

Demanding Accountability from Local Governance

Civil Society Action Report



Prepared by: Bureau for Reconstruction and Development (BRD Democracy Grant

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Civil Society Actions in Promotion of Accountability at the Local Governance Level

Back Ground:

BRD Under the National Endowment grant demanding accountability from the local governance, worked out to build up the horizontal linkages among the CSOs in order to increase their level of cooperation and also create CSO collective strength, with follow up training and workshops on anti-corruption and accountability, including the training on social auditing under the NED grant, where in response to BRD efforts CSOs also provided BRD with its full commitments for their engagement in promoting accountability at the local level as based on their existing capacity and also the situation.

BRD project team has been in regular contacts and visits of CSOs in the provinces, in order to record their practical action relevant to the promotion of accountability, advocacy and relation building activities with the authorities, for increasing the CSOs influences on provincial authorities and their participation in the key development, governance process. the source of all the information outlined below are the Civil Society from the Targeted provinces and recorded by BRD staff.

Ningarhar CSOs Network Action

1. The CSOs Network has continued its meetings with Provincial Governor and Provincial Council, the purpose of these meeting were to discuss the issue of corruption in the local government institutions including Human Trafficking in eastern region to facilitate a joint action by the provincial governance leadership and also provincial council, where the provincial governor has agreed to establish an oversight commission under the leadership of the Deputy Governor beside the government related institutions one representatives of the CSOs network included as member of the commission to work on the related issues and provide timely reports to the provincial governor.
2. The CSOs Network met with UNAMA eastern region, the purpose of the meeting was to express their concerns in regards to the selection process of representatives from the Civil Society to participate in the Tokyo Conference, as the lack of transparency in the process, the people who participated in the conference were not real representative of CSOs.
3. The CSOs Network met with the Special Representative of Secretary General of United Nation for Afghanistan, Mr. Jan Kobis, in the meeting members of the Civil Society discussed the issues of Transition, Corruption and the Security situation in the eastern region and also provided him with the CSOs point of view in those issues.
4. CSOs Network Executive Committee met with the Chairman of Independent Election Commission Mr.Manawi, the topic of the discussion were focused the current amendment in the electoral law from the civil society prospective and also the existing concerns of the CSOs in regards to the upcoming election has been discussed which was noted by chairman to be included for possible action by the election commission.

5. The CSOs network also participated in the consultation seminar, organized by FIFA, the purpose of the seminar was to review the amended draft of the electoral law and provide suggestion and comments from the civil society prospective, at the end of seminar all the comments and suggestion have been noted and submitted to the election commission.
6. The CSOs network in collaboration with the tribal leaders, has visited the Sarobi Power extension project which is currently extended to Ningarhar, to discuss the concerns of the local community from which the power extension line is passing, the Network also meet with the delegation from Ministry of Finance and also senior management of the power extension project. In the result the delegation after approval of Ningarhar Governor agreed to provide power to the villages from which the power lines are passing.
7. The CSO Network met with the independent Monitoring and Evaluation Committee Against Corruption (MEC), during the meeting the issues in regards to corruption at the local Institutions and also Governance related issues has been discussed, both parties agreed on the continued cooperation between MED and CSOs Network in combatting corruption and oversight on the services.
8. The CSOs Network once again met with the provincial governor to discuss the issue of the oversight role of the civil society on the services and also responding to the complaint of the people in regards to the services, in Ningahar province, it was agreed a commission consisting of the local government representatives (inclusive of Judiciary, Security and sect oral departments) and Civil Society Network representative who will meet on weekly basis and follow the people concerns and complaints in regards to the services and corruption issues in the provinces, the commission is meeting on weekly basis , which deal with the complaint and corruption issues at the local government institutions.
9. The Civil Society Network in collaboration with Ningarhar provincial council, has joint meetings with the provincial governor and also members of parliament to discuss the concerns of the Behsood District Community in regards to the Power Services to Behsood district and the construction of Behsood Bridge, which was damaged in last year explosion, the delegation has succeeded to encourage the support of concerned authority for their commitment to resolve the issues and also budget has been allocated for reconstruction of Behsood bridge in 1392.
10. CSOs Network met with the joint delegation of EU and MEC, the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the issues of governance, security and corruption, where the CSOs network members shared their observation on the above issues with the delegation and also requested their support for strengthening the Network capacity to provide continues follow up on these issues.
11. The CSOs Network members participated in the conference under People and Government organized by the Independent Directorate of Local Governance, where the CSOs network provided their point of view on the current status cooperation and linkages among the people and government.
12. The Civil Society Network met with the delegation from Independent Human Rights Commission , the issues of valiance against women in the provinces, and also cooperation between the CSOs network

AIHRC in eradicating violence against women can be strengthened, where both parties have been agreed to continue their cooperation and work on the issue in Ningarhar provinces.

