

FACT SHEET

Employment Assistance and Development Centers - providing a second chance

March 2006



The IOM EADC in Herat



The IOM EADC in Mazar I Shariff



The CARE EADC in west Kabul

PHOTO: POST CONFLICT REFORMS

Concept - The Employment and Development Assistance Centers (EADC's) were designed to provide one to one guidance for DDR'd personnel seeking employment. They also had a second role providing assistance to new businesses as and when they encountered hurdles and obstacles, which, without experience could bring the dream and the, mid to long term, sustainability of the benefits obtained through the UN reintegration option to a premature end - depriving the person of an ability to earn a livelihood.

USAID rolled out the concept of the EADC initially with an Implementing partner, IoM, in Mazar in the summer of '05 before expanding the concept in October / November '05 to include Herat and with the assistance of CARE Bamiyan, Charikar in Parwan and west Kabul.

The objective was to register and match former combatants seeking employment with local vacancies. IT would then work with those who had their own business to assist them by introducing the concepts of networking to develop synergy whilst providing business lessons in areas such as book keeping, marketing etc. and assist them, as they encountered day to day problems with their businesses, with one to one advice.

In reality, all efforts and the limited funding provided by USAID went into registering the FC's and identifying employment opportunities. The task of identifying employment opportunities proved more difficult and time consuming than expected. Only later, when systems were in place was there time to catch up and start to use synergy with other programs to identify and offer additional business courses aimed assisting the self employed.

The typical scenario would restrict registration to two specific times a week. Applicants were interviewed and counseled to clarify what type of work they were qualified to do and or willing to consider. The remainder of the week would be proportionately divided between matching applicants to vacancies, arranging interviews and visiting employers to identify vacancies.

Pilot results as at the end of March 06. EADC's funded to May 06.

EADC's	No. registered	No. placed
Mazar -I- Sharif July 05 (IOM)	556	166
Heart Oct 05 (IOM)	465	93
Kabul Oct 05 (CARE)	1225	48
Charicar Nov 05 (CARE)	2045	11
Bamiyan Nov 05 (CARE)	351	29
Totals	4,642	347

Registrations would have increased greatly if the EADC's had been publicized, if numbers successfully placed were higher and if a national network of regional offices was established reflecting DDR hot spots, such as in Kabul, and providing rural outreach.

Assistance to Afghanistan (continued)



AN EADC Presentation to the local and international organizations to encourage them to employment suitable DDR'd soldiers and officers



At a meeting of local construction companies they all expressed their support for the local EADC



DDR's soldiers placed in reconstruction employment

Lessons Learnt - Key to success is identifying proactive nationals with initiative and a personal drive to assist DDR'd persons. This drive was found to be lacking in the UN's ILO / AGEF MoLSA regional employment centers. In most cases, the Ministry staff lacked motivation and the drive to assist applicants – if they were even there. If there was nothing to do, USAID funded staff would be out visiting employers to learn about their needs and identify vacancies.

It was important to use the minimal resources effectively. Set days were identified for registering FC's to provide time to visit local employers to introduce the concept and benefits of the EADC's and discuss the moral reasons for employing DDR's personnel. The soldiers' sacrifices were noted but identifying vacancies for DDR'd personnel proved difficult as employers are under great pressure to employ family members and friends or simply visit the informal local exchange operating on specific road junctions – skilled to the left, unskilled to the right.

Employers need to be educated to understand the benefits to their business of being able to use the EADC's to identify qualified personnel with proven track records that can be employed on a daily or long term basis and start work immediately.

In the short term, donors need to use their influences to introduce and enforce the concept of employment preferences and priority contracting. This will assist in placing the DDR'd former combatants in mid term employment and establishing their business whilst they mature and identify their markets. [See micro contracting and priority preference briefs.](#)

The EAC's also provide an early warning system identifying concentrations of numbers of unemployed DDR personnel, and political concerns raised by local leaders, such as we are seeing in Parwan, towards which emergency cash for work programs could be directed in the short term to meet needs and prevent issues arising whilst implementing mid to long term measures to permanently address the matter.

The average FC works on a daily wage basis. Wages are discounted by employers by up to a 1/3rd in return for the guarantee of regular work. Self employed FC's will often take daily work to subsidize their businesses. *“when soldiers are introduced to any organization you should regularly visit them to check conditions”*

Unemployment rises significantly as the number of personnel seeking work increases in the winter as the amount of daily work falls – for those working in construction or agriculture. Donors should consider winter wage labor programs in the short to medium term and time requirements to address this issue.

Assistance to Afghanistan (continued)



DDR De-miners who have been successfully placed by EADC, particularly with RONCO



DDR soldiers placed as an auto mechanic



DDR soldiers placed on USAID school desk and chair projects with DDR small businesses

Vocational Training provided by IP's has to be linked to the requirements of the private sector and should incorporate job placement leading to full time employment for a suitable period of time.

Easily available, on going, good advice to small businesses and the private sector as a whole is essential to promoting the legitimate economy and providing a future for the Country. Inexperienced small businesses are vulnerable to trip at the smallest obstacle. Good business advice needs to be available to assist them with specific issues and provide on going advice in conjunction with providing access to more general business lessons – accounting, marketing, etc.

Finding suitably qualified personnel in Country for IP's to offer business advice is difficult. IP's should look to recruit from the sub region to gain a balance between the costs and the experience required.

The bad perception of DDR'd FC's still needs to be addressed to address prejudices and the fear that the FC will be a trouble maker if employed. Many DDR'd personnel do not admit to have been in the military to avoid being tarnished with the same brush as those that abused their position of responsibility and stole. *“it is excellent that whenever an officer or soldier is introduced to an organization, that those people avoid using discriminating words, which upsets the military personnel”.*

Access to capital is the key concern for new business – not helped in Afghanistan due to the lack of accessibility to private funding. More facilities are required to assist growing businesses.

A good carpenter does not naturally become a good businessman. Markets needs to be set up and networks developed to introduce good managers, equity investors and tradesmen to each other to establish competitive businesses and associations that will produce profits, employ people and pay taxes that will boost the economy.

Richard Scarth March 06

Further detailed information is available on www.ddrafg.com