

EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy

Annual Report 2018



EPD | EQUALITY
for Peace and
Democracy

Message from the Executive Director



2018 was a good year for EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy, full of change and progress. We welcomed new staff and new Board members, started working with new donors, created a strategic plan to guide us, and have been building partnerships that will have a lasting and positive impact for our people.

We're proud to be working with a wide range of dedicated caring individuals and organizations. From government through to the local community, there's a genuine groundswell and focus on seeing an end to war, corruption, harassment, illiteracy and injustice.

EPD expanded its operations to 19 provinces adding Kunar to its coverage area. We are very much thankful to our Provincial Women Network (PWN) and Afghan Coalition for Transparency and Accountability (ACTA) who always supported EPD's mission through amplifying the voices of Afghan citizens, empowering women and youth to become future leaders and overseeing the

state institutions for accountable service delivery.

EPD took the pride again to present its review of the draft national budget 1398 wherein the budget was presented in meaningful and coherent manner to make it easier to understand for the general public and how it can affect their lives.

We are also proud to implement and conduct, for the first time in Afghanistan, social audit of government projects in ten provinces across Afghanistan. Moreover, total fifty local civil society organizations (CSOs) across ten provinces were trained on the local governance topics. Awareness raising campaign was launched through workshops, gatherings, radio discussions and screening documentaries to let public know about their rights and responsibilities to make government accountable for their service delivery. At the year end, EPD brought together around 160 community people, CSOs, Government officials from provinces and the centre to exchange problems faced by the local people with the relevant ministries and prompt follow up.

EPD also started working with 20 CSOs and 294 CBOs in Balkh and Paktia to build their capacity to oversee the service delivery of the Ministry of Education.

Champions strategy, an advocacy tool, has been used to accelerate societal and institutional acceptance of the idea that women can and should contribute to the public sector. EPD publicly recognized 10 champions' contributions through an award ceremony which strengthened

Message from the Executive Director

a positive image of reformers and supporters of women in government.

EPD also continued to make great progress in educating IDPs and returnees' children. Through a team of 35 teachers, in Kunduz and Laghman, EPD reached to 2100 children and provided them accelerated learning classes (ALC), community based services, language and catch up classes which resulted in their joining of public schools.

Last but not least, EPD has registered all its 15 Provincial Women's Networks (PWN) with ministry of justice as autonomous organizations which are

now working independently for women's peace and security and making great contribution to the community.

Our success is the community's success. With the ongoing support of our donors, partners, Board, staff and volunteers, EPD is ready for the challenges and achievements ahead in 2019.

Wajid Khan
Executive Director

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EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy

About EPD

EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy (EPD) is a nonprofit, non-governmental organization dedicated to empowering women and youth at the community and policy levels in Afghanistan. EPD was established in early 2010 by Ms. Nargis Nehan. EPD works to build the capacity of women and youth in order for them to be the front face in presenting their needs in development, peace building and democratic processes of the country. EPD further aims at mass mobilization of women and youth to contribute to overcoming the challenges of instability that Afghanistan is facing. EPD establishes platforms for women and youth to come together, establish networks, build trust and confidence, and strive jointly for transforming Afghanistan into a democratic country free of all forms of violence and discrimination.

Vision

EPD envisions Afghanistan as a peaceful, prosperous and democratic state, where all Afghans enjoy equal rights without any form of discrimination.

EPD's mission is to empower and strengthen women and youth at the community and policy levels for building coalitions and networks and promoting human rights, peace and good governance. EPD focuses on the following three strategic areas:

Peace and Security: EPD works to empower and encourage the people of Afghanistan, particularly women and youth, to participate and engage in peace building, conflict prevention, conflict resolution, and mediation at both the national and grassroots levels.

Good Governance: In contributing towards improved governance, EPD aims to increase the transparency and accountability of public institutions for public resources and policies. EPD empowers communities by training and engaging them in the process of budget planning and execution and monitoring public service delivery and implementation of development projects to keep government institutions accountable for quality of their services.

Human Rights: Peace and good governance are critical to ensuring respect for human rights. EPD takes a rights-based approach to developing and implementing programs that empower all people of Afghanistan to know and exercise their rights as Afghan citizens regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, or other factors. EPD believes that women's rights are human rights, and empowering Afghan women is a key component of EPD's mission.

Approach

EPD employs an inclusive approach in its peace building, good governance, and human rights efforts. EPD mobilizes communities at the grassroots level, initiates advocacy initiatives, and build platforms where the public can come together and demand transparency and accountability, and better service delivery from the government. EPD proudly maintains itself not only as women and youth focused but also a women and youth led organization, requiring at least 50% of its staff to be women and 60% youth. EPD also maintains an all-women leadership structure. However, rather than focusing exclusively on women's issues, EPD is working in areas such as the peace process, elections, or anti-corruption issues with special attention to the needs and perspectives of women and youth.

