project or activities funding. Project funding should be provided for the longest term possible, at least three years, in order for the CSO to have enough experience to actually build capacity over the long term.

Recommendation 10: Emphasize Transparency and Accountability

There is much concern within Afghanistan and internationally about the lack of transparency and accountability of international donors' practices. USAID/Afghanistan programs should incorporate transparency and accountability in all their policies and procedures. In addition to having strong conflict-of-interest and sexual harassment policies in place, USAID-funded small grant programs should use a participatory model, and empower grantees with information and decision-making to encourage responsibility and local ownership.

Recommendation 11: Conduct a Needs Assessment to Find Out What Works First

Prior to designing a women's empowerment program, USAID/Afghanistan should spend the time and money to do a needs assessment in the geographical areas that the program will cover, using a participatory method of information-gathering. Many interviewees complained that ASGP did not conduct a needs assessment before beginning the program, and such an assessment would be the obvious way to engage local participation and develop local "ownership" of a small grants program before committing precious resources to particular activities or geographical areas.

With data from the assessment demonstrating specific problems and development needs, research should be conducted on which USAID and non-USAID programs (either in Afghanistan or elsewhere) have addressed these needs, how it was done, whether it was successful, and under what conditions a similar program would be most likely to succeed. Only then should a program be designed and implemented.

ANNEX A: SCOPE OF WORK

Evaluation of the Ambassador's Small Grants Program (ASGP) to Support Gender Equality in Afghanistan

INTRODUCTION

USAID awarded a Cooperative Agreement to Creative Associates on June 22, 2009 to support the ASGP program in the amount of \$26,300,000 in 15 provinces. In July 2009, the United States Ambassador to Afghanistan, Karl W. Eikenberry, and Melanne Verwee, Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women's Issues, announced the program to support Afghan organizations to help women secure opportunities and advocate for themselves. A subsequent USAID/Afghanistan modification on June 3, 2010 approved 1) geographic expansion of the program to the Northeastern, Eastern, Southeastern and Southern provinces, bringing the total to all 34 provinces; and, 2) increase of the ceiling amount by \$ 18,612,455 (from \$20,300,000⁵ to \$38,912,455).

ASGP's overall **goal** is *to improve the status and quality of life of Afghan women by strengthening the capacity of women-focused civil society organizations (CSOs) to contribute to the social, economic, and political development of women throughout the country.* The ASGP program provides institutional capacity development and advocacy support to women-focused, women-led Afghan Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) via grants in order to advance gender equality and, specifically, help women secure opportunities and advocate for themselves. The ASGP contributes directly to the U.S. Foreign Assistance Framework Objective No. 306-04, "Provide Program Support for Programs to Achieve Strategic Development Objectives." ASGP also directly contributes to the U.S. Foreign Assistance for Afghanistan Post Performance Management Plan-2011-2015, Assistance Objective 1: Improved Performance and Accountability of Governance, IR 1.4: Increased development of politically active civil society. This activity also contributes to the FY08, FY09, and FY 2010 U.S. Congressional earmark to support Afghan women and girls and contributes to the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan's (GIROA) Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA).

The ASGP program will end on November 1, 2011. In accordance with USAID's new evaluation policy, at least one independent performance evaluation for each major program should be carried out by external experts. In summer 2010, USAID contracted a broader 2010 Gender Impact Assessment. This assessment looked at a range of USAID programs contributing to gender equality, one of which was ASGP.

⁵ USAID made Modification #1 on December 22, 2009 reducing the award by \$6,000,000 to \$20,300,000, reducing the implementation period by 8 months to November 1, 2011, and replacing the program description. The Embassy decided that the \$6 million out of the cooperative agreement would be allocated to the Embassy political section (POL) for a small grant program to manage \$2 million per year over the life of the program. This was launched as the U.S. Embassy Kabul Afghan Women's Empowerment (AWE) Grants Program.

BACKGROUND CONTEXT

Nearly a decade after the removal of the Taliban from power, Afghan girls and women are starting to recover from the severe restrictions and mistreatment they endured under that regime. Now living under a Constitution that ensures their access to education, employment, and legal rights, women have an official framework to support their personal and professional development. With the exception of constitutionally mandated quotas for women's representation in Parliament, however, all indicators of women's status reveal that enforcement of constitutional rights lags woefully behind enactment. A combination of poverty and deprivation, ill health, illiteracy, discriminatory customary laws, harmful traditional practices, physical and emotional abuse, and overall insecurity keep women at the bottom of Afghan society. With forced and early marriage, high fertility, the second highest maternal mortality rate in the world, and a life expectancy of just 44, Afghan women have little opportunity to develop themselves or participate in the development of their country.

The international community is heavily engaged in supporting capacity building within the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) to improve its ability to address the many needs of its largely impoverished nation. Governmental capacity is so weak and the challenges of development so great, however, that civil society organizations (CSOs) will inevitably be needed to help the government meet the short- and long-term needs of the Afghan people. In other parts of the world, government agencies have found that partnering with CSOs is often an effective means of delivering essential services to less advantaged citizens, carrying out needed social and economic programs, and achieving development goals. Citizens come to rely on CSOs as well to bring information about critical educational, political, economic, health, and environmental issues and to advocate on behalf of communities to meet local needs. Like the government, CSOs in Afghanistan must also strengthen their ability to manage, implement, communicate, and advocate if they are to play a greater role as partners in development.

As the Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIROA) and donors make decisions about development priorities, the allocation of resources, and which populations to serve first, CSOs able to advocate effectively for their constituents will be able to influence those decisions. Moreover, because development resources available to CSOs are likely to be limited, CSOs able to compete successfully for funds by writing compelling proposals, delivering persuasive arguments and presentations, and tapping into established donor networks will likely carry the day. To ensure that issues facing women are sufficiently addressed—and for development in general to be successful and sustainable—women must play an active role as both change agents and beneficiaries.

Within women-focused civil society organizations, the technical and institutional maturity level is poor and the needs are great. Many CSOs do not even recognize what their capacity building needs are. In general, women-focused CSOs need to improve their capacity to assess needs, design responsive interventions, develop, manage and implement/deliver programs, manage operations, finances and people, build alliances and network, make decisions, prioritize, plan strategically, monitor and evaluate performance against meaningful indicators, communicate effectively, conduct outreach and advocacy, and mobilize resources—in addition to building capacity in the technical sectors in which they wish to work. Women-focused CSOs in

Afghanistan vary widely in terms of sophistication, competence and capacity to serve women and girls and to serve as advocates for change. Afghanistan represents a challenging environment for those CSOs working to provide services to women or to support their empowerment, particularly in rural areas. Deteriorating security poses an ongoing concern. Moreover, women-focused CSOs that want to influence policy and decision-making processes still have much to learn before they become consistently effective organizations, since most lack the vision about how to influence policy. The vast majority of indigenous CSOs are limited in their ability to comprehend the political decision-making processes and do not know how to formulate a timely and opportune advocacy strategy capable of achieving its objective.

II. ASGP PROGRAM GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

USG assistance is consistent with the GIROA Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and the National Action Plan for Women (NAPWA), which is based on ANDS goals. The ANDS has been approved by all of the major donors as a guiding framework for the provision of assistance to the country. By working to align assistance with the ANDS and NAPWA frameworks, the U.S. and other donors are helping to put Afghans in charge of their own development. Consistent with ANDS and NAPWA, USAID's activities are also moving towards "Afghanization" (i.e., Afghan-led development) as a key component of all USG assistance in Afghanistan. Through Afghanization, USAID ensures preference for Afghan organizations who can properly manage USG funds while building their capacity at the same time.