13. The CSOs Network continues their regular participation in the provincial development committee and Sector Working group meetings in the province and provide their views from the community perspective in these meetings.

14. The CSOs Network in Ningarhar organized a sensitization session to the young journalists to effectively engage in combatting corruption and promoting accountability at the local level, the initiative took place in Jalal Abad, where young journalists from the local radios have been provided with the awareness on their role and responsibilities in promoting accountability at the local level.

15. The CSOs network organized one day people dialogue session in which elders from the surrounding districts of Ningarhar provinces participated, the Dialogue was focused on the status of service delivery, corruption at the local government institutions and their responsibility, in the result the CSOs network received feedback from community elders on the status of service delivery at the district level and their experience in regards to corruption in exchange of receiving services. Where there were many issues of corruption especially at the judiciary at the district level. The CSOs will convey these concerns to the provincial accountability committee for their action.

Panjsher CSOs Network Actions

1. Panjsher CSOs Network in collaboration with the members of provincial council through continued lobbying to the provincial Governor was succeeded to organize public reporting by the local government departments, around 200 representative of the people have been invited to the provincial capital to participate in the public reporting event, in which all the local government departments, including the provincial governor office has presented their services delivered, projects and upcoming plan including the budget information spent during the year, this was the first exercise in by the local government of showing accountability to the public.

2. The CSOs Network and Provincial Council joint committee conducted visits from the district, during the visit the joint committee met with the community elders and Shuras, the purpose of these visits were to sensitize the community elder in regards to their oversight role and also hearing their experiences in regards to the services delivered by the local departments, the committee has noted all the key issues was the accountability of some of the district governor towards their community, including the issues of attendance of the civil servants at the district level, the committee has reported these concerns to the provincial governor, where the governor. For addressing these concerns the provincial Governor has organized two days workshop to the district governors to aware them from their role and responsibilities including the role of the district shuras and other CSOs at the district level, they have been also instructed to ensure that the civil servants are fully present at their offices to provide adequate service to the people.

3. The joint committee also continued their meetings and collection of information and concerns of the local community, to be reported to the provincial governor and the line departments, where they have

established a good partnership with the local government, they have also provided financial support to organize awareness raising meetings for youths in regards to corruption and other civic activities and encouraged them to form youths movement against corruption.

4. The CSOs Network also is also invited to nominate their representation in the Peace council, where to provide the council with useful recommendations and inputs from the civil society prospective to the council, they will also be part of the monitoring team, who provide oversight on the implementation of the projects funded under the Peace council budget.

5. The CSOs through continues lobbying was able to establish accountability forum at the Pansjher Municipal Governance level, the forum is consisting of the Civil Society , Community Elders and also Mayer and their respective departments the purpose of this forum is to engagement of civil society in the services delivery by the Municipality and including the use of revenues collected by Municipality to delver services .

Bamyan Network Action

1. Bamyan CSOs Network follow up action, was meeting with the Shuras and other community based organized organizations at the district level, the purpose of these meetings were to organize these organizations and encouraged them to provide oversight on the services at the district level and share their findings with the CSOs network at the provincial level.

2. The network also conducted their meetings with the provincial council in order to establish a joint committee, who will provide regular oversight on the services and also collect the concerns of the community in regards to the services and other transparency related issues, and conflict management.

3. The CSOs network in Bamyan established a Public accountability form at the provincial level, consisting of the members of the provincial council, Civil Society and also representative from the governor office, the Forum is working to ensure accountability and will work with the local authorities to address concerns and gaps in varies processes at the provincial level.

Kapisa Civil Society Network Action

1. The CSOs network has regularly providing oversight on the service specially in the education sector, where currently their findings are the teaching quality in the schools are very low, and including the lack of text books in some schools at the district level, the findings are shared with the members of the provincial council of Kapisa, they are committed to follow the issue with the department of education.

2. The CSOs network in partnership with members of the provincial council was able to encourage the M.Raqi Municipality to establish accountability Forum at the Municipal Governance level, with the CSOs membership. The Forum is meeting on monthly basis, reviewing the status of the service delivery by the municipality as well as the proper usage of revenue collected by Municipality.