PROGRESS UPDATE 2018

In pursuance of its commitment toward improving good governance, building sustainable peace and ensuring human right, Equality for Peace and Democracy carried out a series of activities in the Center and provinces relying on its extensive networks. EPD continued its activities in 19 provinces of Kabul, Nangarhar, Kandahar, Helmand, Herat, Laghman, Paktia, Bamyan, Daikundi, Parwan, Badakhshan, Balkh, Kunduz, Faryab ,Uruzgan, Panjshir, Khost, Kunar and Kapisa. EPD's provincial Women Networks continued its activities dedicated for monitoring women's peace and security in 15 provinces while in 12 provinces, it established Government and Civil Society Forums to enhance local governance and promote a transparent and accountable local service delivery.

EPD in Laghman and Kunduz reached out to IDP children to help them continue their education and re-join formal schools. As a result 2100 students were trained in EPD's ALC and CBS on basic



literacy and hygiene out of which 980 could public schools.

Promoting an accountable and transparent service delivery aimed to strengthen local governance was one of EPD's main activities during 2018. In this regard numerous rounds of capacity building were conducted to enable CSOs to hold the government accountable for the quality of their services. EPD also raised awareness through screenings, radio round table and networking workshops.

EPD continued monitoring police and justice sector in Nangarhar by conducting activities such as police award, monitoring through Community Watch Committee and Legal CSO network and capacity building and awareness raising sessions.

The following pages elaborates on EPD's activities during 2018 with more details. For more information regarding EPD please check our website and Facebook pages.



EPD works in three major areas of Good Governance, Human Rights and Peace and Security. Accordingly, in this report EPD activities in 2018 are divided into 3 sections:



**Good
Governance**

**Human
Rights**

**Peace and
Security**

GOOD GOVERNANCE

CSO Capacity Building Activities in Education Sector

Problems with accountability in service delivery at the provincial level in Afghanistan, due to factors such as insecurity and corruption, are major challenge for the government. A lack of transparency and accountability not only affects the local services provided by various public sectors but also increases the gap between government and its citizen. However, increasing local community member's engagement in monitoring public service delivery can empower local governance and enhance transparency and the quality of services.

During this year with financial and technical support of USAID, EPD conducted an assessment in Paktia/Balkh which suggested that Civil Society Organizations (CSO) and Community-Based



Organizations (CBO) can play an important role in monitoring service delivery of the Ministry of Economy (MoE). Accordingly, utilizing a community-based mechanism, EPD aims to address the identified gaps. To enable the coordination of CSOs to conduct education oversight, EPD established a Civil Society Organization's Education Oversight Committee as a platform for dialogue to enhance accountability and transparency in reviewing the activities of the Education Department of Paktia/Balkh. EPD also started mapping and selecting Community Education Monitors (CEM) among CBOs who after capacity building will oversight schools and attempt to verify their data. The mentioned activities will cover overall 14 districts plus capital cities in Balkh and Mazar-e-sharif hoping to provide quality education service delivery.

Totally, 10 CSOs in each province will be gathered and after being trained, will conduct quarterly meetings with the PED as a means of advocacy and oversight. The committee will share provincial district meeting oversight findings with the relevant authorities and stakeholders for recommending changes. As per CEMs, EPD in Paktia/Balkh targets 21 CBO in each district 294 in seven districts in each province who will work at the school levels to further enhance accountability and transparency.

GOOD GOVERNANCE

National Budget Review

EPD has reviewed Afghanistan draft national budget for nine consecutive years, started in 1391, to provide a platform for recording achievements, reforms, fluctuations and challenges that the government has encountered to manage financial assets of the country. The reports provide further details to Parliament to review the national budget. The process gives insight to the national budget from a civil society perspective on national budget planning, execution, monitoring and reporting with special emphasis on the role of civil society and citizens in the entire process.

EPD aims to present a simple and coherent review of the budget so that people can understand the budget and what it means for their daily lives and review the quality of services via allocated resources. Additionally, EPD's Provincial Women Networks (PWN) and Afghan Coalition for Transparency and Accountability (ACTA) at local levels are actively engaged in monitoring governmental service delivery to spread a culture of accountability and transparency. Finding and recommendation of this study also supports EPD's network in enhancing local governance by monitoring public projects financed by the national budget.

In 2018, EPD launched the reports for 1397 and 1398 national budget review with in two separate events respectively in January and December. FY1398 budget totals to AFN 399.42 billion, of which AFN 275.22 billion is allocated for the ordinary budget which constitutes 69% of the core budget. The developmental budget has a smaller share of the FY 1398 budget that totals to AFN 124.19 billion. The proposed budget for FY 1398 has been decreased by AFN 13.79 billion Compared to the national budget FY 1397. Additionally, this comparison reveals that the proportion of 1398 operating budget has been decreased by 2% and the development budget by 7%.