ASGP PURPOSE: The purpose of ASGP is to increase the effectiveness of women-focused organizations, through the provision of financial and technical assistance, to support women-specific activities in the following areas:

1. Implementing activities that improve the status, safety and well being, human and legal rights, and livelihoods of Afghan women and girls;
2. Delivering services that directly address the social, political, and economic needs of Afghan women and girls;
3. Undertaking efforts to increase the participation of Afghan women in development as implementers, change agents and beneficiaries; and
4. Creating or strengthening mechanisms and channels by which Afghan women can access information, network, and take advantage of personal and professional development opportunities;
5. Contributing to building the capacity of Ministry of Women's Affairs to influence policy at the national and sub-national levels.

ASGP EXPECTED PROGRAM RESULTS/OUTPUTS:

1. Strengthened organizational capacity of recipient women's CSOs, including improved ability to operate using sound, transparent systems of management and accountability;
2. Strengthened organizational, administrative and functional capacities of recipient organizations to include conducting needs assessments, designing responsive interventions, and implementing, monitoring and reporting on their programs;

3. Strengthened technical capacity in one or more development sectors, which may include health, education, legal rights, economic growth, etc.;
4. Increased access to information and improved communications and knowledge management capacity within and between recipient organizations;
5. Enhanced networking between and among recipient organizations;
6. Improved ability of civil society organizations to advocate for women and advance the official GIRoA agenda for improvements in women's status;
7. Improved prospects for organizational and financial resiliency of recipient CSOs; and
8. Effective implementation of CSO activities supported by sub-grants.

To achieve these results, the ASGP is implementing activities divided in four components:

1. **Awarding sub-grants for technical and organizational capacity building of eligible organizations, including equipment, and for the activities of such organizations.** This component is being implemented through four types of grants:
 - a) **Quick Impact Grants (QIG):** These grants help small, rural organizations and women's groups rapidly provide goods and services. Projects last less than 120 days from award to completion and are less than \$10,000.
 - b) **Service Delivery Grants (SDG):** These grants aim to increase the organizational and programmatic capacity of organizations to provide access to reproductive health, education and literacy, economic development, peaceful co-existence, awareness, and other issues relevant to women in Afghanistan.
 - c) **Advocacy Coordination Grants (ACG):** These grants help urban organizations improve their advocacy efforts for democratic, institutional and policy change. Grants support campaigns to promote education for girls, access to justice for women, coalition building for economic opportunities, community-based women's organization networks, and to address gender-based violence.
 - d) **Targeted Sustainability Grants (TSG):** To support the development of more sustainable organization(s) to effectively manage donor-support for women-focused Afghan CSOs over the long term, including capacity building and grants management functions.

Grants are recommended by Creative Associates to the ASGP Interagency Grants Committee, which includes participants of the U.S. Embassy Team/Selection Committee⁶, as well as U.S. field personnel and technical experts as appropriate, with final approval by the U.S. Ambassador. A streamlined grant procedure was approved in December 2010 to allow the USAID contracting office to approve monthly grant rounds once the ASGP Interagency Grants Committee recommends grants, without waiting for Ambassador approval. A total of \$16,910,165 of the total award was budgeted to be awarded in direct grants to Afghan women-focused NGOs. Additional funds have been re-allocated to the grants budget through savings on grants closed with a balance and re-allocation of capacity building funds. As of June 27, 2011, a total of 1053 grants have been awarded in 34 provinces totaling \$17,003,631.00. This includes:

6 ASGP Interagency Grants Committee members: a) USAID Gender Advisor, b) USAID AOTR, c) Deputy to the Coordinating Director for Development and Economic Affairs (CDDEA) of the Embassy, d) Representative of the Embassy Political Section, and e) Representative of Embassy Econ Section or USAID Office of Economic Growth. IPA, OSSD and Office of Agriculture/USDA are also included as appropriate.

- 960 QIGs for \$7,935,372.00
 - 74 SDGs for \$5,920,974.00
 - 18 ACGs for \$2,673,685.00
 - 1 TSG for \$473,600.00
2. **Assessing organizational and technical capacity needs of eligible organizations and developing responsive interventions.** This component includes the provision of technical assistance for: capacity development of CSOs and building mechanisms to institutionalize capacity building efforts; conducting formal organizational assessments and establishment of a CSO baseline; creation of CSO-specific institutional strengthening plans; and contributing to building the capacity of the *Ministry of Women's Affairs* to influence policy at the national and sub-national level.
 3. **Overseeing sub-grant implementation** to ensure that in addition to successful implementation of activities, CSO institutional strengthening and technical capacity building within recipient organizations is achieved. This component includes the application of grant-management mechanisms, monitoring protocols and methods not only to deliver services but to ensure grants achieve the desired outcomes and are positively affecting Afghan women and girls;
 4. **Developing and implementing a comprehensive communication plan and strategy** to generate widespread interest in the sub-grant program among women focused-CSOs; developing and managing an information campaign; building a network of CSOs operating with unity of purpose; and assessing mechanisms for access to information for women.

III. PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

This evaluation is being conducted to review and evaluate the USAID-funded efforts conducted by Creative Associates in Afghanistan, through the implementation of ASGP, to strengthen the capacity of women-focused CSOs in supporting and improving the status and quality of life of Afghan women. The evaluation will focus on assessing the effectiveness of ASGP design and performance in achieving its program goal and results through the four components being implemented. It is critical that the successes and weaknesses of ASGP are studied and documented and recommendations are provided for potential follow-on program models to promote gender equality and the empowerment of Afghan women and girls. This evaluation should also measure progress toward reducing gender-related obstacles and constraints and capitalizing on gender-related opportunities.

Purpose of this evaluation:

- a) Evaluate the impact and effectiveness of ASGP's support for women-focused CSOs, including more established Kabul-based groups as well as emerging local and village-based grassroots organizations in the provinces. This should include discussion of how ASGP has improved the delivery of services to meet the needs of women and girls, in both urban and rural areas, in sectors such as health, education, legal rights, economic

growth, etc. and whether this has led to women's increased participation in public life and the social, economic, and political development of women throughout the country.

- b) Evaluate how ASGP has provided opportunities for gender equality and empowerment and has reduced gender-related constraints through the implementation of activities such as: capacity building, development of plans and strategies, mechanisms and channels for women to access information and networking, participation of women in development as implementers and change agents, among others.
- c) Evaluate the overall design and approach of ASGP to determine its effectiveness in achieving the expected results; identify strengths and weaknesses; assess sustainability of projects after the program ends; and identify lessons learned and best practices to inform and improve designs and models for future programs.
- d) To explore and assess issues related to ASGP raised in the *USAID 2010 Gender Impact Assessment*, including inducing the artificial formation of more women-led CSOs, burdensome procedures for grantees, encouraging a project-focus rather than developing longer-term vision and plans, and conflating women's CSOs and women's private entrepreneurial efforts.⁷
- e) Provide specific recommendations to form the basis for future USAID program designs to promote gender equality in Afghanistan through support to women-led and women-focused civil society organizations.
- f) Assess the scope, level and effectiveness of ASGP cooperation with and support to MoWA, including a discussion of progress on enhancing MoWA's capacity to influence policy at national and sub-national levels.

IV. EVALUATION QUESTIONS

Program Goals

- a) **To what extent has ASGP achieved its stated goal/purpose and expected results?** Do beneficiaries perceive that the assistance has helped them to improve their status and quality of life, and if so, in what way? Do beneficiaries perceive that the assistance has contributed to the social, economic, and political development of women in their areas and/or throughout the country? Do women working with the CSOs perceive that the assistance has contributed to their social, political and economic development? Are there any unintended consequences or impacts, significant implementation problems or unmet needs? How realistic were the stated goals? What have been the main challenges to achieve the expected results?

