UNITAR would like to express its thanks to the Hiroshima Prefectural Government and the people of Hiroshima for their support to the Afghan Fellowship. Deep thanks to the workshop resource person, Prof. David Eaton, for his excellence and dedication. Our appreciation is also extended to the United Nations Development Programme in Afghanistan (UNDP), the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission and the Afghanistan Distance Learning Centre, for ongoing support to the Fellowship and help in the realization of this mission. Thanks also to the Fellowship Alumni who could come and share their time.

UNITAR extends special thanks to our Fellows and coaches who contributed their time and experience.

Introduction

The Fellowship is a long-term programme which aims at building training and leadership skills and providing technical and institutional support to a core group of Afghan government officials, educators, practitioners, and professional trainers. The first workshop in the 2005 cycle of the UNITAR Hiroshima Fellowship for Afghanistan was held from 3 to 10 April in Kabul. The UNITAR team arrived in Kabul to conduct a workshop on Project Design and Proposal Writing, and to strengthen relationships with national and international actors.

Workshop I: Project Design and Proposal Writing

The aim of the Workshop was to enhance the participants’ skills in project design and drafting of project proposals, skills identified by Fellows as critical for meeting their professional goals in Afghanistan’s current environment. It was led by Prof. David Eaton, UNITAR Special Fellow and the Bess Harris Jones Centennial Professor of Natural Resource Policy Studies at the Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Austin. Sharapiya Kakimova, UNITAR Fellow, provided administrative and institutional support. Twenty of the twenty four Fellows, and three coaches (alumni from last year) were present throughout the workshop.

The workshop consisted of twelve sessions and had the following objectives:

- to deepen the overall understanding of the Fellowship and its various learning tools available to the participants;
- to develop and facilitate networks and relationships within the group;
- to introduce project design and proposal writing concepts;
- to help participants develop their project concepts;
- to enhance proposal-writing skills.

1 One Fellow from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was on mission to Bangladesh, two Fellows from the Ministry of Women’s Affairs were able to attend only one day of the workshop and the video-conference held on 6 April, two coaches could not attend the full workshop due to their involvement in the Afghanistan Development Forum which was on-going at the time of the workshop.
Session 1: Identification of Needs
- Identification of the problem the project will address and the involved stakeholders;
- How to present and describe needs in a formal proposal;
- How to relate need to potential funder.

Session 2: Project Description in Proposals
- Description of how the project relates to the need.

Session 3: Stating Project Objectives
- Description of the anticipated, measurable goals of the project in the proposal;
- How to relate outputs to outcomes that fulfill the stated need.

Session 4: Project Methods
- Description of project activities and sequence.

Session 5: Proposal Evaluation from the Donors’ Perspective
- Representatives from donor organizations in Afghanistan share their views of what makes a strong project proposal;
- Activity where Fellows evaluate sample proposals from donor’s point of view.

Session 6: Creating a Project Timetable
- How to create a timetable for a proposal to illustrate the schedule of activities and deliverables.

Session 7: Project Evaluation
- How to structure and carry out a project evaluation focusing on measurable evaluation criteria, who will evaluate, and a method of analysis.

Session 8: Project Budget and Accounting
- Development of capital and operating budgets; and
- Overview of accounting techniques.

Session 9: Future Funding
- Development of a plan to ensure project sustainability.

Session 10: Proposal Summary
- Proposal conclusion which restates main points of previous sections.

Session 11: Recommended Proposal Attachments
- Explanation of attachment documents that strengthen proposals.

Session 12: Writing a Proposal Cover Letter
- Techniques to write a one page letter that captures interest and summarizes proposal.

Teaching materials and methodology

Teaching materials were prepared by Prof. David Eaton and UNITAR and are available on-line at Afghan Training Corner2. The sessions were conducted in an interactive format, with lectures and question and answers. At the beginning of the workshop ice-breaking exercises were held to help participants know each other better and create a friendly environment. On the day 2 one of the Fellows was invited to present the After-Action-Review (AAR) to the class. During the AAR, a personal interpretation and summary of the subjects learned, including direct experiences were presented. The foundation exercises were held on day 3 of the workshop. The Fellows were divided into four groups and asked to act as hypothetical donor agencies. Five project proposals were presented and each group had to approve or reject projects and explain their decisions. The foundation exercises illustrated the Fellows’ understanding of the essential elements that need to be included in proposals. Mr. Fakhruddin Azizi, from the UN Development Programme (UNDP) in Kabul was present during the foundation exercises to share his views of what makes a strong project proposal.

