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A New Milestone

This issue of BRD Journal is a very special one because BRD has reached a significant milestone. Through the hard work of our staff and volunteers and the support of our donors and partners, BRD has expanded its activities significantly over the past year.

Many of our donors are happy with our service and with the value of programs implemented. Thus, they have given us repeated funding, a testament to the quality of BRD's service delivery and relevance of its programs. This stable source of funding has enabled BRD to achieve a constant level of income so that it can develop its capacity further, train its staff and expand on its programs. I am thrilled to say that as a result, there are many new and exciting projects in the pipeline for 2008.

I am also pleased to announce our partnership with [Buy1Give1Free](#) – presenting a revolution in giving that enables businesses and their customers to share the joy of giving to BRD instantly and effectively. Every time someone buys a product or service, a portion of the sale goes towards supporting an Afghan to learn a trade, establish a kitchen garden, learn about human rights, educate a child etc. More details will be announced at a later date.

BRD's online volunteers have also reached another milestone. Our volunteering team was awarded the United Nations Online Volunteering Team of the Year 2007, which is the second time BRD's volunteers have won the esteemed global award.

In the last few months, the security situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated in various parts of the country – most notably in the south. Many of you are concerned about BRD's security. In this regard, BRD is very fortunate as it has established very good working relationship with the community in the many provinces that it works in. Together with the support of the community, BRD has been able to keep its premises, project sites and participants safe.

I am happy to inform you that BRD has just started a new initiative through the support of its online volunteer team – BRD Research & Advocacy Series. The program aims to examine a broad spectrum of development issues in Afghanistan and provide inputs and recommendations to donors, policy makers and other interested parties. It will also serve as a space for BRD and other Civil Society Organizations to lobby and advocate issues and concerns affecting the community. The research reports will be shared with all concerned parties and they will also be available on BRD's website.

This year is promising to be an exciting year. I thank you all for supporting BRD and for being with us as we achieve this major milestone.

Khan Agha Dawoodzai
Program Director





Peace Building

Peace Rising and Non-Violence Communication Workshop for Children

On 3 November 2007, BRD and TEMBA School based in USA, hosted more than 40 children for a day of learning non-violent communication through making art. The event was held to mark the **World Day for the Prevention of Child Abuse**, aimed at alerting Governments and civil society organizations to play a more active role in the prevention of child abuse and the promotion and protection of the rights of children. The purpose of the workshop is to build understanding and knowledge of different groups of children on concepts such as peace, violence and abuse. The children explored the impacts of conflict on themselves and at the same time, play and share ideas.

The local children were aged 8-13 and came from all walks of life. They comprised school children, deaf children from a local school and street kids. The day began with the learning of an African song, where everybody stood in a circle to learn the words and movements. During the class, the children showed that they understood and valued concepts such as empathy, respect, love, kindness, giving, appreciation, happiness and creativity. They learnt to use color to represent their feelings, created peace flags with words such as "Peace, "Friendship" "Prevent Child Abuse" and "Stop Violence against Children". Those who are not deaf enjoyed learning the sign language for "Love" from the deaf children.



Every child brought home their art work and was given art supplies such as colored paper, markers and crayons.

International NGO Coalition mark World Day for Prevention of Child Abuse

The international NGO Coalition unites 149 organisations in more than 60 countries to mark the day 19 November with local and national events and activities. The coalition contributes to the creation of a culture of prevention of child abuse and form a global partnership network to raise awareness, mobilise public opinion and action and disseminate prevention programs.



At the end of the day, the children sent appeals to the international community and to the State to protect children's rights; prevent child abuse; and stop violence against children. The appeals have been circulated to the relevant government authorities, UN Agencies and International organizations based in the country.



eVolunteers@BRD



BRD's Volunteer Team Wins the United Nations Volunteering Team of the Year 2007 Award

On 5 December 2007, BRD's Volunteers Manager Ms. Wong Yin Mei and Program Director Mr. Khan Dawoodzai won the United Nations Online Volunteering Team of the Year 2007 Award. Below is an interview with the Online Volunteers Manager, Yin Mei.



