Leading Change in Higher Education for Disadvantaged Youth:
Lessons Learned from Latin America & Afghanistan

Panel Overview

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Presentation</th>
<th>Presenter(s)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The Road to Employment: USAID’s Efforts to Strengthen Higher Education and Workforce Outcomes for Disadvantaged Youth</td>
<td>Megan Meinen US Agency For International Development (Ana Flórez will present)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Diagnosing the Program: Using Initial Cross-Cutting Assessment to Build Capacity of Institutions in Latin America and the Caribbean</td>
<td>Jim Hahn &amp; Ana Flórez FHI 360</td>
</tr>
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<td>4. Strengthening Higher Education in Afghanistan through Gender Equity and Career Services</td>
<td>Lawrence Goldman FHI 360</td>
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Final Discussion
About FHI 360 & UMass Amherst

**FHI 360**
- US-based international nonprofit working to improve the **health and well-being** of people in the US and around the world.
- Work in multiple sectors such as health, education, civil society, economic development.
- Use **research and evidence** to design and deliver programs to change behaviors, increase access, and improve lives.
- Staff of over **4,000 professionals** in more than **60 countries**
- Variety of funders, including US Government, private foundations

**University of Massachussetts at Amherst**
- Nationally-ranked public research university offering:
  - 112 undergraduate degrees
  - 6 associate's degrees
  - 77 master’s degrees
  - 48 doctoral programs.
- 9 schools and colleges.
- 2017 enrollment of **23,400 undergraduates** and **6,900 graduate students**.
- **1,300 full time** instructional faculty

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**USAID**

**The Road to Employment:**
USAID’s Efforts to Strengthen Higher Education and Workforce Outcomes for Disadvantaged Youth

Megan Meinen
Youth and Workforce Development Specialist
USAID Bureau of Latin America and the Caribbean
USAID EDUCATION OVERVIEW

- United States Agency for International Development (USAID) works in education in over 50 countries worldwide.
- Education work focuses on three key goals:
  1. Improving reading skills of children
  2. Strengthening youth workforce development and higher education (HE)
  3. Expanding access to quality education in crises and conflict environments

IMPORTANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

Higher Education has a unique role in preparing the workforce, raising industry standards, building research and evidence, and increasing overall GDP to decrease poverty.

- **Economic Gains**: Increasing average level of higher education by just one year in a country can add 18% to GDP (UNICEF).
- **Social Gains**: increased political participation; increased intergenerational mobility.
- **Development Goals**: critical to the success of other development goals: health, agriculture, environmental management, democracy and governance.

In 2017, USAID allocated $235 million for Higher Education activities.
IMPORTANCE OF HIGHER EDUCATION

• Globally, enrollment in higher education has increased dramatically (gross HE enrollment rates have nearly doubled in LAC, East Asia, and Sub Saharan Africa, source: WB)

• Higher Education Sector is continually expanding:
  – Universities
  – Community colleges
  – Polytechnics
  – Technological institutes

HIGHER EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

• Increased visibility: agreement among several actors of HE’s importance

• As enrollment has increased and Higher Education itself has diversified, HE institutions have assumed responsibility for far wider range of teaching and learning activities and occupational preparation than in the past
  – Labor market assessments, situational learning, research and development, and improved career services

• HE systems are undergoing substantial reforms aimed at encouraging institutions to be more responsive to the social and economic needs of countries
HIGHER EDUCATION CHALLENGES

• **Equitable Access:** Enrollment rates up, but access still not equitable
  – Especially for women, rural, and lower socio-economic status

• **Quality and Relevance of Learning:** outdated curricula, lack of contact with private sector

• **Institutional Management:** Systems grew fast, and not always in a managed or deliberate way.
  – Common issues: over-control by central administrations, lack of freedom and incentives to innovate, lack of accountability.

• HE institutions **must view both students and the private sector as their clients**, serving the needs of both.
  – Difficult to do and for many institutions it is a big shift in philosophy.

