



News Release



Office of Public Affairs

U.S. Embassy

Ambassador Crocker Inaugurates Health Services Academy and Presents Grants to Improve Mother and Child Health

Peshawar, 05 December 2006: In Peshawar on Tuesday, U.S. Ambassador Ryan C. Crocker presented signed grant agreements to three local organizations, launching efforts by the local partners to improve health care for mothers and children across Upper Dir and Buner, in the North West Frontier Province (NWFP).

The event also served to inaugurate renovations of the Provincial Health Services Academy in Peshawar. This month, 100 students from Upper Dir and Buner will enroll in an 18 month community midwife program in Peshawar, developed and supported by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). In all, 200 community midwives from these districts will be trained through this effort, to provide skilled birthing services to their communities.

Work performed through the grant agreements presented by Ambassador Crocker will cover the rest of Buner and Upper Dir. These organizations--Research and Awareness for Human Development Benefits and Rights (RAHBAR), Dir Rural Support Program, and Young Blood Welfare Organization—are in the most underserved and remote areas. These local organizations will work through communities to educate families on how to best support wives and daughters-in-law during pregnancy. Families will also receive training and guidance on how to recognize and respond to pregnancy and newborn emergencies, steps that will go a long way to reducing deaths among mothers and newborns.

“I am delighted to be here today to recognize the concerted efforts being made by NWFP provincial officials and district authorities in Buner and Upper Dir to ensure women have safe deliveries and their babies are healthy,” Ambassador Crocker announced. “Women are the foundation of the family, and the children they bring into this world will become the future citizens of Pakistan. Their safety and well-being during the vulnerable period of pregnancy and childbirth must be of deep concern to us all.”

These initiatives are part of USAID’s five-year Pakistan Initiative for Mothers and Newborns (PAIMAN) program, which seeks to improve the health of mothers and newborns across Pakistan. In addition to training efforts to expand mother and child healthcare to underserved communities, USAID is undertaking a \$1.13 million effort to up-grade health facilities in Buner and Upper Dir, renovating buildings and installing equipment to improve access to quality healthcare. This renovation includes work on the

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district headquarters hospital, one tehsil headquarters hospital, and one rural health center in each district. Renovations are about 70 percent completed and essential equipment for mother and newborn care will arrive in the spring.

Since 2003, USAID's health program has worked in underserved rural and urban districts in all four provinces and FATA. Working with national, provincial, and local partners, these efforts have focused on improving mother and newborn health services, preventing major infectious diseases, and increasing access to clean drinking water.

Overall, the United States, through USAID, is providing more than \$1.5 billion in development assistance to Pakistan over the next five years to improve education, health, governance and economic growth. In addition, the United States has pledged a total of \$510 million in earthquake relief and reconstruction efforts to assist the people of Pakistan and to support Pakistani government relief and reconstruction efforts.

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