Afghanistan PEACE Project
Reducing Risk for the Kuchi People

Afghanistan
Pastoral Engagement, Adaptation and Capacity
Enhancement (PEACE) Project

Quarterly Report

October 1, 2010 through December 31, 2010

Submitted By:
University of California at Davis

In Collaboration With:
Texas A&M University System

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December 31, 2010
Introduction

The Afghanistan PEACE Project has one primary activity under the current extension funding, namely the Peace Ambassador Program. The Peace Ambassador Program has been progressing very well over the last quarter. Fifty-two Ambassadors have been working in their provinces as well as receiving additional training in conflict resolution. During the past quarter the Peace Ambassadors have come to Kabul for reporting and training twice. In addition to summarizing their reports and presentations we were also able to conduct evaluation visits to 10 provinces in an attempt to validate what they have been reporting.

Summary - Activities conducted this quarter

- Reports and presentations were translated and analyzed
- Evaluations were conducted in 10 Provinces

Major Implementation Activities conducted this Quarter

A. Building Capacity for Kuchi leaders and Villagers to Resolve Conflicts; Peace Ambassador Program

Training Benefits

The Peace Ambassador program is progressing well. Ambassadors have worked very hard over the last 3 months to address a wide range of conflicts. They are focusing, however, on land tenure and land access issues between village and Kuchi communities.

Peace Ambassadors (PA) are using new methods of solving conflicts and managing the process more effectively. The new methods are different from traditional ways conflicts have been solved. For the Kuchi the traditional way to stop conflicts between two parties involves the selection of representatives. Generally 3 people represent each party in the dispute. The representatives then, discuss the dispute and come to some solution. Everyone agrees that the solution reached will be followed. This method of resolving conflicts sometimes works to stop the fighting between parties but doesn’t always resolve the issue or to build peace between the 2 parties. One or both sides may still disagree with the outcome and therefore ill-will persists.

We asked the PA to tell us what they felt were the most important ways that their trainings helped them to resolve problems more effectively. PA told us that they now choose a neutral location for solving problems. In the past the meetings were held in the village where the problem had occurred. They are now holding the discussions in a different location or village, somewhere that is neutral to both sides. The Ambassadors also pointed out that prior to any discussions or negotiations they have learned that both sides must be prepared. Both sides need to be in the correct state of mind and willing to resolve the conflict before joint discussions begin. This is accomplished by first meeting with each side individually so the conflict can be understood from both perspectives. Understanding both perspectives requires that the PA remain neutral and attempt to clearly understand the primary interests of each party.

PA also said that they have learned how to select the correct the people to address the conflicts. Instead of bringing together a large group of people for addressing a given issue they have learned to only select the people that appeared open and willing to solve the conflict. They told us that the new methods are less costly monetarily and with respect to time. This was directly related to meeting with only the people willing to solve the conflict instead of inviting a large group of people.
They also mentioned that their communication style has become more effective. They have learned to use language that does not inflame the people participating in the discussions. They mentioned that word selection is critical in discussing the conflict with participants.

Results

As of December 2010, at least 1161 meetings have been held and a total of 329 conflicts have been solved. Of the 329 conflicts solved, 48% of these were conflicts over land use and land access issues. Social conflicts between families, villagers, or Kuchi people made up 49% of the conflicts solved by PA. The remaining 2% resolved were conflicts between villagers and the government. This information is displayed in the following figure to show this relationship by Province. While PA are working in the different regions on conflicts they are frequently asked to solve many other issues. Therefore, while their primary goal is to address land conflicts many social issues are also addressed. This indicates how frequently communities are asking for help to resolve conflicts of all kinds.

The Peace Ambassadors coordinate their efforts within the Provinces and Districts with the Provincial and District Governors. That coordination is part of the responsibility of Wahidullah Sabawoon and his commission, as he oversees the PA monthly work plans. If a Governor asks the PA to address a specific conflict, there will be a signed copy of the agreement document if and when the issue is resolved. In cases where neither District nor Provincial Governors are involved, there is no copy of the signed agreement document given to a government entity. If the Peace Ambassador program continues after April 30, 2011, we will probably ask that at least the Provincial Governors receive a copy of all documented conflicts that are resolved.

Evaluations

Evaluations were conducted in 10 Provinces where PA were working to solve conflicts. The evaluations consisted of gathering community members from both the Kuchi and village sides to determine if the PA were indeed doing what they have been reporting. A series of questions were asked of the community members and their responses were recorded. See Appendix 1 for an example of the questions asked during the evaluations. After each evaluation visit, the evaluation team wrote up a brief report and discussed how effective each Peace Ambassador had been in their given community. They placed each ambassador into one of three categories; highly effective, moderately effective, or somewhat effective.
After all the evaluations were complete we calculated that 52% of Peace Ambassadors were considered highly effective, 29% were considered moderately effective, and 17% were considered somewhat effective. This information was then given to Wahidullah Sabawoon so he can make a decision regarding the PA included in the “least effective” category. We suspect that the least effective ambassadors will be replaced next quarter.

