

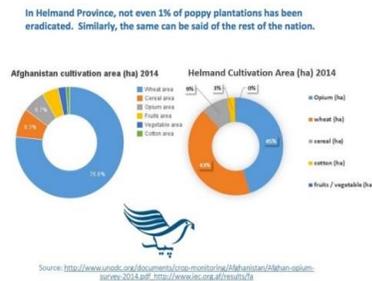


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FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AFGHANISTAN

SNAPSHOT

A Reporter Charts a New Path



Rohullah Arman's first data journalism story for the PAYK Investigative Journalism Center explores Afghanistan's failure to eradicate opium cultivation.

With renewed calls for greater transparency in Afghanistan, it is important now more than ever that the Media learn to tell data-driven stories.

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In a country in which under a third of the population is literate, Internet is widely in- accessible, and reliable statistics are nearly impossible to come by, Afghan journalists are hard-pressed to produce stories grounded in hard evidence.

But Afghan journalists are no strangers to overcoming adversity, and several enter- prising reporters are overcoming the odds to tackle data journalism head-on. Rohullah Arman of the PAYK Investigative Journalism Center is one such journalist.

After attending two rounds of weeklong data journalism trainings as part of the USAID-funded Afghan Civic Empowerment Program, he published his first in-depth investigation of opium cultivation in Afghanistan, with the support of Internews' data journalism mentor Eva Constantaras.

In Afghanistan, even the reporters interested in exploring this style of journalism are often at a loss when it comes to finding sources of data. "After releasing my first data-driven report," he said, "my colleagues asked, 'Where did you receive all this data from? Who prepared and provided you with these charts?'" Arman knows the challenges he is up against: few data sources have yet to be digitally migrated, the majority of available data is not in Dari or Pashto, and government officials have been slow to implement the country's new Access to Information Law.

Nevertheless, he is still eager to pursue data journalism, and is finalizing a piece on female drug addiction. Reflecting on his new skillset, he said, "This report is an important step in the progress of the media sector."

For more information, please contact: Fawad Barekzai at fbarekzai@internews.org