3. The CSOs network of Kapisa in partnership with the organized a one day joint session with the provincial line departments the purpose of this session was to inform the local department on the CSOs activities and strengthening their linkages with local government departments in order to increase support for the CSOs Activities in the province

Parwan Civil Society Network Action

1. Civil Society Network in Parwan organized to gather with the social protection sector organized a monitoring visits from the projects implemented by the departments of Labor and Social Affairs and Women Affairs. The purpose of the monitoring was to assess the quality and also its potential impact on the Beneficiaries. The team visited the vocational training projects, where the main findings were the selection of beneficiaries and also the quality of the training material provided were low. The findings are communicated in the related sector working group meetings and also reported to the provincial development committee meeting for their action.

2. The CSOs Network Chair participated in the social protection, Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights Sector Working Group meetings, presented the CSOs plan for providing oversight on the service delivery in the education sector and Judiciary, and some of the finding of their oversight such as living conditions in the Juvenile center and also the lack of text books in some of the schools in surrounding districts of charikar have been presented in the sectoral meetings.

3. The CSOs network met with the provincial Governor in Parwan, the purpose of the meeting was to discuss the role of CSOs in the decision making process at the local level and also oversight on the services, including the inclusion of CSOs activities in the provincial television. The provincial governor committed to increase CSOs role and participation in all the development and governance related process at the provincial level in order to ensure transparency and instructed the manager of the local television to ensure that the activities of the local civil society organizations are included in the programs.

Wardak Civil Society Actions

1. CSOs network met with the provincial governor of Wardak province, the purpose of the meeting were to discuss the oversight and social audit of the projects and services of the local departments to be conducted by the civil society in Wardak province. The provincial governor has appreciated CSOs initiative and expressed their full support from their activities.

3. The CSOs Network conducted meetings with the provincial council, the purpose of these meetings were to facilitate a joint monitoring from services and projects implemented by the line departments in the result a joint CSOs and PC mentoring team established. The team will continues to monitor services and projects of all the sectors in the Wardak Province.

4. CSOs PC joint mentoring team provided monitoring from the projects implemented by the Municipalities, Department of Education, Agriculture and Rural Development and during the visit the team also met the elders of the communities to find out their experience about the quality of services

and also quality of the projects. In the result there were many findings, such as quality of the services, slow progress, un-qualified staff, lack of participation of the local communities.

5. The CSOs network organized a joint meeting with the sector departments and district governor, the purpose of the meeting was to communicate their findings from their monitoring visits, where all the department are committed to address all the concerns and finding presented by the CSOs team.

6. The CSOs Network continued their participation in the sector working groups and Provincial development meetings, were able to discuss major transparency issues in regards to the projects, programs and services delivered at the local level.

Takhar CSOs Network Actions

1. Takhar CSOs organized a meeting with the District Development Assemblies (DDAs) and District Shuras, the purpose of the meting were to sensitize and engaged community based organization in prompting accountability at the district level, and also provide CSOs network with all the information in regards to the quality of services, all the CBOs has been expressed their full support from the CSOs initiative, and express their willing to be engaged. These linkages will provide the CSOs with broader reach to the districts.

3. Through joint efforts of CSOs and provincial council a public accountability meeting has been organized in Takhar province in representative from the community elders from the district level was also invited , where all the key line departments reported to the public. Where the support for the one day accountability meeting has been provided by the Afghanistan Subnational Governance program through UNDP.

Kundzu CSOs Action

1. Kunduz CSOs has initiated program, in promoting accountability through media, they organized one day session on promoting accountability through reporting to the media, the local members of the local media organizations has been invited to the meeting, during the session varies ways and tools and the role of media in promotion of accountability on and how to report accountability findings in the media reports. The initiative will support CSOs efforts for combatting corruption and promoting accountability using varicose tools.

Ghazni CSOs Network Action

1. Ghazni CSOs Network conducted sensitization campaign about transparency accountability to the school's students, in Ghazni total 50 male and female students has been sensitized in regards to the corruption, accountability.

2. CSOs Network is currently in the organization stage, and still they are looking the possibility of the implementation of their advocacy plan, considering the current security situation Ghazni province.

Conclusion:

Considering the current context and also the security challenges in the provinces of Afghanistan, Civil society organizations trained the targeted provinces are continued their follow up actions, using varicose approaches based on their existing capacity, which indicate a momentum of CSOs started at the local level and its one of the key outcome and achievement of the grant. there are many ways for CSOs to effectively engage in accountability and transparency issues, and their need for capacity building in term of knowledge and skills have been addressed through the grant , but the key challenge which limits the CSOs actions is resources .