LESSONS LEARNED

• **Access has not increased at the same rate for all groups**, need special efforts for disadvantaged students

• **Must focus on quality and relevance of classes:** includes working with private sector and with teachers

• As HEIs gain more autonomy it is critical that leaders have appropriate management skills
Diagnosing the Problem: Using Initial Cross-Cutting Assessments to Build Capacity of Institutions in Latin American and the Caribbean

Ana Flórez, Director of Post-Primary Education
Jim Hahn, Program Manager
FHI 360
Presentation Roadmap

1) Advance Program Overview, Context, and Approach

2) Methodology & Results of Diagnostic Assessments
   - Labor Market Assessment
   - Institutional Landscaping Analysis
   - Study of Barriers to Access and Completion

3) Using Assessment Results to Guide Implementation
   - Translating assessment results to action
   - Country specific examples

4) Next Steps in Leading Capacity for Change

USAID Advance Program Overview

**Objective:** Strengthen 2- and 3-year technical post-secondary degree programs so that more young people, especially those from disadvantaged populations, obtain new or better employment.

- **Timeframe:** 2015-2020
- **Location:**
  - Honduras, Guatemala: Technical education part of 4-year universities
  - Jamaica: Existing community college system
Higher Education Context in LAC Region

- **37%**
  - Large *skills gap* between tertiary training and labor market demand (lack of technical & soft skills).

- **15x & 40%**
  - Over last 30 years, significant growth in coverage & enrollment in higher education, but *lack of equal opportunity* for disadvantaged youth.

Program Theory of Change

**THEORY OF CHANGE** | Phases of a Young Person’s Career

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Before entering University</th>
<th>During University or technical training</th>
<th>In the workplace</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What will I do in the future?</td>
<td>I have no idea</td>
<td>I don’t want to be a cog in a wheel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who am I?</td>
<td>I don’t want to be</td>
<td>No, because this does not meet my expectations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LAC RWFD Program and partner actions</td>
<td>Employers and alumni actions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**REACH BACK (IR 2)**
- Better information to make choices
  - I make a proactive choice
  - I have confidence in the value of my contribution

**REACH OUT (IR 1)**
- Better equipped (with soft skills, relevant content, and contacts)
  - Yes, because I am motivated, high-performing, and rewarded

**REACH IN (IR 1)**
- Better performance (productivity)

*Reach Back*
Activities conducted with high school age youth to help them understand their choices whether they are selecting a course of study or career path, or planning to go directly into the labor market.

*Reach Out*
Activities to engage the private sector and use existing sector models and collaboration to ensure that youth have access to the necessary information, skills, and networks to approach potential employers with a viable proposition.

*Reach In*
Activities to track and support invisibly placed youth, gather feedback from employers, and identify “success factors” associated with highly productive and motivating workplaces.
Advance Program Approach

1. Students demonstrating market relevant skills increased (education quality increased).
2. Equitable access for disadvantaged individuals to target fields increased.

Labor Market Assessment: Approach

**Purpose**
- Identify *priority economic sectors* with a *high demand* for technical education graduates.

**Methodology**
- Quantitative analysis of *secondary data* to understand market trends
- Qualitative *interviews with employers and academic institutions* to understand skills needs.
**Labor Market Assessments: Results**

**Priority Sectors & Value Chain Maps**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Honduras</th>
<th>Guatemala</th>
<th>Jamaica</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Health Services</td>
<td>1. Legumes and vegetables</td>
<td>1. Tourism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Tourism</td>
<td>2. Textiles and apparel</td>
<td>2. Logistics and Transportation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Tourism</td>
<td>5. Creative Industries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Common Skills Needs for Tourism and Agribusiness Sectors**

- **Soft Skills**: confidence, professional ethics, motivation
- **Technical Skills**: food processing, logistics and marketing, entrepreneurship

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**Position, Occupation, and Education Level in the Business Tourism Value Chain vs. Existing/Inexisting Degree Programs in Honduras**
Closer Look: Tourism

Existing Career/Degree Program to Strengthen: Business Tourism Administration

New Career/Degree Program to Develop: Tourism and Safety

Institutional Landscaping Analysis: Approach

Purpose
- Mapping of post-secondary technical training institutions & degree programs
  - 15 in Honduras, 8 in Guatemala, 13 in Jamaica
- High level information on overall institutional capacity

Methodology
- Interviews with faculty
- Review of secondary data
- Self-assessment using institutional capacity rubric
- Ranking of institutions based on data collected, and key considerations like geographic location, Advance Program objectives, academic alignment with priority sectors
Institutional Landscaping Analysis: Results

