

## Summary of the Evaluation of the Voice For Humanity Project in Afghanistan, Fall 2005

Dr. Arvind Singhal (Ohio University) and Dr. Corinne Shefner-Rogers (University of New Mexico) conducted a comprehensive quantitative and qualitative analysis of the Voice For Humanity (VFH) civic education project for the September, 2005 Parliamentary elections in Afghanistan. In that project, VFH distributed 16 hours of audio content delivered on 41,000 digital audio devices in 23 provinces, reaching an estimated 2.4 million Afghans in a six week period of time.

They concluded that the VFH project was “highly relevant and highly effective” in reaching out to rural and uneducated Afghans. The VFH program “provided an impetus for collective listening, engaged learning, and family dialogue” leading to “decisions, actions and transformation.”

Some of their findings based on surveys include:

- 80% listened to the entire 16 hours of content, not just once, but several times through.
- An average of 55 people listened to each VFH player during the six week period.
- 86% listened to the content in groups. The average group size was 8.8 with a range of between one and 40 individuals.
- The Afghans who received the VFH players conducted an average of 5.7 listening sessions in their homes with a range of between one and 50 sessions.
- 55% reported that after listening to the content, they discussed the content later with other people who had not been exposed to the content.
- Even though the initial purpose of the content related to the Parliamentary elections, 96.5% continued to listen to the VFH players after the elections.
- A shocking 98.5% of the listeners agreed that the content was trustworthy.
- 98% reported that the content was interesting to listen to and culturally appropriate.
- 91.6% found the technology “very easy” or “easy” to operate.
- 93% increased their knowledge about the parliament during the project time period, compared to only 45% of those who did not listen to the VFH content; 67% increased their knowledge of democracy compared to only 22% of those who did not listen; 63% increased their knowledge of human rights compared to only 15% of those who did not listen.
- 99.2% of listeners voted in the elections.

Here are some quotes from Afghan listeners and a brief story that demonstrate the transformational impact of the project:

“We had decided to vote before but after listening to the [VFH player] we understood how to vote and the process of voting, we learned the qualities we need in a candidate.”

“Before hearing the program [my husband] would not have given me permission to go out alone, but now he lets me, this is a big change for us. He allowed our daughter to go to school.”

“Listening to [VFH player] brought us light and brightened our eyes. Before this we were in the dark. This brought us brightness, not just for me but for my family and other women. They were all ignorant and illiterate before, by the [VFH player] brought them brightness.”

Before receiving the VFH content, a father had transacted his young daughter’s engagement to pay off a personal loan. As per tradition, the girl thought she had no choice but to comply. However, when she heard the VFH content and played it for her father, they discussed her engagement and her father agreed to not force the marriage. The VFH training program changed the course of her life.