⁷ USAID 2010 Gender Impact Assessment, Checchi and Company Consulting, Inc , p. 14, p. 56-58

Program Components and Expected Results

- b) **Awarding sub-grants:** To what extent has ASGP supported women's groups, including women-focused CSOs, through the implementation of grants? What are the achievements of the grants program, and to what extent has each of the four types of grants been effective in reaching program goals and expected results? What has been the geographic reach? What is the impact of grants and program activities implemented in urban vs. rural areas? To what extent has the Service Delivery Grants (SDG) improved and addressed the needs of women and girls at urban and rural areas? To what extent has the Advocacy Coordination Grants (ACG) improved and addressed the needs of women and girls at urban and rural areas? To what extent and how have the Quick Impact Grants (QIGs) improved and addressed the needs of women and girls across the country?
- c) **Assessing organizational and technical capacity needs of eligible organizations and developing responsive interventions:** How effective has the use of the Institutional and Gender Audit (IG&A) been in assessing institutional capacity? How has improved capacity of CSOs been defined and measured? What results have been obtained through the implementation of CSO-specific Capacity Development Plans (CDP)? How effective is ASGP in improving women-focused CSOs' ability to operate in Afghanistan by strengthening their organizational, administrative and functional capacities? To what extent has the ASGP program increased the institutional capacity of CSOs participating in the program versus those who did not?
- d) **Developing and implementing a comprehensive communication plan and strategy:** How effective has ASGP been in improving Afghan women-focused CSOs' access to information and networking, advocating for women's rights and issues, and acting as agents of change? What mechanisms have been developed for women-focused CSOs to be able to represent women's interests and to make the role of women in development activities more visible? How effective was the communications component in contributing to achievement of goals, especially in assisting CSO networking, communications within and between women-focused CSOs, informing CSOs throughout the country about the availability of grants, etc? How effective was ASGP in facilitating linkages between sub-grantees and other partners and programs? Did the program experience any backlash during implementation? If so, what caused it and was the communications component able to either pre-empt or mitigate it?
- e) **Cooperation with the Ministry of Women's Affairs:** How effective has ASGP been in working with the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) to increase its ability to promote public and governmental awareness of women's issues and to create advocacy strategies with the CSOs to influence and achieve policy reform? What specific results have been obtained through working with MoWA in improving its policy-making capacity at the national and sub-national levels? How effective is the Afghan Women's Advocacy Coalition (AWAC) and its cooperation with MoWA? What additional inputs are needed to strengthen AWAC? What has been the extent of ASGP contacts and cooperation with provincial level ministry representatives such as the Director of Women's Affairs (DoWA)? What was the role of the MoWA and DoWAs in the grant referral and

monitoring process? How effective have ASGP's capacity building interventions with the MoWA?

Methodology and Management

- f) **Sub-grant awards process and implementation:** How did Afghan civil society organizations who received grants initially find out about the ASGP program? Discuss the effectiveness of the referral process for grant proposals. What was the most frequent referral channel? Could or should a competitive approach have been used for award of sub-grants through a limited or fully open publically announced rolling call for proposals or fixed deadline rounds of Requests for Applications? How effective was the process of vetting of applicants at the local, provincial and headquarters level? How effective is the ASGP staff structure? Are regional program offices achieving expected results through the implementation of project activities? How effective have been the grant mechanisms established to deliver the services to CSOs and recipients? How have monitoring methods, protocols, and information systems been applied to ensure that sub-grants are achieving stated outputs and outcomes? What methodologies worked and which were less effective for grant making? What controls were put in place to prevent conflicts of interest and how effective were they?
- g) **Capacity building:** How effective has been the capacity development delivered by the Capacity Delivery Facilitators (CDFs), the Capacity Development Technical Assistants (CDTAs), in-house trainers and short-term consultants? How effective has the methodology of including budget line items in grant awards for external consultants been? How much did the services provided by external consultants to civil society organization grant beneficiaries contribute to their long term effectiveness and sustainability? How effective were interventions aimed at developing gender policies and gender mainstreaming within beneficiary organizations? Were the performance indicators and assessment of their usefulness for management and reporting and objectives appropriate?
- h) **Sustainability:** What progress was made on developing a national level women-focused civil society support organization as a legacy to the ASGP program? What are the roles of local partners, such as the Afghan Women's Education Center (AWEC), in implementing ASGP and as the recipient of the Targeted Sustainability Grant (TSG)? What progress has AWEC made with ASGP's assistance in developing the capacity to carry on programming to support Afghan women-focused CSOs in the future? What were the advantages and disadvantages of making grants to unregistered civil society organizations who stated that they would register with ASGPs help? Are there any indications to substantiate artificial formation of women-led CSOs or conflating women's CSOs and women's private entrepreneurial efforts? How many emerging organizations completed the NGO registration process with the Ministry of Economy and continue to carry out activities after the end of the four-month quick impact grant period?

Program Design and Approach:

- i) **Lessons Learned:** Assess the validity of the development hypothesis that strengthened capacity of women-led civil society organizations will contribute to the increase in stability, institutional capacity and standard of living in Afghanistan. Assess the effectiveness of the program design in achieving its goal and objectives. Discuss the validity of the development hypothesis that economic empowerment can/will lead to political empowerment of Afghan women-focused civil society organizations and Afghan women more broadly? What are the strengths and weaknesses of ASGP approaches? To what extent were Afghan women's needs served and objectives met through this program? Is the program moving forward to achieving sustainability of overall activities after the program ends? What lessons learned and best practices can be applied to improve the design and models for future programs?

- j) **Recommendations:** What interventions have been more and less effective and under what circumstances? What recommendations would you make for future types of interventions to strengthen women-focused civil society organizations, i.e. grants, training/capacity building, network strengthening, etc.? What recommendations would you make for future thematic areas for interventions to support gender equality in Afghanistan through women-focused civil society organizations, i.e. literacy, vocational training, economic opportunity, animal husbandry, handicrafts, health and hygiene, human rights, legal rights, civic awareness, etc.?

VII. DATA COLLECTION/ANALYSIS ACTIVITIES

The consultants will review the following documents:

- a) Program Descriptions and modifications
- b) Annual Work Plans
- c) Quarterly Reports
- d) Annual Reports
- e) PMP and other M&E documents
- f) ASGP grants list
- g) USAID 2010 Gender Impact Assessment
- h) Any other previous program assessments and evaluations, including specific-gender ones
- i) National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA).

VIII. METHODOLOGY

The evaluation team will be responsible for developing an evaluation strategy and methodologies that include a mix of qualitative and quantitative data collection and analysis approaches. The methodology will be presented as part of the draft work plan as outlined in the deliverables below. The evaluation team will be able to base their analysis on a variety of program implementation documents, as listed above, and other reports and program trackers.

