

A4T Project Summary Report

Project Code Assigned:

*General Project Information

*Project Name: Integrative Solutions to Community Problems in Kabul, Afghanistan

*Initiative: Economic Development_ Briquette Production Pilot Programs

*Department: Business Development

*Acting Department Executive: Najib Mojaddidi/ Wahid Omar

*Point of Contact or Project Manager: Najib Mojaddidi/Wahid Omar

Project Description:

Almost 70% of Afghans live below the poverty line of \$30 a month, with very little economic stabilization programs in sight to reduce the effects of war and increase the purchasing power for the of Afghans and bring their life a sense of normality. With the briquette project, Afghans4Tomorrow (A4T) aims to directly address the issue of poverty by providing a simple and sustainable business opportunity to the most disadvantaged populations of Afghanistan; one that will not only serve as an ongoing source of income to help people satisfy their basic needs, but also introduce & produce alternative environment friendly burning fuel to heat homes and cook food.

Fuel Briquettes is an alternative fuel source representing an environmentally friendly replacement for expensive and/or depleting fuel source including firewood, coal, charcoal, liquid propane gas and kerosene. Briquettes has been successfully produced and used across Africa, Asia, and the US. Teams of 6 individuals can produce briquettes by decomposing commercial and agricultural residues such as paper, sawdust, and leaves with water, and utilizing a press to “press” the materials into briquettes. A family of 6 can produce up to 120 kg of briquettes per day directly out of their home with a potential profit of approximately \$150 a month, or save up to \$200 a year by using the briquettes for their own household needs. (The price of Briquettes is approximately 42-50Afg/84¢-\$1 per ser, versus approximately 55-70Afg/\$1.10-\$1.40 per ser of Wood).

In July 2008, in cooperation with Bernard Amadei and the Engineering for Developing Communities program at the University of Colorado, Engineers without Borders, The Legacy Foundation, and the Foundation for Sustainable Technologies, A4T established its first training center/production facility in Dah-e-Buree Kabul. The past 3 months we have also added 3 more training/production facility at A4T1 (girls school), GPFA (Gul_dara/Farza), and again at the main office, a small one team press facility for our widow/handicap project.

2009 will be an important year for us as we plan on working with Ministry of Rural Development, Ministry of Agriculture who both have seen our product and have shown lots of interest. Another quick and most efficient way for A4T to make this technology and training available to the Afghan people is through partnerships with fellow NGO's. It is through such partnerships that A4T will receive the funding necessary to train local groups of Afghans wanting to enter into briquette production. A typical training sequence provided by A4T includes location assessment and production viability, facility set up and requirements, material processing, book-keeping, business administration, and marketing strategies. A4T also offers its services for 1 year of follow up

supervision and support. It is from such trainings and support services that A4T receives the money to cover its operational costs. A4T's training fee is \$250 per person and there is a 15-20% overhead fee on equipment and set up costs.

2008 Activities (July 2008 through December 2008):

1. Project A4T_400(Briquettes Production/Training team & facility 1):



The office team is comprised of 18 boys, with 4 handicapped men who are “master trainers” and manage production. Team employees of the A4T Office Team were found through the Ministry of the Handicapped, and on the streets of Ko-te-Sangi. They were all formerly unemployed and/or earning a poverty wage and lacking a supportive and encouraging environment. At A4T they receive the training and gain the experience that will enable them to build future briquette making enterprises for themselves.

The boys and managers are currently master trainers of the briquette making process, earning a living wage, and involved in A4T's “earn to learn” program. For two hours each day, the whole team is instructed in Dari (reading and writing), math, and drawing. Each boy receives a salary of 2,400A/month (\$48/month), while managers are paid 10,000A/month (\$200/month). Support staff (driver, guards, etc.) receives \$100-150/month. Through training and awareness programs this team have provided demonstrations and/or trained 100's of Afghans and internationals on briquette making process. The team is also responsible for building facility and equipment for 28 briquettes making “press” stations all around Kabul, Gul Dara and Farza. With improvements in overall business concept and technology, we believe there is a high project success rate, using this pilot program as a model any where in Afghanistan.



