

# ▶ EIIIP Afghanistan News Brief



International  
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Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan



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▶ **Welcome** Welcome to the eighth edition of Employment Intensive Investment Programme (EIIIP) Afghanistan News Brief. The purpose of this publication is to disseminate news and updates concerning the ongoing activities of the EIIIP Afghanistan project. Its primary goal is to keep the audience Informed and engaged by providing relevant information and insights into the project's progress and initiatives.

The Special Trust Fund for Afghanistan (STFA) is funding this project and ILO is implementing it as an intervention for Promoting Employment and Decent Work through the Humanitarian-Development-Peace Nexus.

We will also provide you with a brief on our interventions to address the humanitarian crisis through the project, particularly the efforts being made at promoting employment and decent work through employment intensive investment programmes. Our aim is to inform how the project is being implemented together with the people and for the people and will also include human interest stories. As we close the year, this edition continues on a series of human interest stories that illustrate inclusivity with an inspiring story of Sonia who has found a lifeline in realizing her dream of gaining a livelihood through opportunities offered by the EIIIP - Enterprises Joint Intervention that target women beneficiaries linked to workers of the EIIIP projects.



Figure 1: Stone Masonry Side Drain Construction in Shortepa District Road.

## ▶ Project Update...

The joint EIIIP and Enterprises Development intervention to train women beneficiaries linked to the EIIIP projects continued during the month in Shortepa district, with a total of 500 women trained to date from Mazar and Shortepa. This represented a milestone for the programme in venturing to the rural areas, which required a shift in implementation modality to ensure the programme caters for the diverse needs. Tracking of the jobs created is now ongoing, together with efforts to link those who have been empowered with entrepreneurship and financial literacy skills to enterprises that will provide them with either self or other employment opportunities for livelihood.

Registration requirements enforced by local authorities and challenges in ensuring women inclusiveness bogged down the progress of eight infrastructure projects in Shortepa district in Balkh province and Mardyan and Mangajik districts in Jawzjan province. The eight projects include three rehabilitation projects for the 3.6 km Shortepa road project, together with spot improvement and maintenance of a 8 km road. Another 13.7 km spot improvement and routine maintenance project is being carried out in Mangajik district Jawzjan, together with three contractors rehabilitating a 3.3 km long road in Mardyan district, also in Jawzjan province.

Meanwhile, activities of the Northern Region Cash for Work Plus Working Group (NR CfW+ WG) which joins together UNAFPs involved in CfW interventions, continued over the month with a meeting which continued providing knowledge and experience sharing, identification of common issues, challenges and solutions.

We are making efforts to involve more women through skills training on how to weave gabion baskets, The accredited National Examination Board in Occupational Safety and Health (NEBOSH) course was also conducted and involved ten participants from the ILO, Moore, ACCI and contractors who will be undertaking the exam in January 2024.

Figure 2: Cross Drainage Structure Construction in Rehabilitation of Shortepa District Road





## ► Human Interest Story

### “Sonia Finds a Lifeline for Her Livelihood Dream through the EIIP – Enterprises Joint Collaboration”



Figure 4: Sonia (centre) as a trainee during the ILO EIIP – Enterprises Development GET AHEAD training held in Mazar e Sharif.

Sonia is a 23-year-old young woman who unfortunately could not continue her education owing to the ban on women education, which was further compounded by the family's strict enforcement of cultural values. “I really wanted to seek further education, but Taliban banned education for females in Afghanistan, while my father does not allow me to go out of Afghanistan to seek education.”

Thanks to being related to her uncle, Gol Padsha, who worked on the ILO EIIP Project in Khalid bin Walid for more than a month, she was and nominated by her uncle as a female household member to benefit from the Joint EIIP and Enterprises Development, she was able to participate on an ILO Get Ahead and Financial Literacy training that seeks to empower female beneficiaries to attain livelihood entrepreneurship skills.

As a result of participating in the training opportunity, Sonia now sees her dream of opening her own confectionary bakery in Mazar-e-Sharif becoming a reality. She says: “I used to learn how to bake cookies through YouTube channels.” However, when I participated in the Get Ahead training, it opened up and blew up my mind, being exposed to different entrepreneurship principles, and I then decided to start my own candy or confectionary bakery within my living area.

The ILO Community Liaison Officer, Freshta Najafizada responsible for the project recalls, “When I met the women in Khalid Bin Walid project, I was surprised to find her with a great and complete business plan with a nice and realistic budget plan within her proposal.” Sonia says that her plan was made with great attention and consultations, as she remembers, “After the training, while I was preparing my business plan, I gathered and consulted with young ladies like me to work together in the project.

CLO says: “women in Khalid bin Walid project accept her idea as well and they purposed her idea for the office on which all of them can work together in Khalid bin Walid.”

As Sonia looks forward to establishing her project in a few days, she says: “I was initially getting depressed every time my father was talking about other girls who are working and making money.” I then made it known politely and respectfully that this was as a result their family allowing them to be educated and work, as otherwise no one is born educated.”

Despite the gains, Sonia is still adamant in fulfilling her other pursuit of seeking education as she says: “After I start my business, I will not stop pursuing my dream. One day I will continue my education, no matter the hardships faced, whether within or outside Afghanistan.”

Sonia philosophically notes that this is not only her story, but it is the life story of thousands of young women in Afghanistan who have been forced not to pursue education or work by the ruling Taliban regime.

In zeal, Sonia says: “I will be successful in my business, God willing, and I do look forward to all young women of my age finding a way to start their own business, and I encourage them not to give up, but pursue their dream.”

EIIP Afghanistan has linked with its sister project, the Roads to Decent Jobs for All Afghans (R2DJ4All) under STFA funding, seeking to leverage its existing networks, knowledge, and successes in bridging the short-term employment opportunities to longer-term enterprise and entrepreneurial activities of women beneficiaries through skilling and market systems development targeted at women beneficiaries from the workers' households that initially benefited from the EIIP work component. Through this model that is being piloted, and which will be rolled out as the programme expands, various training components and other interventions are integrated including: Entrepreneurship training for women with skill, who can start a small business; business coaching and mentoring services for women-owned micro enterprises to scale up innovative proven business models and financial services through small in-kind grants to entrepreneurs submitting good business proposals.