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AFGHANISTAN

SUCCESS STORY

Afghan Emerging Civil Society Leaders Establishes International Relations

Youth are positively influenced by the Emerging Civil Society Leaders' Program through gaining knowledge for future improvement and dialogue. Subsequently, Afghan youth build international relations and extend the emerging leaders program in their provinces



The Emerging Leaders' group photo with members from the host organization – Youth Initiative for Human Rights – in front of the Bosnian Parliament in Sarajevo.

USAID promote civil society and media engagement that enables Afghan citizens to influence policy, monitor government accountability, and serve as an advocate for political reform.

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The Emerging Civil Society Leaders 2015 Program is a project of the USAID supported ACEP which identified 34 young leaders with equal male and female participants from across Afghanistan. The program provides a number of capacity building activities. Youth make up 65% of the population of Afghanistan and thus are a significant cohort requiring skill development across social and political realms.

The ACEP/Emerging Civil Society Leaders' Program is well-known among Afghan youth. The program identifies and builds knowledge of young males and females from across Afghanistan through trainings in; political activism, public speaking, leadership, management, gender, peace & conflict, and CSO law. In a recent international exposure visit, conducted from 5 to 14 September the Civil Society Emerging Leaders traveled to Bosnia and Herzegovina to discuss the role of youth engagement in post-conflict, multi-ethnic countries. The youth – 16 women and 16 men from 25 provinces in Afghanistan – attracted headlines across Bosnia and Herzegovina as they met with their Bosnian peers, civil society activists, members of Parliament, academics, historians, leading media outlets, grassroots activists and key officials to exchange and learn from the Bosnia Herzegovina experiences.

“The experience of this program has taught me how to stand up again, though I’ve fallen down many times before,” said Ramiz Bakhtia. “Now I’m organizing a community-based version of the ECSL program to benefit local emerging leaders, those who can inspire others and make change in their small communities.

At the end of the visit a bi-literal declaration on cooperation and dialogue between youth leaders in Bosnia Herzegovina and Afghanistan was collaboratively drafted and declared. Youth from the two countries also created a joint Facebook page. These initiatives are the first positive steps taken towards build lasting relationships between youth activists. It is hoped that these steps will be followed by the creation of further global networks with Afghan youth.

“I gained many ideas from their experiences because after their civil war in the 1990s, the Bosnian people experienced a period of transition much like what we are living through now in Afghanistan. Because they’ve overcome these challenges, their input is valuable to us and may help us determine how to ensure a better future for women and youth.” said Mohammed Mustafa Raheal.