Q. When and why did you decide to become an Online Volunteer?

A. After I moved to Australia from Singapore, I wanted to do something different in my spare time. That was when I decided to try volunteering. However, I did not want to only volunteer my time but I wanted to be able to make use of my skills too. I came across UNV Online Volunteering and took up my first assignment in May 2006. It was to write a proposal for a Nigerian NGO. It was a useful experience. I realized that the skills and experience that I have as a business management consultant and an ex-banker, are just as useful in the not-for-profit sector as in the private sector. Most importantly, I can contribute without being there.

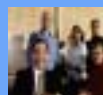
Q. How has volunteering online influenced your life?

A. Through my work with BRD, I learnt about the culture, way of life and the struggles of local Afghans. Issues that I have been dealing with have deepened my understanding of the challenges faced by an NGO in the country. Having only ever lived in developed countries in times of peace, the insights into the challenges faced by people in post-conflict countries under reconstruction such as Afghanistan, has broadened my perspectives to the struggles of nation-building.

Online volunteering has also added a new dimension to how I apply my skills and has resulted in my interest in development work. I made new friends, built meaningful working relationships and I am still learning from the people I work with.

eVolunteers@BRD | Commitment for Results

Join BRD's Online Volunteering Team
[Email Us](#)



New Partnership The National Endowment for Democracy

BRD is pleased to announce a new project funded by National Endowment for Democracy (NED). The project will be initiated in 6 provinces in the Central Region - Parwan, Kapisa, Punjsher, Logar, Wardak and Bamyán, to be completed over a 6-month period. The overall objective is to build the capacity of Afghan Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in human rights advocacy. The project is part of BRD's CSO Capacity Building Program.

The project aims to promote networking and collaboration between CSOs, develop a pool of CSO human rights trainers so that they can train other CSOs and to raise awareness about human rights protection and its significance for democracy and citizen empowerment in the community.

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BRD is now on Facebook
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New Video An Interview with Khan on BRD's Programs





Capacity Building of Government

Modern Management Training

Asia Foundation partnered with BRD to build the capacity of government officials of the Office of the President, the Office of Administrative Affairs and the National Security Department. The project is part of Asia Foundation's "Support to Centre of Government Project".

The objectives of the project were to enhance the capacity of local Government departments in governance, leadership and overall management and provide participants with the conceptual understanding and practical orientation in Basic Management, Planning, Organization Management, Authority, Responsibility & Delegation, Motivation, Meeting Management, Problem Solving, Decision Making, Leadership, Supervision, Monitoring & Evaluation, Performance Appraisal, Self-Development and gender related issues. 15 officials attended the 5-day training in Kabul.



The lead trainer was BRD's Mr. Abdullah Noorie - Head of BRD's Training Section. Mr. Noorie has more than 30 years of experience in teaching, training and facilitation and worked as project heads in various national and international organizations and NGOs. He is highly respected for his articulation, subject knowledge, presentation style, participatory methods, facilitation skills and professional maturity in handling participants' questions/discussions. Rated as one of the best trainers in Afghanistan with deep expertise in providing training to thousands of participants at different levels in various provinces of Afghanistan, he has a deep understanding of local issues/culture.

The Assistant Trainer Mr. Said Agha is experienced in NGO training. He helped in group facilitation, writing of program materials, translation and evaluation work.

Participants gained broader skills in management and thought the training was important and highly relevant to their work. They have expressed an interest and urgent need for report writing skills and help in the application of the skills and knowledge in the workplace.



