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

Quarterly Report

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Introduction

Until May 2011 the Afghanistan PEACE Project has had one primary activity called the Peace Ambassador (PA) Program. On May 1st the PEACE Project received an 18 month extension that included funding for not only an expanded PA Program but for several other activities as well. Some of the activities that were funded include the support for all 31 Kuchi Shuras with the aim of developing stronger “herder alliances” throughout the country. The Shuras are also intended to deal with conflicts within the Provinces and provide a way for the Independent Department of Kuchi to address education, health, literacy and rangelands. The PEACE Project will also be continuing to provide some technical support and training to MAIL related to the technologies we have institutionalized there. We are very excited that the PEACE project will continue to address livestock production issues for the extensive livestock producers of Afghanistan.

Summary - Activities conducted this quarter

- Annual Workshop for 52 Peace Ambassadors held in April
- Kuchi Provincial Directors meet in Kabul to discuss Shura Program
- Selection workshops for new PA’s held in Mazar and Jalalabad
- 61 Peace Ambassadors met in June to begin new year of work

Major Implementation Activities conducted this Quarter

A. Building Capacity for Kuchi leaders and Villagers to Resolve Conflict

Peace Ambassador Program

Peace Ambassadors (PA’s) from 15 Provinces have been working independently and together over the last year to solve as many land access conflicts as possible. In total these leaders, representing both Kuchi and Village communities, have solved more than 300 such conflicts. In addition, they have also solved more than 300 social conflicts for communities in these Provinces while pursuing the resolution of land issues. Twelve of these PA’s have been working together for 2 years. The other 40 PA’s marked their first year working to bring peace to Afghanistan in April. This April all 52 PA’s attended a gathering in Kabul to celebrate their accomplishments.

Over the past year they have solved 616 conflicts in total. You can see the types of conflicts solved and where they were solved in the Figure 1.
The resolution of these conflicts required 2407 meetings with communities, individuals and government officials.

The 5 day event included lengthy discussions about their work across 6 regions of the country. The participants were from Parwan, Faryab, Jawzjan, Kunduz, Sar-e-Pul, Samangan, Khost, Badakhshan, Balkh Jalalabad, Maidan Wardak, Ghazni, Takhar, Baghlan, Kapisa and Bamyan. Discussions among representatives of the Peace Commission, Sanayee, PEACE and the Ambassadors resulted in the following conclusions and suggestions for the coming year of work.

1. About workshops:
   - The workshop topics should be accepted by PA’s and must be in accordance to their daily activities.
   - Workshops should have practical work included.
   - Give examples of conflicts during workshops and let them work on it jointly until they find a good solution.
   - Short educational movie clips should be prepared during workshops.
   - Scheduling workshops should be based on the acceptance of three involved organizations.
   - The workshops should have practical work in addition to theoretical teachings.

2. Program process:
   - If possible try to have female PA’s.
   - We should try to have youths involved in this program.
   - Even if the funding stops PA’s should continue their work.
   - The program should motivate the PA’s to initiate their own work plans.
   - The program should motivate PA’s to have contact with governmental offices.
   - During the monitoring process the representatives of three interrelated organizations were indispensable.
• Peace commission should introduce two other representatives to this program in addition to Sarwari.
• The workshops should prepare PA’s to be trainers.

3. Program policies:
• Attendance of PA’s is necessary at the workshops.
• It should be understood by all PA’s not to conduct their personal work during workshop.
• Per diems should not be paid if they don’t have their achievement reports or do not present at workshop.
• If they cannot attend, PA’s should inform officially one of the related organizations.
• It should be clear to PA’s that their per diems are based on their work plans not how many months they worked.

4. About PA’s’ activities:
• We should insist that PA’s focus on conflicts between Kuchi and villagers (Land, Rangeland…) in their work plan.
• PA’s should work at the province level.
• Each PA should focus on, at most, two joint issues and more than five separate issues.
• PA’s from one province should have gatherings with their neighbor province’s PA’s for sharing information to improve this program and to find solutions to conflicts.
• Each PA should have a meeting with the district governor and other leaders each month to talk about people’s problems and finding the solutions for that.
• PA’s should have a complete report of their activities.