• **9 institutions selected (4 public + 5 private)**

• **Notable areas for capacity Improvement**

  - Lack of updated information on economic trends (H, G, J)
  - Relevant curricula and pedagogy (H, G, J)
  - Tracking systems for student graduates (H, G, J)
  - Indicators to measure technical tertiary education (H, G)
  - Flexible options for student enrollment (H, G, J)

Study of Barriers to Access & Completion: Approach

**Purpose**

- Define disadvantaged youth for each country context
- 3 perspectives for barriers: Gender, Community, Student

**Methodology**

- Interviews with approximately 800+ youth per country
- Approximately 20 focus groups with students, faculty, & community per country
- Identification of key barrier categories for each country
Study of Barriers to Access and Completion: Results

Situational
Socioeconomic, need to work, migration/safety, gender roles at home, geography/distance

Institutional
Application requirements; inadequate pedagogy; inflexible class schedules

Educational trajectory
Career guidance, low level of secondary education

Dispositional
Student attitudes, motivation, prejudice, lack of emotional support

Common Findings Across the Studies

Common findings
Technical tertiary education lacks relevance, quality, and access.
Lack of time, attention, and resources to technical education.
Factors and actors inside and outside of universities are disconnected.

Implementation approach
• Create paths for productive citizenship
• Teach soft skills
• Strengthen teacher and staff capacity
• Modernize admissions/recruitment
• Increase access for disadvantaged students (300 full scholarships)
• Form task teams within each university to strengthen and champion technical degree programs (especially in bachelor’s level institutions)
• Engage private sector in designing different paths for productive citizenship, teacher PD, and labor bridging.
• Engage community and K-12 schools in recruitment.
Capacity Building Strategy

Institution selection, based on cross-cutting assessments

- Curriculum & Pedagogy
- Scholarship Programs
- Staff/faculty development
- Recruitment & Admissions
- Labor Market Bridging

Institutional capacity strategy

Program completion & self-sustaining improvements

Country Highlight: Guatemala

**Universidad Panamericana**

Expanded technical degree programs to campus in Western Highlands region.

- **Emphasize technical education** in 4-year university
- Engage more **disadvantaged youth**
- Boost **local economy** and spark **social change** and mobility
Honduras

- **Universidad Cristiana Nuevo Milenio & Centro Universitario Tecnologico**: Private institutions investing in technical education

- Technical education has the **attention of the government**
  - *Triple Helix*: Government + Universities + Private Sector

Country Highlight: Jamaica

**Council of Community Colleges of Jamaica**

- **Governing body** for community colleges in Jamaica.
- Strengthening **coordination and collaboration across community colleges**. Change at scale.
- Opportunity to influence **island-wide uptake of technical education reform** & influence social change
USWDP Overview
Goal and Objectives

Goal

Increase the employability of university graduates in Afghanistan by improving the quality and relevance of higher education, specifically academic programs that align with workforce needs

Objectives

• Establish academic programs and career services that help students transitions from school to work
• Improve the management and use of higher education resources
**USWDP Overview**

**Implementation Details**

**Funder**
USAID/Afghanistan

**Period of Performance**

**Counterparts**
Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE)
11 Public universities (4 in Kabul, 7 in provinces)

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**USWDP Overview**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Five-year project:</th>
<th>Funder:</th>
<th>Implementers:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014 to 2018</td>
<td>USAID</td>
<td>FHI360, University of Massachusetts (lead technical partner), Purdue University, Altai Consultants and Afghan Holding Group</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Aim:** To develop Afghanistan’s workforce through higher education

**Targeted Institutions:**
11 Public Universities and Ministry of Higher Education

**Activities:**
- Market oriented degree programs
- Academic degree scholarships
- Systems development
- Capacity development of HE management
- University Career Centers
### Existing Bachelor's Degree Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Degree</th>
<th>Afghan Partner University</th>
<th>US Partner University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Counselling</td>
<td>Kabul University</td>
<td>Hunter College</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Stomatology</td>
<td>Kabul University of Medical Sciences</td>
<td>University of Minnesota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Midwifery</td>
<td>Kabul University of Medical Sciences</td>
<td>University of Minnesota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Allied Health Sciences</td>
<td>Kabul University of Medical Sciences</td>
<td>University of Minnesota</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Business Administration</td>
<td>Nangarhar University</td>
<td>University of Kentucky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Geology, Exploration and Extraction of Oil and Gas</td>
<td>Jawzjan University</td>
<td>Texas A&amp;M University</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### New Bachelor's Degree Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Degree</th>
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<th>US Partner University</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Business Admin.</td>
<td>Kabul University</td>
<td>Ball State University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Kabul University</td>
<td>University of Neb. Omaha</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Energy</td>
<td>Kandahar University</td>
<td>Texas A&amp;M University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Counseling</td>
<td>Herat University</td>
<td>Hunter College</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Balkh University</td>
<td>University of Neb. Omaha</td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Food Technology</td>
<td>Herat University</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Agribusiness</td>
<td>Balkh University</td>
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<td>Agribusiness</td>
<td>Kunduz University</td>
<td>Purdue University</td>
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## Master’s Degree Programs