The methodology is suggested to include, but is not limited to:

- a) Key interviews with USAID/Afghanistan Democracy and Governance Office staff, Senior Gender Advisor, and field-based USG staff at Regional Platforms or Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs);
- b) Interviews with implementing partner (Creative) staff in Kabul.
- c) Phone or in-person interviews with ASGP regional program managers:
 - Eastern Region based in Jalalabad - Covering: Nangarhar, Kunar, Laghman, and Nuristan
 - Kabul & Central Highlands Regions based in Kabul - Covering: Kabul, Kapisa, Panjshir, and Parwan, Bamyan, Wardak, and Daikundi
 - North East Region based in Kunduz - Covering: Kunduz, Badakhshan, Takhar, and Baghlan
 - North West Region based in Mazar-e-Sharif - Covering: Balkh, Jawzjan, Samangan
 - Southern Region based in Kandahar - Covering: Kandahar, Zabul, Nimroz, Uruzgan, and Helmand
 - South East Region based in Kabul - Covering: Khost, Paktya, Paktika, Logar, and Ghazni
 - Western Region based in Herat - Covering: Herat, Badghis, Farah, and Ghor
- d) Interviews and focus groups with selected beneficiaries (CSOs and the people they serve), including TSG grant recipient AWEC and members of the Afghan Women's Advocacy Coalition (AWAC), who are all Advocacy Coordination Grant (ACG) recipients.
- e) Interviews or focus groups with non-beneficiary CSOs.
- f) Interviews with MoWA and DoWA staff and also local partners.

Field work is suggested to include interviews in the areas with the highest concentration of grants, including Kabul, Hirat, and Balkh provinces. Time and security permitting, one or two other provinces should be visited with higher concentrations of activities, e.g. Nangarhar, Bamyan, Takhar, Wardak, Daykundi, Badakhshan, Khost, Kunduz, Logar, Parwan.

Data collection could include designing and applying a survey to be taken during the evaluation. USAID is open to primary analysis (e.g. surveys, other quantitative assessments) where appropriate.

IX. REPORTING REQUIREMENTS AND DELIVERABLES

1. **Evaluation Work Plan** covering (a) develop a work plan and methodology to be approved by USAID/Afghanistan prior to arrival Afghanistan. The plan will include the overall design strategy for the evaluation; (b) the data collection plan; (c) a list of the team members indicating which one will serve as the team leader and primary contact (an e-mail and phone contact for the team leader should be provided); and (d) the team's schedule for the evaluation.
2. **Initial Briefing:** Hold an initial briefing on strategy and methodology prior to initiating fieldwork. Develop lists of potential interviewees and sites to visit.

3. **Mid-term Briefing:** Hold a mid-term briefing with USAID on the status of the assessment and potential challenges and emerging opportunities.
4. **Draft Evaluation Report**, consistent with guidance provided in Section X below. Length of the report: not to exceed 25 pages in English, excluding annexes in Times New Roman 12 point, single space, consistent with USAID branding policy. The draft evaluation report should be submitted to USAID within the agreed timeframe under the delivery schedule below. The report will address each of the issues identified in the SOW and any other factors the team considers to have a bearing on the objectives of the evaluation. Any such factors can be included in the report only after consultation with USAID. Detailed outline that provides in narrative form the points presented in the PowerPoint will be submitted prior to departure. The draft evaluation per the below format will be submitted within six to eight business days after return travel is completed.
5. **Oral & PowerPoint Presentation/Briefing** to present key findings and recommendations to USAID. Conducted as agreed upon during the in-briefing sometime during the five days prior to departure.
6. **Final Evaluation Report** incorporates final comments from the ODG/AOTR and Senior Gender Advisor. Final report submitted to the ODG and Program Office-OPPD within one week of receipt of comments.

X. FINAL REPORT FORMAT

The evaluation report shall include the following:

1. Title Page
2. Table of Contents
3. List of any acronyms, tables, or charts (if needed)
4. Acknowledgements or Preface (optional)
5. Executive Summary
6. Introductory Chapter
 - a. A description of the project evaluated, including goals and objectives.
 - b. Brief statement of why the project was evaluated, including a list of the main evaluation questions.
 - c. Brief statement on the methods used in the evaluation such as desk/document review, interviews, site visits, surveys, etc.
7. Findings: Describe the findings, focusing on each of the questions the evaluation was intended to answer. Organize the findings to answer the evaluation questions.
8. Conclusions – This section will include value statements based on interpreting the facts and evidence and describing what the facts and evidence mean.
9. Recommendations – This section will include actionable statements of what needs to be done, consistent with the evaluation's purpose, and based on the evaluation's findings and conclusions. This section will provide judgments on what changes need to be made for future USAID programming, including recommendation to improve the design and performance of future USAID programming and project implementation; ways to solve

problems these projects' faced; identify adjustments/corrections that need to be made; and recommend actions and/or decisions to be taken by management. This should also include proposed future objectives and types of activities based on lessons learned for possible follow-on program design.

10. Annex

- a. Statement of Work
- b. Places visited; list of organizations and people interviewed
- c. Methodology description
- d. Copies of all survey instruments and questionnaires
- e. Critical background documents
- f. List of key documents reviewed

ANNEX C: METHODOLOGY

The evaluation team used a combination of an extensive document review, focus groups, meetings, site visits, and personal interviews to gather information about the ASGP. The methodology of using focus groups and interviews was designed to gather qualitative data about the performance of the grants through discussion with grantees.

Individuals the team met with and/or interviewed a broad range of individuals and groups. The evaluation team chose grantee organizations and beneficiaries to interview and to participate in focus groups based on input from USAID/Afghanistan staff and on a desire for diversity based on region, sector (advocacy, economic development, family health, education/literacy, social/political), whether completed or ongoing, and with an attempt to have at least 50% of the grantee organizations headed by women represented. These grantees were contacted using this selection method.

For the focus groups, grantee CSOs were invited to a centrally-located place that was not associated with ASGP, i.e., not an ASGP or USAID office. The invitations were made in Dari, by telephone, which in itself was a valuable assessment tool, as many of the phones were out of order or belonged to someone other than the listed CSO representative. At the focus groups, each lasting some three hours, the team leader led the group by asking key questions about the value of the grants program and how it was run, with the other members of the team asking follow-up questions as needed. The questions were devised by the evaluation team after consultation and reference to USAID's questions about the program, and were standardized for each group.

Focus group questions were asked in English, translated into Dari, and the answers were usually given in Dari and then translated into English. When respondents chose to answer in English, their words were translated into Dari so that the other participants could understand what was said. Participants were asked individually in turn, to ensure everyone had a chance to speak; sometimes the group was allowed to discuss an issue freely and without interruption. Many participants asked that we not attribute what they said, fearful of ASGP staff or the donor knowing that they had criticized the program.

The evaluation team provided snacks and water during the focus groups, and lunch afterwards, giving more time for informal discussion and information-gathering. Often this informal conversation provided rich data that could not be obtained in a group setting. Small travel allowances were given for participants who traveled long distances or incurred burdensome travel expenses to attend.

The evaluation team was headquartered in Kabul City (Kabul Province), but also traveled within Afghanistan to carry out focus groups in the areas with the highest concentration of grants.

No focus group was held in Kabul, but the team did extensive interviews with grantees from Kabul and other parts of Afghanistan, including Jalalabad, and made several site visits to QIG and ACG grantees while in Kabul City.

The Evaluation Team strove to be as independent as possible in order to have candid discussions and gather truthful information.

ANNEX D: FOCUS GROUP QUESTIONS

1. How did you hear about ASGP?
2. Did you start a new civil society organization in order to get this grant from ASGP?
3. Do you have a business, or a civil society organization? Is there a difference?
4. Were you a registered CSO before you became involved with the ASGP? If you registered after you applied or got the grant, what was the process?
5. What did you do with the money from the ASGP grant? How did you decide what activities to do with the money?
6. Did you have any problems getting or implementing the grant (for example, approvals, reimbursements, quality of equipment, and expertise of consultants)? How did/do you deal with those difficulties? Did you tell the ASGP staff that this was a problem?
7. How long was the grant for? Is the grant ended or still going?
8. If the activities that are funded by the grant are finished, is your organization still active? Do you have other donors or ways of financially supporting the organization?
9. Do you have any other grants from ASGP? From any other USAID program? From another donor?
10. Have you ever gotten together with other groups that got ASGP grants to share information?
11. Do think that the ASGP grant has helped you improve your life, or helped women in your community? If yes, how are women better off because of your program?
12. Is there anything else about the ASGP grant, grant program design, any grant process, or ASGP staff you would like to tell the evaluation team?

