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Cadets receive on-the-job training

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Capacity Development Program Manager Leslie J. Wright (left) with NMAA Cadets (left to right) Obaidullah Amanullah; Hameedullah Mohammad Musa; Shah Noor Mohammad Noor; Mohammad Nijat Imam Raza; and Mir Abas Mohammad Nadir at the graduation ceremony. (Photo by Bruce Huffman, public affairs officer)

Kabul, Afghanistan—Afghan Cadets received interactive on-the-job training from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Afghanistan Engineer District, construction and engineering team members, as well as project and program managers, Aug. 16-31 in Kabul, Afghanistan.

Through a Cadet Training Program coordinated by AED Capacity Development Program Manager Leslie J. Wright, the one senior and four junior Cadets from the National Military Academy Afghanistan were exposed to interactive training activities, which gave them the opportunity to apply engineering related theory taught in a class room setting to real world practice in the areas of operations and maintenance, construction, engineering, and project management.

"This effort adds value to the capacity development mission by ensuring that there are local Afghans equipped to operate, manage, engineer, and administer horizontal and vertical construction in Afghanistan," said Wright.

The training began Aug. 16 with greetings from AED Commander Col. Thomas E. O'Donovan. Then an overview of the overall program was given by Planning, Programs, and Project Management Division Deputy Director Peter Frick and Engineering and Construction Division Director Russ Holemann.

An overview of the training program was provided by Afghanistan National Army Program Manager William D. Mullery and Kabul Area Engineer Officer in Charge Maj. Leigh Ford. Wright then ended the day explaining the connection between the Cadets participation in the program and the development of Afghan Capacity at the vocational, academic, professional and institutional levels.

Over the next 13 days, the five Cadets participated in a variety of exercises to include a Compound Safety Assessment Exercise and 12 site visits throughout the Kabul area, according to Wright. After each site visit, Cadets took part in a thought provoking exercise that was prepared by the AED project managers, construction representatives, project engineers, and the Capacity Development Program Manager who participated as AED mentors to the cadets.

Through this intensive applied-learning program, AED seized the opportunity to assist in building the individual capacity of Afghan engineers and Afghan project and program managers. "It will help ensure the sustainment of the United States Government infrastructure investment and the investment realized by the Afghan people," said Wright.

Other benefits to the Afghan people include sustaining the development of higher learning institutions, adding value to long term local capacity development efforts, developing institutional knowledge on a sustainable basis, and developing and using local capacity to sustain infrastructure investment.

"Building the capacity of learning institutions will help the Afghan people sustain their infrastructure and build the projected work force that they'll need to sustain their infrastructure using locally appropriate engineering and construction standards and specifications," said Wright.

Providing quality, responsive engineering and construction services to a variety of customers in Afghanistan is one of AED's missions under their Strategic Reconstruction Program, according to Corps officials. Through this effort, the Corps performs a crucial role in the international efforts to facilitate establishing a secure and stable environment in Af-



Operations and Maintenance Project Manager Robert J. Szemanski (far right) shows the Cadets some issues that can come along after construction. He also explains the difference between an O&M issue and a warranty issue. (Photo by Leslie J. Wright, Capacity Development Program Manager)

ghanistan while promoting reconstruction and infrastructure development.

More than 300 U.S. Civilian and Military personnel are assigned to the Corps' Afghanistan Engineer District, according to Corps officials. They manage programs and projects that support a full spectrum of regional activities for the International Security Assistance Force; the Combined Security Transition Command - Afghanistan and Regional Command - East, both of which are U.S. commands; the U.S. Agency for International Development; and other organizations operating in Afghanistan.

AED team members work with CSTC-A, USAID, donor nations and agencies to identify areas where projects have an immediate effect building alternative livelihoods, creating ownership and eroding enemy support.

The two-week AED sponsored on-the-job training program, a direct result of this effort, ended with a graduation ceremony Aug. 31 at AED Qalaa House, where each Afghan Cadet was presented with a graduation certificate.



Construction Representative Robert L. Williams (far right) shows the Cadets a gate at the Ministry of Defense that has some foundation problems and asks them how they would design the foundation to resolve the issue. (Photo by Leslie J. Wright, Capacity Development Program Manager)



Construction Representative William D. Breckinridge (2nd from left) discusses with the Cadets how the foundation and concrete slab was constructed at a logistics warehouse and how long it took. (Photo by Leslie J. Wright, Capacity Development Program Manager)