YTD the team have produced almost 10,000 kg of briquettes the past 4 months. 5,714 kg has been sold in the market in Kabul, another 2,697 kg were used in the office for testing and quality control purposes. Currently due to winter, our production have been hampered, but the next 6 months is very crucial as we prepare for 2009 winter and expect to produce at full capacity.

The key to success to Briquette micro enterprise is raw material and dry weather and we have both in Afghanistan. Furthermore, we will help all our entrepreneurs not only on the purchase of raw material at cheapest value but also on sales to other NGO as well as monitoring system so that the daily output standards are adhered to.

Long term goals for this project include efficiency at our production cycle, in house briquette equipment making facility, developing training partnership with NGO's and disadvantaged afghans as well setting up A4T head training centers in the five largest/main provinces of Afghanistan, Kabul, Herat, Mazar, Jalalabad, and Kandahar. This will ensure that training is accessible to low income people from these and neighboring regions interested in going into briquette production, as well as make the actual product available in such local markets.

2.Project A4T_401(Briquettes Production/Training facility 2_A4T girls school #1):

The school team is comprised of 38 female students with 2 widows managing them. They attend class in the morning and work making briquettes in the afternoon. The girls work part time for 1250Afg/month (\$25), while the managers earn 2000Afg/month (\$200/month). This enables them to help support their families without interrupting or neglecting their studies. Thus far production has been subsidized, but contracts with local organizations for the continued sale of the briquettes will be signed in order to secure salaries and funding for the A4T schools.



Production facility at A4T1



Testing at A4T2

YTD the team have produced almost 5,616 kg of briquettes the past 4 months. 4,837kg have been sold to A4T other projects including A4T1, A4T2, Guesthouse and ISK. There is still 1163kg still in our warehouse waiting to be sold. Currently due to winter our productions have been hampered, but the next 6 months is again very crucial as we prepare for 2009 winter supplies now.

With our in-depth experience the past 6 months and future requirements for standardization of production process to reach the maximum daily output by each team, this Pilot program has also shown sign of success and can be applied to other girls schools at a very high project success rate.

3. Project A4T_402_GPFA_Gul Dara (Briquettes Production/Training facility and 12 sub stations set up in Gul Dara, Farza):



Training of GPFA Master Trainers October 2008,



Training/production facilities equipment _ Gul Dara

A4T recently completed their first group training with a group of six individuals brought to it through The Global Partnership for Afghanistan. These groups were trained to be “master trainers” and in turn trained 12 other groups in the villages of Guldara, Farza, and province of Paktiya (subsequent trainings will occur at the end of March 2009 both in Guldara and Paktiya).



Briquette making station _Gul Dara(GPFA)



Briquette _using cow waste _Gul Dara

The project is very important because its an pilot program in the heart of afghanistan’s grape country(Shamili Plains). We will hold another major training program at GPFA briquette making facility sometimes in March 2009 with Sanu Kaji Shrestha brouth in for leading the training. Potentially briquettes from this area can be marketed very inexpensively, mainly due to raw material(leaves, animal waste) being free.

4. Project A4T_403_ Micro Enterprise

One additional team of 6 was added in November 2008 through funding from a generous private donor. This project aims to provide two under privileged individuals (older widow, handicap) the know how and equipment to own their own business at the end of the program. The concept is the same as project 400(main office) but in a smaller scale. At the end of the project we will use a credit system and build a small production facility at their homes so that they can become self sufficient by end of year two. The 2nd year is very important as A4T must due its part in monitoring the project operations to ascertain that production is according to ceiling set by their business plan.

Additional production site will also serve as a training site and will be available to train groups in three month phases. Trainees in this program will receive a salary for their work, and upon completion of the three month course, will be provided with the start up equipment necessary to start their own briquette production micro-enterprises.