Throughout the workshop Fellows were asked to think about their projects and to prepare short briefs on their proposed ideas. This exercise helped Fellows better understand the Fellowship’s objectives and also

2 http://www.unitar.org/hiroshima/afghancorner/resources.html
helped them prepare for the meeting with their mentors during the video-conference. The first video-conference between Fellows and mentors was held on 6 April. The Afghan Training Corner website was introduced to Fellows during lab sessions at the workshop.

**Individual Consultations with Fellows**

On 6 April, in parallel to the video-conference, Fellows had individual consultations with Prof. David Eaton on projects they would like to work on throughout the year. As a follow-up to the individual consultations and the subsequent discussions with Mentors, each Fellow was requested to prepare a short report regarding his/her project. Some of the Fellows decided to change their projects after their discussions with mentors. Many Fellows decided to focus on developing training programmes to improve computer and English skills among ministerial staff as a chosen project.

**Workshop Evaluation Summary**

The Fellows were asked to submit an evaluation of the workshop and other Fellowship activities such as computer training and video-conferencing. On a scale of 1 to 5 (where 5 = Very Satisfactory, and 1 = Very Unsatisfactory) 80% of the Fellows found the workshop in relation to structure and content to be “very satisfactory”, the remaining 20% rated it 4 = Satisfactory. There was an even more universal reaction to the resource person, 90% found him to be “very satisfactory” in terms of his expertise and teaching abilities. 50% of the Fellows were not completely satisfied with the duration of the workshop; they would have preferred it to be longer. With reference to the Fellows’ level of perceived increase in knowledge and skills as a result of the workshop, 70% rated the workshop at 5 (very satisfactory) and 20% rated it at 4 (satisfactory). Finally 85% of the participants found the topic of the workshop to be very relevant to their work.

**Involving Cycle I’s Alumni in the next Cycle.**

Five coaches, Alumni from the 2003-2004 cycle, selected to be Coaches on the basis of outstanding performance, were invited to participate in the 2005 Cycle. Coaches act as bridges between UNITAR, mentors and the current group of Fellows to help the programme move smoothly and to share past experiences with the new group.

In order to strengthen the Fellowship Community, the whole group of alumni was invited to participate in select sessions. Thirteen Alumni attended the closing ceremony and dinner. Their attendance assured UNITAR that the past participants are committed to the programme and remain part of the Fellowship network.

**Closing Ceremony**

On 9 April the closing ceremony of the first workshop of the Fellowship took place. Mr. Wali Hamidzada, Director of the Afghan Civil Service Training and Development of the IARCSC, and Mr. Fakhruddin Azizi, UNDP De-mining and NHDR programme officer, participated in the certificate-giving ceremony.

**Meetings**

UNITAR held meetings in Kabul with multiple national and international institutions, including the Independent Administrative Reforms and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC), Afghanistan Distance Learning Center (ADLC), the World Bank (WB), and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)

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3 Originally six coaches were chosen, however due to a job transfer Mr. Humayun Sherzad is no longer able to continue as an active coach.
to discuss the present situation in Afghanistan, the priorities of the Fellowship, and to strengthen the foundations for future partnership.

During these meetings, possible partnerships with national and international actors were discussed. In particular, UNITAR and IARCSC agreed to sign a Memorandum of Understanding which will allow the Fellowship to reflect the present needs of the Afghanistan civil service to the extent possible.

Conclusions

Workshop I launched the Fellowship’s 2005 cycle. The Fellows received certificates recognizing their attendance and skill development upon the workshop’s completion. The first video-conference was also successfully accomplished during the workshop period. Starting the workshop before the first video-conference helped Fellows define their project in advance, which enabled them to maximize the time with their mentors during the video-conference.

In summary during this mission:

- Workshop I was successfully completed;
- The first video-conference with mentors was successfully completed;
- Dinner with members of Fellowship community in Kabul was organized;
- The appointment of coaches proved to be an effective tool to strengthen the Fellowship;
- The partnership with IARCSC was strengthened;
- Continuation of the partnership with KDLC was confirmed;
- The foundation for the partnership with the WB was laid.

Hiroshima, April 2005