Public Administration Reform

For better governance, rule of law and human rights

One of the most critical challenges facing Afghanistan following a quarter century of civil war and repression has been the establishment of a legitimate and credible government. The weak public sector is characterized by:

- Limited legislative oversight and representational experience of new democratic government institutions.
- Lack of resources and fiscal capacity as the Afghan government mobilizes fewer domestic resources as a percentage of GDP than any other government in the world. It has low levels of revenue to pay public sector wage bills and finance public investments.
- Lack of capacity to execute expenditures in much of the country due to inadequate financial tracking and management systems; lack of a functioning banking or electronic payments system and widespread insecurity.
- Lack of qualified and professional staff due to the loss of valuable human resources as a result of war, persecution and hyperinflation. The Government is thus unable to effectively fulfill its basic functions of service delivery and manage its own administration. Unable to attract skilled and qualified staff due to a poor pay scale, corruption by civil servants is prevalent, further ensuring the public sector remains short of educated and professional resources. Corruption within the justice sector is also widespread.
- Limited direct accountability to local population.

- Excessive centralization and lack of coordinated decision-making across Government, resulting in overlapping functions of ministries and poor clarity of lines of responsibility.

Much of Afghanistan's local and sub-national administrative structures remain under the *de-facto* control of illicit power holders and armed groups. Illicit power holders create private armed groups and pay officials far more than their salaries in bribes. Many of those working in government institutions are in fact part of the informal structure that controls the informal and illegal sectors of the economy.

The Government is currently being restructured and rationalized to ensure a fiscally sustainable public administration. The Public Administration Reform Program seeks to improve coordination between decision-making bodies within the central government; restructure ministries and simplify administrative procedures and business processes; improve service delivery through sub-national administration and create an effective, financially sustainable civil service that gradually phases out donor supplementation of salaries.

Additionally, the Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC) will strengthen rules and procedures for a professionally managed civil service, including promotion of high ethical standards and disciplinary measures for corrupt or unethical practices. The government is adopting a merit-based recruitment system and establishing a coherent, comprehensive skills development program for civil servants.

Source: Interim Afghanistan National Development Strategy

BRD has done extensive work in the capacity building of the public administration since 2002. Its training programs aim to equip public administrators with proper management, process/skills, knowledge and techniques to improve service delivery and become self-reliant and effective. Strong partnerships have been built with the President's Office, the Ministerial Government and local governments at the provincial and district levels. BRD also provides consulting services in the assessment of the Afghanistan Stability Program.

As a result of wide-ranging engagements with the government at all levels, BRD has gained a deep understanding of the challenges of capacity building of the government.

It was found that government participants lack professional knowledge. The quality of experience is lacking, despite an abundance of experience due to tenure in a position. Many have a low level of education, which hampers the learning process. In some cases, there is rigidity in approach and an indifference to change.

Participants desire but lack encouragement and coaching from supervisors in the workplace. There are no proper performance appraisal systems or even job descriptions. Management policies and organizational structures are unclear, resulting in little responsibility and accountability. Morale is low and there are attitude issues such as indifference to work performance.

However, many participants are also eager to learn and actively participate during training. They expressed their need for more professional development courses to improve their administration skills and skills in implementing development projects.

To have a sustainable impact, BRD adopts a **long-term approach** to any capacity building interventions. A **comprehensive** and **continuous** program targeted at any one government body and its local population is likely to have more far-reaching impacts and precipitate the desired changes in work ethics, attitude and performance of the government than a one-off intervention.

Program for Capacity Building of Public Sector:

- **Capacity building for social stability** - awareness raising and sensitization to issues resulting in conflicts.
- **Capacity building for organizational effectiveness** – focus on organizational, management and administration skills.
- **Capacity building for development project management** – skills required for the design, implementation and monitoring and evaluation of development projects.

Capacity building for social stability

Through numerous community interventions, BRD has been able to identify the issues resulting in potential conflicts, their effects, and underlying causes of conflict and the influencers of social stability. Provincial and district governments, Community Development Councils (CDCs)*, traditional shuras and Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are the major influencers of social stability in a community.

Conflicts arise usually as a result of lack of awareness and capacity to deal with and/or incorporate Human Rights, Gender Equity, Corruption, Conflict Management, Peace Training and Promotion of Private Enterprise Development in strategies, policies and processes. Through awareness raising and sensitization to these issues, the influencers become better informed and develop the skills and processes to address conflicts and restore social stability.