ANNEX E: LIST OF BACKGROUND AND KEY DOCUMENTS***Key Documents**

No.	Document Name	Group Type
1	3. Project Impact: Did Project Activities Improve Women's Lives?	
2	ACG Advocacy Methodologies & Mapping Workshop 2-4 May 2011 Agenda	
3	ACSFO - ASGP Grant Application	Copy of original submitted
4	Advocacy Methodologies & Mapping Workshop – ASGP Advocacy Coordination Grant (ACG) Partners – Kabul, Afghanistan 3-4 May 2011	ASGP - AWAC, ACGs & MoWA
5	Afghan Civil Society Assessment & How Afghans View Civil Society	I-PACS Publications
6	Afghan Women in Sub National Government - June 2010	Publication
7	Afghanistan Income Tax Law (Consolidated to 27 March 2005)	I-PACS Publications
8	Agenda _ACG_ Media and Communication Workshop _13-14 June 2011	
9	Agenda ACG Assessment & Planning Workshop 13-14 July 2011	
10	Ambassador's Small Grants Program (ASGP) to Support Gender Equality in Afghanistan	Kabul, Afghanistan
11*	Ambassador's Small Grants Program to Support Gender Equality in Afghanistan Quarterly Report April - June 2011	ASGP Quarterly and Bi-Weekly Reports
12*	Ambassador's Small Grants Program to Support Gender Equality in Afghanistan Quarterly Report January - March 2011	ASGP Quarterly and Bi-Weekly Reports

No.	Document Name	Group Type
13	ASGP Advocacy Coordination Grant (ACG) Partners – Assessment and Planning Session 13-14 July 2011	ASGP - AWAC, ACGs & MoWA
14*	ASGP Bi-weekly Program Update - Submitted to USAID July 7, 2011	ASGP Quarterly and Bi-Weekly Reports
15*	ASGP Bi-weekly Program Update - Submitted to USAID June 23 2011	ASGP Quarterly and Bi-Weekly Reports
16*	ASGP Bi-weekly Program Update - Submitted to USAID June 9 2011	ASGP Quarterly and Bi-Weekly Reports
17	ASGP Capacity Building Grant Submission, Approval and Implementation	
18	ASGP Capacity Development for CSO Partners - DRAFT Training Plan April 11, 2011	ASGP Capacity Development Strategy and De-obligation
19	ASGP Capacity Development Update 20 July 2011	
20	ASGP Coaching Handbook Final Edition 2010	
21	ASGP Embassy Team 7April10	
22	ASGP Institutional Capacity Development Plan - 23 April 2011	ASGP Capacity Development Strategy and De-obligation
23	ASGP meeting of 23Aug2010 AZ agenda	
24	ASGP meeting of 27feb2011	
25	ASGP Project Monitors - Provinces & Calendar - May / June 2011	ASGP Project Monitoring Methodology
26*	ASGP Quarterly Newsletter Spring 2011	
27	ASGP Regional Program Managers (RPMs)	

No.	Document Name	Group Type
28	ASGP Report May 15, 2010- April 14, 2011	AWEC Follow-Up
29*	ASGP SDG Capacity Development Consultant Budgets to be De-obligated	ASGP Capacity Development Strategy and De-obligation
30	ASGP SDGs-ACGs by Region	
31	ASGP update 8sept2010	
32	AWAC Minutes of meeting, evaluation & way forward 2	
33	AWAC Organizational Members	ASGP - AWAC, ACGs & MoWA
34	AWEC - Technical Sustainability Grant - FOG No: 2010-01-48	Copy of original contract for grant
35	AWEC Afghanistan Women's Education Centre - Kabul, Afghanistan - Strategic Plan and Proposal 2009-2011	AWEC Follow-Up
36	Bridging the Gap: Increasing Civil Society Participation in Law and Policy Formulation in Afghanistan	I-PACS Publications
37	Capacity Development Needs - ACG and SDG Recipient CSOs by Location, Priorities for TA & Grant Status	ASGP Capacity Development Strategy and De-obligation
38	Capacity Development Technical Assistants (CDTAs) – Lessons Learned & Planning Workshop – Kabul, Afghanistan April 19-20, 2011	AWEC Follow-Up
39	Checklist for Assessing Evaluation Reports	
40	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, BBC/AEP, CPI, DPA, EA IRI, NDI, TAF) - Oct 2010	Civic Edu new_Vr Maps
41	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, BBC/AEP, CPI, DPA, EA IRI, NDI, TAF) - Oct 2010 - Audience: Disabled	Civic Edu new_Vr Maps - Audiences
42	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, BBC/AEP, CPI, DPA, EA IRI, NDI, TAF) - Oct 2010 - Audience: General	Civic Edu new_Vr Maps - Audiences

No.	Document Name	Group Type
43	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, BBC/AEP, CPI, DPA, EA IRI, NDI, TAF) - Oct 2010 - Audience: Other	Civic Edu new_Vr Maps - Audiences
44	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, BBC/AEP, CPI, DPA, EA IRI, NDI, TAF) - Oct 2010 - Audience: Refugee	Civic Edu new_Vr Maps - Audiences
45	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, BBC/AEP, CPI, DPA, EA IRI, NDI, TAF) - Oct 2010 - Audience: Religious & Community Leaders	Civic Edu new_Vr Maps - Audiences
46	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, BBC/AEP, CPI, DPA, EA IRI, NDI, TAF) - Oct 2010 - Audience: Women	Civic Edu new_Vr Maps - Audiences
47	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, BBC/AEP, CPI, DPA, EA IRI, NDI, TAF) - Oct 2010 - Audience: Youth	Civic Edu new_Vr Maps - Audiences
48	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, BBC/AEP, CPI, DPA, EA IRI, NDI, TAF) - Oct 2010 - Issues: Citizenship	Civic Edu new_Vr Maps - Issues
49	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, BBC/AEP, CPI, DPA, EA IRI, NDI, TAF) - Oct 2010 - Issues: Democracy	Civic Edu new_Vr Maps - Issues
50	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, BBC/AEP, CPI, DPA, EA IRI, NDI, TAF) - Oct 2010 - Issues: Elections & Peace	Civic Edu new_Vr Maps - Issues
51	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, BBC/AEP, CPI, DPA, EA IRI, NDI, TAF) - Oct 2010 - Issues: Ethic	Civic Edu new_Vr Maps - Issues
52	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, BBC/AEP, CPI, DPA, EA IRI, NDI, TAF) - Oct 2010 - Issues: Human Rights	Civic Edu new_Vr Maps - Issues
53	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, BBC/AEP, CPI, DPA, EA IRI, NDI, TAF) - Oct 2010 - Issues: Minority	Civic Edu new_Vr Maps - Issues
54	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, BBC/AEP, CPI, DPA, EA IRI, NDI, TAF) - Oct 2010 - Issues: Political Campaign	Civic Edu new_Vr Maps - Issues
55	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, BBC/AEP, CPI, DPA, EA IRI, NDI, TAF) - Oct 2010 - Issues: Unspecified	Civic Edu new_Vr Maps - Issues