According to the reports, national budgets for these two consecutive fiscal years were subjected to fundamental reforms which could solve the ministry's challenges pertaining to low budget expenditures. Development budget in previous years had a great amount annually in carrying forward status from each year to the next. In fact, that amount of budget allocated to the previous year and for new-year. During the formulation of the national budget for FY 1397, MoF introduced zero-based-program budgeting based on GFS and COFOG systems of IMF.

Domestic revenue contributes up to 10% in financing the proposed development budget for FY1398. This percentage is still very small and cannot respond to the needs of the people. Additionally, 56 % of the donors' contribution is proposed as non-discretionary projects. Only 33% of the total contributions have been appropriated to the optional/discretionary projects.

The research report is available on our website and you access them by checking the following links:

<http://www.epd-afg.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/01/Book-ENG-Final.compressed.pdf>

<http://www.epd-afg.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/1398-Draft-Nationa-Budget-Review.pdf>

GOOD GOVERNANCE

Monitoring local service delivery

Social audit and monitoring public service delivery is both right and duty of each citizen. Moreover, with the extensive corruption and worsening security situation, a transparent service delivery won't be possible without public engagement. EPD with support of UNDP and Deputy Ministry Municipalities empowered CSOs and community members in monitoring through CSO networking and awareness raising programs.

EPD established GCCF (Government and Civil Society Forum) in 10 provinces of Afghanistan to monitor the service delivery of local government. The Forum was formed of CSOs members and



representative of government department aimed to improve transparency, accountability and build public trust on the government. To enhance skills, EPD held numerous rounds of trainings for the GCCF, PWN and ACTA members on topics such as social audit, advocacy, policy writing, M&E, and access to information.

EPD also initiated networking workshop aimed to raise awareness and highlight the problems and challenges faced by local citizens and to find solutions. During the past year, 20 rounds of this workshop were held which provided opportunity of exchanging ideas and views between relevant local government departments and participants as a result of which a very good network and coordination was formed among them.

Some of the GCCF, ACTA and PWNs' accomplishment and achievement have been highlighted in the M&E report for this project. Following is the link to this report:

<http://www.epd-afg.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/LoGo-ME-Report.pdf>



GOOD GOVERNANCE

Public awareness to enhance good governance

During 2018, EPD held awareness raising workshops and campaign in order to enable citizens to understand their citizenship roles and responsibilities and to make the local government departments informed of their primary mandates in regard to fighting corruption and delivering on time and transparent local services to public. The awareness sessions gathered a wide range and number of participants in different areas. It is worth mentioning that awareness raising on “paying property tax (Mahsool Safayee)” was widely welcomed by the participants and could encourage a number of people to pay tax and support municipality’s revenue



collection.

EPD further raised awareness through local media and facilitated 40 radio round table discussions. The discussions were live broadcasted and published for two more times to cover a higher number of audiences. During the program, panelists were available to raise awareness and answer the audiences’ questions.

Documentary screening was the other approach that EPD utilized to make the local citizens understand their citizenship rights and role. The documentary titled “It Is My Money, Where Has It Gone?” was screened to the participants across ten provinces. The screening sessions followed with group discussions to inform the participants on their citizenship role in regard to overseeing and improving transparent, accountable local services delivery. Throughout the project 3692 female and male individuals in districts and provinces centers participated in the documentary screening sessions.



GOOD GOVERNANCE

Exchange Event for Accountable Service Delivery



On the 16th September 2018, EPD conducted a national conference inviting around 158 participants from 10 provinces including governmental officials, CSOs, GCCF members and EPD's provincial coordinators by the support of Deputy Ministry Municipality (DMM) and UNDP. The aim of this conference was to share the provincial problems with Ministries in order to resolve provincial challenges in regards to accountable and transparent service delivery.

The program arranged two panel sessions with

participation of key representatives of various governmental sectors such as DDM, Ministry of Higher Education, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of public welfare, Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development and IDLG in order to respond to the presented challenges and questions. The representatives of each province delivered a brief presentation on GCCF achievement and problems that GCCFs were not able to address them at local level. Followed by the presentation, the panelists delivered speeches and provided answers to questions. Commitments were also provided to solve some of the problems.

Besides presentations and panel sessions, the conference included a documentary screening on LoGo project accomplishments throughout ten provinces of Afghanistan. The film collected efforts of female and male volunteer members and CSOs who endeavored to raise awareness and advocate for a transparent and accountable service delivery.



GOOD GOVERNANCE

Access to Justice

EPD in Nangarhar has undertaken an initiative towards the enhancement of access to justice aims to strengthen the engagement of CSOs and their networks in monitoring justice sector. The initiative lobbies and advocates for improved access to and quality of justice provision, especially for women in both formal and informal judicial system.