Capacity Building for organizational effectiveness

The capacity of the government to deliver services is dependent on whether it is able to function effectively and efficiently.

- Organizational development training comprise organization restructuring and/or rationalization with clear lines of reporting, responsibilities and authority; development and installation of job descriptions, key performance indicators and job competencies; a transparent performance appraisal and incentive system; rationalization of processes and procedures and a modern financial and information management system.
- Management and Administration Training comprise Monitoring Supervision and Evaluation, Communication Skills, Leadership, Record Keeping, Time Management, Report Writing, Computer Literacy, Information Management etc.

Capacity building for development project management

A huge amount of international aid is being funneled through Government Ministries, local governments and CDCs for the reconstruction of the country. Project management skills such as Project Design and Data Collection, Participatory Rural Appraisal, Objective Oriented Project Planning etc are vital for the successful delivery of development projects.

To promote mutual understanding and cooperation between the community and the local authorities, an important and critical part of the program comprise **multi-stakeholders** partnership building events/workshops.

Such partnership building sessions are designed for the stakeholders (traditional shuras, CSOs, CDCs and the local government authorities) to discuss conflict issues in their province, how each is dealing with conflicts, the difficulties and what needs to be done. They exchange ideas and come to understand the needs as well as obstacles faced by each group.

The aim is to facilitate networking and promote cooperation. Critically, dialogue between government and local population is increased to promote accountability and improve relationships.

Each stakeholder will develop action plans to incorporate the knowledge from the training programs in their daily jobs.

*CDCs were established throughout all Provinces and Districts In support of the National Solidarity Program, a massive effort by the government to reach rural communities across Afghanistan. The main objective of the CDCs is to provide much needed services to local communities until such time as local governments are capable of providing comprehensive support to the local population. Elected village-level CDCs reach consensus on development priorities, develop investment proposals and use grants and local labor to meet their needs.



Peace Building

Non-Violence Communication and Conflict Resolution for Civil Society Organisations

From November 3-8, 2007, BRD hosted the second national training on non-violence, peace building, and conflict resolution with Non-violent Communication (NVC). The 5-day intensive workshop was attended by members of local non-governmental organizations and government officials.

Catherine Cadden (Center for Non-violent Communication certified trainer and founder of the Temba School), Jesse Wiens (Center for Non-violent Communication certification candidate and founder of ZENVC), and Jiva Manske (MA, peace and conflict studies) all traveled from the United States to facilitate the training. Naghmeh Yazdanpanah from Iran, translated between English and Dari.

The trainings covered basic concepts and skills of nonviolence and NVC, as well as applications of non-violence to conflict resolution, project development, and project management. Over 20 participants, including 10 women from the Ministry of Women's Affairs, a representative from the Ministry of Economics, and representatives from Save the Children and other NGOs attended the training.

The training was based on Four Pillars of Non-violence:

- 1) Personal Commitment to Interdependence;
- 2) Seek to Join Alliances and Build Partnerships Through Understanding;
- 3) Non-violent Direct Action and
- 4) Reconciliation.

Drawing from the work of visionaries like Martin Luther King, Jr., Mohandas Gandhi, and Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan, the three trainers created these Pillars to facilitate an experiential process of participating in transformative social change. Pedagogically, the facilitators used a range of activities in the large group, in small groups, and in pairs to share elements of a reconciliation circle process that is applied around the world, notably in the United States and Brazil.

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Plans for sharing the training further within participants' own organizations, as well as proceeding with projects that applied what was learnt, marked the training's success.



Participants in an empathy card game

What is Non-Violent Communication?

Imagine connecting with the human spirit, in each person, in any situation.

Imagine interacting with others in a way that allows everyone's needs to be equally valued.

Imagine creating organizations and life-serving systems responsive to our needs and the needs of our environment.



Women in an empathy circle