5. Selecting of New PA’s:
• They should be selected from those areas where conflicts are occurring.
• The best way for selecting PA’s is by having key communities select who they want to represent them.
• Community selections will attend three-day workshops and those that performed the best will be chosen by the partner organizations.
• PA’s must be nominally educated. (writing, reading and speaking)
• PA’s shouldn’t be too young or too old. (between 35-50)
• PA’s must be well-known by the communities where they are working.
• PA’s need to be self-motivated to seek good solutions for a conflict.
• PA’s should be from different districts.
• They should have the ability of working with people.
• They should not have any kind of prejudice. (verbal, regional, religion, ethnic)
• Kuchi PA’s should be introduced at the Provincial Kuchi Shuras and the District Governor’s office.
• Villager PA’s should be introduced to the Village Shuras and the District Governor’s office.
There were also discussions regarding the material taught during the workshops. New PA’s were not only skeptical themselves but their communities and families were also very skeptical of the program to begin with. One Peace Ambassador told us what happened to him when he was selected to attend the first conflict resolution workshop. He said that the Mullah in his village told him that he should be careful because a western organization was involved in the trainings. He warned the Peace Ambassador that the organization might be trying to convert him to Christianity. The PA’s family was also nervous about him attending and asked that he reconsider. In the end the PA told everyone that he wanted to see it for himself and then make a decision. When he arrived he was relieved to see that the program was taught from the perspective of Islam. This made him very comfortable and when he returned home to his village he showed his family and Mullah the materials that he had received during the trainings. The Mullah was surprised and instructed the PA to continue his training so that he would be able to help his community to resolve conflicts.

Over the past year the Provinces that PA’s were working in covered 6 regions. Starting in July the PA’s will be working in Provinces covering 8 regions. Information that will be reported by the 75 PA’s this coming year will include:

- Peace Ambassador’s Name
- Type of conflict
- Conflict solved
- Date of solving:
- Names of those involved in conflict
- The conflict location (Province, District, Village)
- Size of Rangeland / Land in Hectares impacted by the conflict
- Number of animals impacted by solving the conflict
- Number of families benefited from solving of this conflict
- Number of meeting that were conducted for solving of this conflict
- The technique or the method used for solving of this conflict

**Provincial Kuchi Shuras**

Starting in June, we reinitiated support for the Independent Department of Kuchi. In the past we have only been able to support up to 13 Shuras across the country. Now we will support all 31 Provincial Kuchi Shuras. Supporting the Shuras will enable us to continue conflict resolution work related to Kuchi herders. Over the years Kuchi Directors for IDK have attended many conflict resolution trainings. In addition they have been introduced to the technologies that we are institutionalizing within the MAIL. The Directors report to the IDK office in Kabul. This quarter we have worked together with the Director of IDK to create a monthly report format that will assist their Department in collecting valuable information from the Provinces as well as help us to measure their success in resolving conflicts.

In late May we invited all 31 Provincial Directors to attend a workshop to discuss the new reporting format and expectations for the new program. They were provided with the new reporting formats and policies regarding our support for their monthly shuras. Included in each Shura report will be the following information.
• Name of Reporter and his position
• Date of conflict
• What was the conflict?
• If the conflict is over rangeland, how many animals use it?
• Location (Province, District, Village)
• Number of Families benefited from solving the conflict
• Number of Participants with complete ID
• Which method was used for solving that conflict

We expect to receive and report results for these items beginning next quarter.

B. Other Capacity Building Efforts for the Independent Department of Kuchi

Initial meetings were held in June to discuss the adult education courses for IDK staff. The Director of IDK is very enthusiastic about the program and promised to nominate appropriate staff for specifically focused courses. There will be courses for English, computer training, finance/accounting, and management. IDK staff will begin attending courses in September after Ramadon.