No.	Document Name	Group Type
56	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, BBC/AEP, CPI, DPA, EA IRI, NDI, TAF) - Oct 2010 - Mode of Delivery: Briefing (Face to Face Sessions)	Civic Edu new_Vr Maps - Activities
57	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, BBC/AEP, CPI, DPA, EA IRI, NDI, TAF) - Oct 2010 - Mode of Delivery: Media	Civic Edu new_Vr Maps - Activities
58	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, BBC/AEP, CPI, DPA, EA IRI, NDI, TAF) - Oct 2010 - Mode of Delivery: Mobile Cinema & Theater	Civic Edu new_Vr Maps - Activities
59	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, BBC/AEP, CPI, DPA, EA IRI, NDI, TAF) - Oct 2010 - Mode of Delivery: Training	Civic Edu new_Vr Maps - Activities
60	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, EA IRI, TAF, Counterpart International) - July 2010	Civic Education Maps - July 2010
61	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, EA IRI, TAF, Counterpart International) - July 2010 - Audience Targeted: Disabled	Civic Education Maps - July 2010 - Audiences
62	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, EA IRI, TAF, Counterpart International) - July 2010 - Audience Targeted: General	Civic Education Maps - July 2010 - Audiences
63	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, EA IRI, TAF, Counterpart International) - July 2010 - Audience Targeted: Other	Civic Education Maps - July 2010 - Audiences
64	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, EA IRI, TAF, Counterpart International) - July 2010 - Audience Targeted: Religious & Community Leaders	Civic Education Maps - July 2010 - Audiences
65	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, EA IRI, TAF, Counterpart International) - July 2010 - Audience Targeted: Women	Civic Education Maps - July 2010 - Audiences
66	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, EA IRI, TAF, Counterpart International) - July 2010 - Audience Targeted: Youth	Civic Education Maps - July 2010 - Audiences
67	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, EA IRI, TAF, Counterpart International) - July 2010 - Issues Covered: Citizenship	Civic Education Maps - July 2010 - Issues
68	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, EA IRI, TAF, Counterpart International) - July 2010 - Issues Covered: Democracy	Civic Education Maps - July 2010 - Issues

No.	Document Name	Group Type
69	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, EA IRI, TAF, Counterpart International) - July 2010 - Issues Covered: Elections & Peace	Civic Education Maps - July 2010 - Issues
70	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, EA IRI, TAF, Counterpart International) - July 2010 - Issues Covered: Human Rights	Civic Education Maps - July 2010 - Issues
71	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, EA IRI, TAF, Counterpart International) - July 2010 - Issues Covered: Minority	Civic Education Maps - July 2010 - Issues
72	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, EA IRI, TAF, Counterpart International) - July 2010 - Issues Covered: Unspecified	Civic Education Maps - July 2010 - Issues
73	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, EA IRI, TAF, Counterpart International) - July 2010 - Mode of Delivery: Briefing	Civic Education Maps - July 2010 - Activities
74	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, EA IRI, TAF, Counterpart International) - July 2010 - Mode of Delivery: Media	Civic Education Maps - July 2010 - Activities
75	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, EA IRI, TAF, Counterpart International) - July 2010 - Mode of Delivery: Mobile Cinema & Theater	Civic Education Maps - July 2010 - Activities
76	Civic Education in Afghanistan (ACSF, EA IRI, TAF, Counterpart International) - July 2010 - Mode of Delivery: Training	Civic Education Maps - July 2010 - Activities
77	Commentary on the Law on Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan	I-PACS Publications
78	Communication and Media Outreach Strategy: I-PACS - Initiative to Promote Afghan Civil Society	I-PACS Publications
79	Completion Report as of March 2011	
80*	Cooperative Agreement No. 306-A-00-09-00517-00 for Ambassador's Small Grants Program to Support Gender Equality in Afghanistan	
81	CREATIVE April meeting points	
82	Creative ASGP Institutional & Gender Assessment	AWEC Follow-Up
83*	Creative ASGP Institutional and Gender Assessment	

No.	Document Name	Group Type
84	CSO Monitoring Form	ASGP Project Monitoring Methodology
85	CSO Monitoring Form	
86	ECW Advocacy strategy Final version	
87	ECW Gender Policy - Final Version	
88	Family Health	
89	Finance and Grant Checklist for Payments Approval	
90	Flow Chart: ASGP Grant Monitoring and Reporting – QUIG	
91	ASGP SDGs-ACGs by Region	
92	Gender Mainstreaming Guide for Afghan Civil Society Organizations	I-PACS Publications
93	Grant Agreement - Morning Star TV and Radio Station	
94	Grant Agreement Modification Morning Star June 2011	
95	Grant CSO Details and Activity Locations	
96	How Ulema View Afghan Civil Society: Report from the Roundtables with Afghan Religious Scholars	I-PACS Publications
97	Invitation for ASGP Assessment Workshop 25-26 July 2011 Kabul	
98*	Invitation to Bid - Organizational Capacity Development Consultancy TORs – ASGP Final	
99*	I-PACS Initiative to Promote Afghan Civil Society	I-PACS Publications
100	Justice for All No 14 (23.34)	Film
101	Media and Communication Workshop – Afghan Women's Advocacy Coalition (AWAC) – Kabul, Afghanistan 13-14 June 2011	ASGP - AWAC, ACGs & MoWA

No.	Document Name	Group Type
102	Meeting of 13 April 2010 note to creative	
103*	Modification of Assistance / Ambassador's Small Grants Program to Support Gender Equality in Afghanistan Phase II Technical Proposal	
104	Murder in Kabul (Justice for All)	Film
105*	NAPWA - National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan	
106	NGO Reporting Guidelines: A Guide for Compliance with Reporting Requirements Under the NGO Law	I-PACS Publications
107	Non-Governmental Organizations Law	I-PACS Publications
108	Number of ASGP Grantee CSOs Led by Males and Females	
109	Original Grant Application Morning Star TV - Jan 2011	
110	Outreach to Afghan Women Guide	I-PACS Publications
111	Public Communications and Media Workshop – Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) Department of Public Relations and Gender Advocacy (Publications Unit, Media Unit, Training Unit) – Kabul, Afghanistan 25-29 June 2011	ASGP - AWAC, ACGs & MoWA
112	Raping Children - Sarepol Province (Justice for All)	Film
113	Regional and Provincial Distribution of ASGP Quick Impact Grants (QIGs)	ASGP Capacity Development Strategy and De-obligation
114	Registration Brochure: How to Register an NGO in Afghanistan	I-PACS Publications
115	Revised Grant Application Morningstar TV - May 2011	

No.	Document Name	Group Type
116	Statutes on the Employment of Foreign Citizens in Afghanistan Organizations	I-PACS Publications
117	Strategic and Fundraising Planning Guide	
118	Toyana	DVD
119	Training Manual on the Elimination of Violence Against Women Law - ACSFO - Afghan Civil Society Forum Organization	
120	Tranche Payment Request Form Revised as of March 2011	
121	UNDP Institutional Capacity Building for Gender Equality Project (GEP)	Film
122	WASSA - Women Activities and Social Services Association Annual Report 2010	
123	Woman Global Day (March 8)	Film
124	Women's Groups in Afghan Civil Society: Women and Men Working towards Equitable Participation in Civil Society Organizations	I-PACS Publications
125	Women's Groups in Afghan Civil Society, Sippit Azarbajani-Moghaddam, Counterpart International, 2006	
126*	Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) 2008-2013	
127*	Office of the Special Inspector General for Afghanistan Reconstruction Greater Coordination Needed in Meeting Congressional Directives to Address and Report on the Needs of Afghan Women and Girls	
128	ASGP Conflict of Interest and Nepotism Policy (ND)	
129*	MISPA Evaluation Final Report	