During the evaluations communities were asked if they had any recommendations for the conflict resolution program. The responses are summarized below:

- Communities overwhelmingly supported and encouraged the program participants to continue
- More Peace Ambassadors are needed (everyone seemed to mention this point; Governors, Communities, and Peace Ambassadors)
- Include elders of the communities, government officials, and younger representatives in conflict resolution trainings
- The program needs to continue for a long period of time, not just year by year
- Government’s Peace Commission must act independently
- If additional Ambassadors are selected for future work they should be known to communities on both sides of the conflict

We are hoping to continue and expand the Peace Ambassador Program after April 30, 2010. The partnership between Wahidullah Sabawoon’s Commission, Sanayee Development Organization and the PEACE Project has initiated a solid program that builds grass-roots, conflict resolution skills within respected community members. With time this program will resolve many land-use issues between Afghans.
This is an example of an actual evaluation form. I purposely did not select a roaring success as an example. One of the land-rights issues that these communities are dealing with has still not been solved by the Peace Ambassadors. However, you can see from their answers that there is a strong desire to attempt a peaceful solution to the land issue mentioned.

Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan
Peace Commission, Afghanistan PEACE Project, and Sanayee Development Organization

Peace Ambassadors’ questionnaire

PA name: Mozodeen
Interviewers: Abobaker Sarwari, Rafiullah Azizi and Haroon Gulzar
Interviewees: Naswari (Kuchi) and Aslam (villager)
Place: IDK office of Sar-e-Pul province
Date: 02/11/2010

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<td>1. Are you happy about the peace ambassadors that were selected by the Peace Commission for conflict resolution? Are you happy about their performance?</td>
<td>We want to thank from peace commission and other involved organizations who support this program. Yes, we are so happy from Peace Ambassadors achievements and they are so active in their work means solving of conflicts.</td>
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<td>2. Which problems have been solved by the peace ambassadors?</td>
<td>It was a rangeland conflict between us, which is solved once by peace ambassadors, but Kuchi people didn’t accept it.</td>
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<td>3. Where? (the location of the problem)</td>
<td>Village</td>
<td>District</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Kalakshagh and Namidan</td>
<td>Center</td>
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<td>4. When the problem was solved, how long did it last? And what was the role of peace ambassadors in solving the issue?</td>
<td>It took for one month in court. Actually peace ambassadors held some gatherings and talking with elders and governmental officials about it.</td>
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5. Who were the people involved in both sides of the conflict?  
   - Who had effective roles in solving the conflict?  
   Kuchi and villagers whose names are mentioned on the top and peace ambassadors, other elders and governmental officials had effective roles in solving the conflict.

6. Do the people involved in the conflict have satisfaction from the decision made by the peace ambassadors in the solving conflict or not? If not why?  
   Yes, we are accepting and agree with the final decision of peace ambassadors.

7. If the problem or conflict was not solved, what were the reasons?  
   Because Kuchi people were not accepting the decision.

8- Did peace ambassadors have gatherings or meetings?  
   Yes | No  | If yes, so where and what for?  
   Yes, they have gatherings and meeting with governmental officials and in different villages and for solving conflicts and talking about bringing peace in our country.

9- Did they use new and useful methods in solving conflicts or problems?  
   Yes | No  | If yes, which methods and where did they learn those methods?  
   Yes, we are using new methods which we learned in last workshops like discussion, gatherings, mediation and reconciliation and beside those sometimes we are also suggesting and discussing about some issues.

10- From peace ambassadors’ perspective which methods were useful and what were the results?  
   I think the methods which we learned from workshops are so useful, because through those ways we can solve a conflict easily and in a peaceful way.
11- What are the differences between old or traditional and new methods of solving conflicts and problems? What are the benefits of new methods?

- I think they don’t have a big difference, but just I can say that new methods are organized ways and now we know how to talk and how to start our talking or solving a conflict.

12- Do Kuchi and villagers have suggestions for solving more of their conflicts and problems?

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<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>If yes, what are they?</th>
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- Yes, we want from peace commission if it is possible to increase the number of peace ambassadors in Sar-e-Pul province.

13- Write down your ideas about the performance of the peace ambassadors.

- I think the achievements of peace ambassador are reality and have facts, because the interviewees are so happy from them and they are saying that peace ambassadors are solving our conflicts.

### Interviewers’ ideas or opinions:

- Achievements:
  1. It was a nice program, because now we know that what they are doing is right.
  2. We shared and explained this program to the governors of different provinces and they were so happy from us by having such a nice program and they wanted the continuation of this program in the future.

- Faced problems:
  1. We haven’t faced any problems.
Suggestions
The monitoring of peace ambassadors should be followed and we think that it is better to tell peace ambassadors to bring 10-15 people with their selves for monitoring in the future.

Brief Report:
Before starting the monitoring of peace ambassadors, first we were going to the governor of each provinces and we were talking about all over our program, in addition, we explained that who is running this program and how this program is, means that we told them about peace ambassadors, workshops in every two months for peace ambassadors and so on, although some of them were unaware of this program, but later on after our explanation they showed their keen interest and wanted the continuation of this program in the future.
What they were saying was that “if it is possible to increase peace ambassadors in each province, it will be more effective in solving conflicts even in bringing peace to our country and we are so thankful from those organizations who are involved and supporting this program.”
Then we were going to provincial IDK office for implementing of our programs, in fact people were so happy from peace ambassadors and they were saying that:

Kuchi:
We are so happy for having such peace ambassadors in our province and we accept their decisions for solving our conflicts and we appreciate their work and they wanted the continuation of this program and increasing of peace ambassadors in their provinces.

Villager:
We also want to increase peace ambassadors in Sar-e-Pul province, because just two peace ambassadors are not enough and we think that by having such peace ambassadors there won’t be any conflict or problem in our province. We want to held the same workshops for governmental official too through which they will understand how to solve a conflict.