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<td>MBA</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>MBA</td>
<td>Herat University</td>
<td>University of Denver</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Master of Finance and Accounting</td>
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<td>Master of Public Health</td>
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<td>Master of Hydraulics and Hydro-technical Structures</td>
<td>Kabul Polytechnic University</td>
<td>Texas A&amp;M University</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Master of Education Leadership and Management</td>
<td>Shaheed Rabbani Education University (SREU)</td>
<td>University of Massachusetts</td>
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## Associate’s Degree Programs

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<tbody>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Business Accounting</td>
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<td>Business Administration</td>
<td>Nangarhar University</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Business Administration</td>
<td>Herat University</td>
<td>University of Massachusetts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Information Technology</td>
<td>Kabul Polytechnic University</td>
<td>Central Georgia Technical College</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Bio Medical Equipment Technology</td>
<td>Kabul University of Medical Sciences</td>
<td>Community Colleges of Spokane</td>
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### Capacity Development

<table>
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<th>AREAS</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Quality</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Assurance</td>
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### Policy Documents & Quality Assurance

- Mission/Vision/Values
- Curriculum
  - Learning Objectives
  - Courses/Sequence
  - Pedagogical Approach
  - Materials
  - Assessment
  - Capstone
- Advising
- Recruitment and Admissions
- Administrative Structure
- Finance and Budget
- Alignment with Quality Assurance Standards
## International Exchanges

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>#</th>
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<th>Number of Exchange Programs</th>
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<th>Female</th>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Azerbaijan</td>
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<td>China</td>
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<td>China</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
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<td>Egypt</td>
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<td>France</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>7</td>
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<td>30</td>
<td>226</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>260</td>
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## In-Kind Support to Degree Programs

- Honoraria for academic program steering committees and instructors
- Administrative and operational support for program start-up
- Grants to enhance academic facilities and learning environments
  - Improved classrooms
  - New and updated laboratories
  - Specialized equipment
Scholarships to Upgrade the Skills of Afghan University Faculty Members

- 2 Afghan faculty members provided scholarships for Ph.D. studies in Europe
- 18 Afghan faculty members received scholarship to get Master’s degrees from countries within the Asia/Pacific region
- 28 Afghan faculty members are pursuing their graduate studies within Afghanistan
- 51 young women received scholarships to study at the graduate and associate degree levels within Afghanistan.

Gender Equity: Opportunities for Female Students and Faculty Members

**Targets:**
- Gender parity in higher education (50% of students and 50% of higher education professionals) 
- Improved opportunities for females and “safe and secure environments to study without harassment” 
  *(Gender Strategy for Higher Education, 2014)*

**Reality (female participation in higher education):**
- 2004: 21% of public university students / 17% of faculty members *(World Bank)*
- 2015: Almost 23% of public university students and 21% of faculty members were female *(Ministry of Higher Education)*
Gender Equity: USWDP Strategies

- Minimum of 30% female participation in all USWDP funded activities (up to 50% in select Kabul-based activities)
- Scholarships for female students admitted to select academic programs supported by USWDP
- Proactive publicity to entice female applicants for USWDP funded academic programs
- Scholarships for female faculty members to upgrade credentials (including, transportation and housing for programs in Afghanistan)

Gender Equity: Challenges Encountered by USWDP

- Public universities in provinces have proportionally few female applicants at the undergraduate level, significantly fewer at the graduate level
- Many degree programs developed with USWDP support are in disciplines that don’t attract females
- Few female faculty members are trained in the disciplines of the new programs
- Few female faculty members have the qualifications (including language) to study outside of Afghanistan
- Females often encounter personal and cultural barriers to professional development opportunities
Gender Equity:
Anticipated Outcomes of USWDP Strategies