No.	Document Name	Group Type
130	AWE Grant Application Form	
131	Program Description for Afghan Women's Empowerment Through a Subgrant Umbrella Mechanism (AWESUM Grant Application Guide)	
132	<i>AWE Request for Applications (RFA)</i>	
133*	USAID Cooperative Agreement with Creative Associates	
134*	USAID 2010 Final Gender Impact Assessment	
135	MoWA Support Letter April 26, 2011.pdf	
136	Creative ASGP Annual Report 2010.pdf	
137	ASGP Referring Partner Networks__Expansion Sept 2010.pdf	
138	Grants summary as of 27jun 2011.xlsx	
139	Final MOU between MoWA and ASGP_USAID_revisions_Dece__with AWAC sign.docx	
140	ASGP grants data jun 22.xlsx	
141	ASGP Referring Partner Networks__Expansion Sept 2010.pdf	

ANNEX F: NON-USAID PROGRAMS THAT COULD BE MODELS FOR USAID WOMEN'S EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS

AGA KHAN FOUNDATION (AGKF)

The Aga Khan Foundation (AGKF) is committed to reducing rural poverty, particularly in resource-poor, degraded or remote environments. AGKF concentrates on a small number of programs of significant scale. The model of participatory rural development it has pioneered combines a set of common development principles with the flexibility to respond to specific contexts and needs. Programs typically link elements such as rural savings and credit, natural resource management, productive infrastructure development, increased agricultural productivity and human skills development with a central concern for community-level participation and decision-making. The ultimate goal is to enable community members to make informed choices from a range of appropriate options for sustainable and equitable development.

The Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) and the Aga Khan Foundation as part of AKDN, consider that the most effective way to stimulate social and economic development is to promote improvements in a coordinated fashion across the full range of development sectors. Their multi-sectoral approach is most effective because investments are focused on specific geographical areas over an extended period of time. By focusing development interventions geographically, AKDN aims to bring a variety of disciplines to bear in a given area and create a critical mass of development activities, which will eventually reinforce each other. For instance, support for education to increase literacy and vocational skills are expected to help to stimulate entrepreneurialism and long-term economic development. Likewise, improvements in healthcare will enable a healthier population to seek gainful employment and to take a more active role in civil society and social regeneration. AKDN refers to this approach as Multi-Input Area Development (MIAD) – an effort across sectors to respond to development needs and opportunities in particular geographical areas by targeted interventions in education, healthcare, agriculture, private sector development and governance. Over time, AKF hopes to foster a strong network of capable Afghan individuals and institutions that can drive their own indigenous development process.

To promote gender integration as part of the NSP Plus initiative, in 2010 AKF facilitated four *shura* (village councils) conferences on women's development and provided 309 micro-grants for gender-related projects, including women's literacy classes and the establishment of community centers. AKF promotes the grouping of community development councils into “clusters” to promote development on a wider geographical scale. During 2010, at the cluster level, for example, the AKF provided disaster risk reduction training, facilitated the preparation of girls' education plans, and provided micro-grants for infrastructure projects. For 2011 and beyond, a range of training and other activities organized for community development councils under the NSP Plus program are also planned.

The Evaluation Team's interview with AGKF was to inquire about programs similar to ASGP for comparative purposes. AGKF provides small grants (\$2,000-5,000) to women for development activities, similar to ASGP QIGs. The selection process is linked to National

Solidarity Program. They work through their social mobilizers, who are community-based workers. Their program recognizes that the process of working with women needs to be over a long period of time, especially with women in SMEs – they have to learn their markets, know distribution networks, and assess the competition. AGKF knew of the successful ASGP Bamyán dairy project, as they were assisted by the AGKN market network – the only example of successful marketing for the ASGP that the Evaluation Team heard of, and one that highlighted that ASGP did not use any marketing assistants, to its detriment.

AKF seeks to encourage inclusive economic development in rural communities by promoting effective market systems that can be sustainably supported by capable local institutions and cooperative networks of people. The market development program works through local institutions, including private business development service providers, vocational training institutes, and business associations. Through capacity-building and linkages to effective market systems, local grantees are enabled to become economic actors, not merely beneficiaries. AKF has broadened its market development program to a wider strategy based on a value chain approach.

Community-Based Savings Groups provide affordable and sustainable access to credit and savings for the most vulnerable members of rural communities. AKF is establishing savings groups across its program areas, working in partnership with local NGOs where feasible. To date, the Foundation has established 1,501 savings groups (69% of them women's groups), with 21,331 members (70% women), spread across 21 districts. The groups' aggregate savings rose significantly during 2010, reaching a cumulative total of 21.84 million Afs (approximately \$485,300 US) held by all groups. The program also provides relevant training to group leaders, members, and accountants, focusing on financial management, accounting, record keeping, and techniques for building strong groups. This training is linked with AKF education work, providing literacy and numeracy courses to ensure effective and transparent management of the savings groups' funds. As groups mature, their savings increase, helping the groups to meet their members' greater credit needs, particularly for income-generating activities.

CARE AFGHANISTAN

CARE's Humanitarian Assistance to Women of Afghanistan (HAWA) program was first implemented in 1994. After the civil war, there were estimated to be over 12,000 widows in Kabul alone. Over the years, this program has "graduated" over 1,800 widows with vocational, livelihood, and health programs, and HAWA itself has become a stand-alone program with an annual budget of \$400,000.

The Widows Association for Advancement in Afghanistan (WAWA) is a program that developed from HAWA from the women themselves. It was established in 2008, and focuses on capacity-building on women's rights issues. The five-year program (now in Year 3) was designed to build on the women's desire to have a collective association, now 10,000 strong, addressing their own solidarity, knowledge development, and advocacy on women's rights. WAWA is structured with women's groups at the community level, and "action groups" at the provincial level. A typical example of the autonomous problem-solving of these groups would be the case of a widow who is entitled to inheritance, and has not received anything from her deceased husband's family. The members of the group might consult with the family and with the *shura* where empowered

women can now go and sit and discuss with men. The widow may be referred to other appropriate organizations, such as Legal Aid in the formal justice system. In cases of violence against women, the Independent Human Rights Commission takes individual cases. There are other programs focusing on reproductive health working with the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia, in the U.S., to collect data on pregnancy, lactation, family planning, and improved infant and maternal mortality. A livestock program, with 3,000 female participants from HAWA, teaches women about nutrition, business planning, hygiene, and markets, for their personal knowledge and for local community sales.

There are 19 community savings groups where women contribute to savings to expand their livelihoods. Shari'a law does not permit interest to be received or paid, so the savings groups operate more like lending circles rather than traditional microcredit. Contributions might be as little as 50-300 Afs (\$2-6), but each month a woman can apply and the group decides who should receive the loan, which is paid back with no interest. In this way, for example, a woman who has a cow that only produces 5kg of milk per day would be able to sell it and, with a loan from the saving group, buy a more productive cow that could produce 15kg of milk per day, giving her 5kg of milk for her own use, and 10kg to sell. Once a woman is economically independent, or empowered by bringing money into the family unit, she is more likely to have a say in family decisions such as whether her daughters will go to school, or who the daughters will or won't marry.

CARE has historically focused on project-based funding, but made the decision to move to program-based long term funding in 2011, especially in Afghanistan, with rural women and girls as the priority. This decision comes from 12 years of lessons learned, based on the presumption of shrinking resources, and that the most return on donor investment is to invest strategically and for the long-term in women and girls and their basic needs of health and education.