A4T attended the Kabul Agricultural Fair from August 19th - 22nd, 2008 and will be attending the Mazar Agricultural Fair on October 30th and 31st. The purpose in participating in these fairs is not to sell our product but to survey the public's response to the Briquette Project, as well as set up partnerships with interested groups and organizations. A4T gained much exposure at the Kabul Agricultural Fair and received an overwhelmingly positive response from the general public. A4T hopes and expects to receive this same response in Mazar, and has already been contacted by organizations and individuals interested in briquette production in Mazar.

A press conference was held at the head office in Kabul on Oct. 8 to launch the product and develop relationships with prospective customers and partners. A video describing A4T's mission and work was shown, children speakers presented their experiences of working with briquettes, an informative power point presentation was given to further explain A4T's work and the briquette production process, a tour of the facilities was provided, and bread baked in tandoors and tea boiled in samawars with our briquettes for fuel were served and enjoyed by all. Several organizations showed much interest in partnering with us and have contacted us since then to begin the process.

Speakers at the First Briquette Conference in Kabul, October 8th, 2008:



Guests and members getting a tour of the facility and enjoying bread made in our tandoor ovens fueled by briquettes:



Challenges:

- Corruption
- Child Labor Law concerns
- Micro enterprise credit system for Funding long term projects, including A4T Briquette team 2009 graduates(38 girls, 26 boys)
- R&D and future plan for Program monitoring

Next 6 months Plan:

- Conference 2 in march 2009 and training to include Sanu Kaji Shrestha founder and chairman of the Foundation for Sustainable Technologies
- A4T Briquette production cycle efficiency
- In-house Briquette “Press” making capability
- Micro enterprise credit and monitoring system for A4T Briquette making graduates
- Partnership with Ministry of Rural Development
- Partnership with Ministry of Agriculture
- Partnership with Afghan Parliament members for implementing briquette project in their respective villages
- Partnership with NGO’s such as Agha Kahn, GPFA, GTZ and others
- Implementation of other A4T Briquette projects

***Project Objective:**

To provide Afghans throughout the country with a sustainable, income generating business opportunity in briquette production by offering them briquette production training and business start up assistance. Due to the simplicity of the technology used in the production process, this project is accessible to and aims to aid the most impoverished and disadvantaged groups in Afghanistan, namely women, widows, children, orphans, and the handicapped. This will not only serve to employ the disadvantaged, but will help counter deforestation by providing a fuel alternative to wood as well as improve sanitation conditions in cities by reducing air pollution and recycling certain waste materials needed for the briquette production process. We also hope that revenues from A4T’s own briquette production teams will serve to provide funding to maintain A4T schools and other projects.

***Benefit to the People of Afghanistan:**

The Briquette Project is designed to supply the population of Afghanistan with a cheaper fuel source for heating, cooking, baking, etc. and offer those who would otherwise have no employment job opportunities. This past winter’s freezing temperatures in Afghanistan claimed over 1000 *reported* deaths. Below freezing temperatures paired with increased gas prices this winter will leave even more people incapable of heating their homes and feeding themselves. These environmental and economic factors are felt most harshly by Afghanistan’s poor and young who do not have the resources to cope with such fluctuations. Briquette production is a simple and relatively inexpensive process that these groups can utilize to provide income and therefore security for themselves. Ninety eight percent of Afghanistan’s rural population and seventy five percent of its urban population use solids as fuels. It is to this that we can attribute the fact that 50% of Afghanistan’s forest cover has been cut down since 1978. This lends itself to additional environmental problems such as decreased air quality, soil erosion, and flooding. The use of briquettes for fuel can ease the dependency on wood as well as decrease air pollution as they produce 40% less smoke than wood. Afghan urban centers also suffer from poor waste management practices, and the use of paper wastes in the briquette production process is the beginning of implementing an informal paper recycling program. Furthermore, by partnering with organizations to subsidize briquette production micro-enterprises, A4T is aiming to cultivate economic independence and stability for the Afghan people.

***Project Start Date: July, 2008**

***Project End Date: June 2009**

***Project Cost YTD: \$89,998**