



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

AFGHANISTAN

SUCCESS STORY

Leadership Recognized in Afghan Youth Parliament Presidency

Skills training and effective networking instilled confidence for young Helmand ECSL to successfully lobby for the Afghan Youth Parliament presidency.



Above: As AYP president, Agha Mohamad Quraishi is committed to advancing youth interests.

Below: Afghan Youth Parliament in session.



The Emerging Civil Society Leaders (ECSL) program recently completed its fifth annual intake (15 women; 19 men), again involving all 34 Afghanistan provinces. Facilitated under the Afghanistan Civil Engagement Program (ACEP), and funded by USAID, ECSL identifies Afghan youth leaders and trains them to develop the following skills: effective personal communication, producing written and verbal presentations, networking, and creating peaceful youth activism.

Agha Mohamad Quraishi is a 2016 ECSL from Helmand province, who quickly realized the benefits of interacting with like-minded activists on social media, exchanging personal experiences and sharing a vision, which can be a catalyst for positive change. Regularly participating in capacity-building sessions conducted by ACEP in Kabul, he further elevated his profile through regular event attendances. In Helmand, Quraishi applied his skills to organizing community meetings that highlighted local issues, and promoted participants to collaborate to develop solutions.

A personal breakthrough occurred when Deputy Ministry of Youth Affairs called for youth parliamentarian applications to the Afghan Youth Parliament (AYP), which is a forum endorsed by President Ashraf Ghani, established to progress youth interests. Following a series of selection assessments, Quraishi was appointed to the AYP, which consists of 130 men and women aged 18-30. Among other activities, AYP regularly gathers to debate the merits of political stability, security, and education, and to propose recommendations to advance Afghan youth policy.

Quraishi was nominated as one of three candidates for the position of AYP President; a challenging role with substantial leadership responsibilities. To bolster his election prospects, he began a campaign that involved meeting regularly with AYP parliamentarians, to explain that if elected, his views would be balanced, fair and democratic. He lobbied his ECSL national network to promote his candidacy directly to youth parliamentarians in their respective provinces. This contributed significantly towards his successful election as AYP president, with Quraishi stating: "As AYP president I will work hard to advance youth interests in Afghanistan. I could not have requested so many people across the country to advocate for me without the confidence and communications skills ECSL has provided me."