GLOBAL PARTNERSHIP FOR AFGHANISTAN (GPFA)

It is unfortunate that no one at USAID recommended the Evaluation Team meet with Global Partnership for Afghanistan as an example of positive long-term programmatic delivery of services for women's economic empowerment; it was brought to our attention by the Afghan Women's Network. The following information details the GPFA programs for rural women entrepreneurs, with most of the funds being privately raised by U.S. citizens.

Though women comprise 60% of Afghanistan's population and a majority of the agricultural workforce, their participation is meagerly rewarded. Many have lost husbands, brothers, sons, and fathers to the conflict and are struggling alone to support their families with subsistence farming. GPFA assists women in under-served communities to increase their agricultural production. In 2005, GPFA launched the Women Working Together initiative to help women farmers collaborate and build a better future for themselves and their families. Working with men's and women's *shuras* (village councils), they identified widows and other female heads of household who lacked the supplies, training, tools and funding to replant their land. GPFA has helped establish or revitalize nearly 1,000 orchards, nurseries, and other woman-owned farm enterprises that now benefit tens of thousands of women and girls.

To address the special needs and cultural considerations of Afghan women, GPFA has built a staff of women agricultural professionals and village facilitators. These female staff members help women increase their income and food supplies, not only as orchard and woodlot entrepreneurs but also through income opportunities such as underground fruit storage facilities, beekeeping, vegetable production, and poultry, which can fit comfortably into their culture, compounds, and traditions. Some initiatives focus specifically on developing women entrepreneurs in non-traditional roles in horticulture, forestry, and market development. For example, on International Women's Day, March 8th, GPFA sponsored celebrations in Puli Alam, Logar Province and Maidan Shar, Wardak Province, designed to engage and promote rural Afghan women. The participation of 1,600 women across the two events was the first large-scale gathering of women in these conservative areas in many years, and an unprecedented moment of collective action for Afghan women seeking to better their lives. Such initiatives come about not because of short-term grants on public awareness of women's rights, but because women are able to take some public power when they have even marginal economic power and security.

GPFA is transforming the Mohammad Agha District Center in Logar Province, Afghanistan. In November 2010, GPFA gathered 58 women farmers, members of the local *shura* and the Community Development Center, and U.S. Embassy staff at the Mohammad Agha District Center in Logar Province, Afghanistan. Logar women farmers had the unprecedented opportunity to voice their ideas and share their experiences with community decision-makers and U.S. officials, including Ms. Darci Vetter, Deputy Undersecretary for Farm and Foreign Agricultural Services at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The meeting was a crucial step in GPFA's efforts to expand the Mohammad Agha District Center's outreach and services to women.

Recently, GPFA has built an underground cold store for twelve women in Surkhankhil village, in Farza Province, Afghanistan. Underground cold stores are roots cellars designed to keep fruits, vegetables, and other produce from spoiling. They are low-cost and simple to build, employ local labor and materials, require no electricity or power, need very little maintenance, and add significant value to local farm families. This is another excellent example of an innovative project designed to enhance women's livelihoods that is low-cost, sustainable, and appropriate, and should be used as a model for USAID-funded women's empowerment programs.

ANNEX G: ASGP GRANT AWARDS BY PROVINCE

ASGP Reporting

Number of Grant Reports

Report Criteria: Criteria

Province	QIG	SDG	ACG	TSG	TOTAL
Kabul	123	11	12	1	147
Herat	105	27	1	0	133
Balkh	90	9	1	0	100
Nangarhar	66	2	2	0	70
Bamyan	40	6	0	0	46
Takhar	43	0	0	0	43
Wardak	38	0	0	0	38
Daykundi	34	2	0	0	36
Badakhshan	32	1	0	0	33
Khost	32	0	0	0	32
Kunduz	27	3	0	0	30
Logar	26	0	0	0	26
Parwan	23	2	0	0	25
Faryab	24	0	0	0	24
Paktya	23	0	0	0	23
Baghlan	22	0	0	0	22
Ghazni	20	1	0	0	21
Jawzjan	19	2	0	0	21
Farah	16	3	0	0	19
Kandahar	19	0	0	0	19
Panjsher	16	2	0	0	18
Laghman	16	0	0	0	16
Sari Pul	15	0	0	0	15
Hilmand	12	0	0	0	12
Kapisa	10	0	1	0	11
Zabul	11	0	0	0	11

Province	QIG	SDG	ACG	TSG	TOTAL
Nimroz	10	0	0	0	10
Samangan	7	3	0	0	10
Nuristan	9	0	0	0	9
Paktika	9	0	0	0	9
Badghis	7	0	0	0	7
Ghor	6	0	1	0	7
Kunar	7	0	0	0	7
Uruzgan	3	0	0	0	3
Total	960	74	18	1	1053

ASGP Reporting

Value of Grant Awarded

Report Criteria: No Criteria

Province	QIG	SDG	ACG	TSG	TOTAL
Kabul	\$940,637.00	\$975,965.00	\$1,905,165.00	\$473,600.00	\$4,295,367.00
Herat	\$584,455.00	\$2,222,693.00	\$157,250.00	\$	\$ 2,964,398.00
Balkh	\$737,541.00	\$462,007.00	\$160,770.00	\$	\$1,360,318.00
Nangarhar	\$569,329.00	\$225,329.00	\$308,830.00	\$	\$1,103,488.00
Bamyan	\$334,060.00	\$481,316.00	\$	\$	\$815,376.00
Takhar	\$422,780.00	\$	\$	\$	\$422,780.00
Wardak	\$344,670.00	\$	\$	\$	\$344,670.00
Daykundi	\$333,423.00	\$304,400.00	\$	\$	\$637,823.00
Badakhshan	\$287,010.00	\$136,440.00	\$	\$	\$423,450.00
Khost	\$285,494.00	\$	\$	\$	\$285,494.00
Kunduz	\$260,146.00	\$213,190.00	\$	\$	\$473,336.00
Logar	\$214,025.00	\$	\$	\$	\$214,025.00
Parwan	\$166,686.00	\$174,117.00	\$	\$	\$340,803.00
Faryab	\$208,814.00	\$	\$	\$	\$208,814.00
Paktya	\$211,623.00	\$	\$	\$	\$211,623.00
Baghlan	\$213,187.00	\$	\$	\$	\$213,187.00
Ghazni	\$190,003.00	\$83,664.00	\$	\$	\$273,667.00

Province		QIG	SDG	ACG	TSG	TOTAL
Jawzjan	\$160,592.00	\$112,720.00	\$	\$	\$	\$273,312.00
Farah	\$118,299.00	\$224,040.00	\$	\$	\$	\$342,339.00
Kandahar	\$180,509.00	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$180,509.00
Panjsher	\$117,115.00	\$105,220.00	\$	\$	\$	\$222,335.00
Laghman	\$140,540.00	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$140,540.00
Sari Pul	\$120,980.00	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$120,980.00
Hilmand	\$112,894.00	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$112,894.00
Kapisa	\$85,950.00	\$	\$88,020.00	\$	\$	\$173,970.00
Zabul	\$96,176.00	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$96,176.00
Nimroz	\$99,342.00	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$99,342.00
Samangan	\$64,212.00	\$199,873.00	\$	\$	\$	\$264,085.00
Nuristan	\$79,430.00	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$79,430.00
Paktika	\$79,384.00	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$79,384.00
Badghis	\$53,886.00	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$53,886.00
Ghor	\$43,014.00	\$	\$53,650.00	\$	\$	\$96,664.00
Kunar	\$49,325.00	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$49,325.00
Uruzgan	\$29,842.00	\$	\$	\$	\$	\$29,842.00
Total	\$7,935,372.00	\$5,920,974.00	\$2,673,685.00	\$473,600.00	\$	\$17,003,631.00

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USAID

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE



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