C. Technical Support for MAIL

Technical Support Related to the Livestock Early Warning System and Nutritional Profiling Activities

In April, the PEACE Project was represented in the Strategic Workshop held for developing a National Rangeland Management Plan.

We wanted to provide them with a very general overview of the essential elements required to manage Afghanistan’s Rangelands. Large-scale land classification can be accomplished by satellite data if MAIL has the appropriate amount of ground surveys to verify the actual land cover. There are several land cover classifications that have been made in the past decade and I would think the military has some high resolution aerial photography as well. Once MAIL knows where they have existing rangelands the next step is to know how to manage them effectively.

MAIL must first define the management area. Management occurs on different scales from country-wide to a particular rangeland. They could manage by Province or District using political boundaries or you could manage by watersheds which then allow them to consider ecological issues. However, once a watershed is identified, having agreement on user rights to those rangelands will be critical. Sorting out who has legal rights to use rangelands is what will enable effective management.

Assuming that MAIL has identified a watershed for management and are working on resolving user-rights within that watershed, what’s next? They need to know what is growing and grazing in those areas. Conducting an assessment of the rangelands within the watershed will allow them to understand the type and abundance of plants that are growing there. The assessment requires some technical skill……identification of plant species.
There are many ways to determine changes in the preferred species (good or bad). Communities could protect small areas from grazing to create grazed/un-grazed comparisons. These will let them know how much vegetation is being consumed. MAIL extension workers could conduct vegetation surveys and set up photo comparison sites. These will all lead to a better understanding of the impact that the current animal numbers are having on the site and provide trend information.

One rangeland management goal should be to remotely monitor and predict production at larger scales. Rangelands are variable, large and expensive to evaluate and monitor. Remote monitoring systems can help to provide an overall view of the rangeland condition. Remote applications use satellite climate data to model and predict plant growth. These predictions can be useful for policy, planning and for livestock producers. Having some lead-time can prevent major die-offs of livestock or provide livestock producers with the information to make important management decisions about their herd sizes.

Considering the above it seems as though we should develop a way to initiate community agreement on rangeland user-rights for both mobile and settled communities. There have been some good examples of this but probably not enough has been done to include the mobile communities in this process.

We should also consider engaging the community (both sedentary and mobile) to work with MAIL on assessing and evaluating the rangelands. We should engage the people to help MAIL collect the necessary data to manage rangelands at a local level and national level. Technical expertise will be required initially to ensure that MAIL extension workers can effectively provide management information feedback to communities. MAIL Extension workers need to be able to say to communities “We analyzed the data you helped us collect and here are the results and management recommendations”.

Two areas that require immediate attention are:
- How do we engage the extensive livestock producers to participate in this process of resolving conflicts and assessing rangelands
- How do we build expertise within MAIL to manage at the district or watershed level

**Technical support related to Livestock Market Information System**

Although the MAIL is not committing their full attention to the LMIS system yet, we have had several discussions with the middle management personnel regarding the activity. There is interest but not enough to motivate them on their own. Monitors are still collecting weekly price information for Jalalabad, Mazar and Kabul and the data is being entered into the server. The Server is operating and it is possible to request and receive price information by cell phone messages. In addition the website for the LMIS is also working and livestock market information from the 3 markets can be graphically displayed on request at this site.

Over the past quarter we have worked on minor software improvements from Texas. We have also made trips to Jalalabad and Mazar to evaluate the monitors in those cities.
Challenges

Over the last quarter we have attempted to engage the MAIL in both the Nutritional Profiling and Livestock Market Information Systems. We are still attempting to straighten out the management of the Laboratory at Darulaman. Also, as mentioned above the LMIS is ready to go and could be expanded immediately if the MAIL staff chose to do so. We will continue to engage the MAIL staff in these areas.