- 22 additional female faculty members with advanced degrees
- More programs with explicit gender enrollment targets
- Sustainable mechanisms established for scholarships for female students in select programs
- More female graduates (and eventually faculty members) in disciplines that traditionally had not been attractive to female students
- **Greater awareness at universities and in MoHE that gender parity is a long term MoHE commitment**

Safe Learning Environments:
USWDP Support for MoHE Anti-Harassment Strategy

- Creation of Gender Advisor positions at all public universities
- MoHE Nondiscrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy, 2016
- Creation of a harassment complaint review process for MoHE and public universities and piloting of the process at one public university
  - Policy Implementation Committee
  - Complaints Review Committee
  - Campus-wide gender, harassment, and discrimination awareness campaign
Safe Learning Environments:  
USWDP Support for MoHE Anti-Harassment Strategy

Career Services: Helping University Graduates  
Transition from School to Work

Objectives:

• Create a career center model to be replicated at public universities across Afghanistan
• Develop university-based mechanisms to engage potential employers in decisions on course offerings, curriculum content, and extracurricular learning
• Provide a direct link between students and potential employers prior to graduation
• Create the capacity for universities to provide students extracurricular training tailored to the needs/expectations of potential employers
Career Services:
USWDP Strategies to Foster a Concept of “Career Services”

• Creation of career centers at 10 public universities

Career Services:
Creation of Career Centers

• Career centers were created at 10 public universities
• USWDP provided initial support:
  – functioning training center and training equipment
  – administrative personnel and trainers
  – in-kind support (Internet, supplies, etc.)
• Universities committed to preparing for the transfer of the centers (and operating costs) within 2-3 years
• Career counseling was piloted in 2017

To date, no university has assumed full operational responsibility for its career center.
Career Services: Employers Relations

- University Industry Advisory Councils (UIACs) were created at 11 public universities
- USWDP provided secretariat support through the career centers:
  - identification of UIAC members
  - coordination of meetings convened by chancellor
  - administrative services and in-kind support
- University chancellors committed to convene meetings

To date, the success of the UIAC model has been uneven. Some universities successfully adopted the model. Other universities have struggled to make good use of the UIAC concept.

Career Services: Provision of Extracurricular Training Programs

- USWDP developed a standard package of trainings:
  - Soft skills
    - Personal development skills (effective communications, report writing, time management, and office ethics)
    - Pre-employability skills (job search and networking, CV writing, interviewing)
  - Computer Management and Office Automation (CMOA)
    - Basic computer skills (equipment and office software)
    - Working with IT equipment and software in an office environment
  - Life Skills (aka “Hands, Heart, Head and Health”)
    - Peacebuilding and conflict mitigation skills
Career Services: Delivery of Extracurricular Training Programs

• Utilization statistics (**through December 2017**)
  – Soft skills
    3,482 students (36% female participants)
  – Computer Management and Office Automation
    2,026 students (29% female participants)
  – Life Skills
    1,096 students (50% female participants)

All training programs proved popular and were oversubscribed at most institutions. Students complained that the course offerings and timings were overly restrictive. University administrators complained that the career centers needed evening hours. In 2017, USWDP began offering special trainings at select universities and developed a mobile app for training content.

Career Services: Mobile Application for Soft Skills Training Content

• The mobile application extends the reach of the soft skills training to students who are not able to participate in the limited timings of the trainings or who study on campuses without career centers
  • Content is available in Dari, Pashto, and English
  • The app functions on low capacity smart phones
  • The pilot phase in late 2017 included 300 users (20% female participants)

The pilot version of the application was well received by the users. The application will be rolled out and made available to all university students in 2018.
Career Services:
Internship Opportunities for Students

• Career Centers, working with UIAC members, sought internship opportunities for 5,100 students (36% female participants)
• 170 students (41% female participants) leveraged the internships to secure employment after graduation
• Job fairs linked students with employers offering internships and employment

A 2016 assessment of the internship program noted that most students valued the practical work experience. Nearly half reported that the internships were not in their fields of studies and that employers were not prepared for interns.
In 2017, USWDP improved targeted placements of students to better align with career interest and developed mandatory orientations for intern supervisors.

Questions and Discussion

Thank you!

Any questions or comments?

Feel free to contact us.

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