During 2018, EPD's subnational office facilitated interaction sessions with participation of representatives of public justice sector, media and local justice organization's including Afghan Independent Bar Association (AIBA), Afghanistan Prosecutor Association (APA) and Afghanistan Women Judge Association (AWJA). These local CSOs which provides legal services with support of EPD, has



created a lobby and advocacy networks and could identify numerous cases of human right violation within courts and justice sectors which some of them have been addressed.



Under this initiative throughout 2018, various events such as monthly meetings, dialogue and coordination meetings were held to lobby and advocate with the authorities and follow up with the identified cases. Additionally, the network raises awareness among local judges, prosecutors, local CSOs and media on court procedures and Human Rights to reduce occurrence of the cases.

GOOD GOVERNANCE

Community Watch

Law enforcement and effective police performance is not possible without public support. Unfortunately, corruption and lack of awareness has created a wide gap between citizen and the police sector. It can both decrease trust and increase level of crime in the communities. With the financial support of United States Institute of Peace (USIP), EPD in Nangarhar, has established a Community Watch (CW) committee to monitor police performance with public engagement, raise awareness, bridge the gap and enhance police performance.

During the past year, the committee regularly held meeting with authorities in police headquarters to monitor police performance and promote culture of community cooperation with police. This collaboration led to prominent achievements such as conducting dialogues for interaction among authorities in the police headquarter and public, awareness raising on the need for cooperation between police



and community, addressing drug and addiction problems, as well as taking measures to control crimes committed because of them.

The committee accomplished the third round of police award ceremony where 10 police officers including a female employee, were honored for their cooperation with community members and efforts to tackle crime. The ceremony also hosted a panel discussion with participation of Head of Crime Investigation, Head of Human Rights Commission, Police Head of Internal Affairs and representative of Local (Mardomi) Police. The panel stressed on importance of police and public mutual respect and cooperation and accepted that there are some cases of police failure but it can be improved only by community members' support.



GOOD GOVERNANCE

Access to Information

In 2014, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GiROA) passed the Access to Information Law (ATI) that gives clear entry points to empower citizens to increase accountability of the government. To further improve this law, a Presidential order was issued in October 2016 and an amended Access to Information Law was endorsed through Presidential Decree in March 2018. As a result, both the legal and policy framework supporting access to information is stronger. This institutional framework is intended to increase the demand from the community and citizens for legally-mandated access to information.

In spite of amendment in laws, level of awareness among citizen and their capacity for oversight still remains in a low level. To address the issue, EPD in three provinces of Nangarhar, Laghman and Kunar initiated awareness raising programs. In this regard, EPD established two monitoring committees in Laghman and Kunar and utilized its GCCF in Nangarhar as a community-based approach for spreading awareness and advocacy for implementation of ATI law and

increasing transparency and accountability.

EPD in next step will raise awareness through radio round tables and extensive awareness raising campaigns in district and community levels. It will also further advocate for the law in governmental entities and encourage citizen for monitoring public projects through asking for information.



HUMAN RIGHTS

Champion strategy

Women inclusion in different key aspects of the society is a main factor to achieve gender equality, reduce poverty and maintain transparency in governance. Pertaining to this many accomplishments have been conducted including USAID Promote: Women in Government's efforts to encourage women participation in government. With social, cultural barriers and insecurity and volatile situation in Afghanistan, certainly, it could not be achieved without dedication of Afghan female and male champions who have struggled to fill gender gap and enhance women participation in Afghan civil service.

EPD with support of USAID Promote: Women in Government identified and honored some of these male and female champions who demonstrated significant leadership in promoting and advancing the role of women in the public sector and the society at large. In this regard, EPD established a committee consisted of the Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry



of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyr and Disabled, ALO, ECW and WISE-O for selection of the champions. EPD collected over 170 CVs nominated for the Champion Awards of 2018 in Kabul, Herat, Balkh, Kandahar and Nangarhar. Considering the applicants' achievements and based on a set of criteria, 41 candidates were shortlisted via the screening and selection committee. In the final stage, the committee selected top 10 eligible champions after interviewing them.

On 29th October 2018, the selected candidates were recognized and awarded in a Champions Award Ceremony held in Government Media and Information Center (GMAC) aimed to create and strengthen a positive image of reformers and supporters of women in government.

The committee further worked on finalizing a pre-prepared champion strategy which has been developed and used as a guide for the champion selection. During the ceremony, the strategy was submitted to MoWA and it was encouraged that the initiative should be repeated annually to further promote role models and appreciate their work in terms of narrowing gender gap and ensuring women's right.

HUMAN RIGHTS

EiE in Kunduz and Laghman



Conflict and instability has displaced thousands of people in Kunduz and Laghman. Being the most vulnerable group, children among such families are at high risk of discrimination, social exclusion and lack of access to education and health facilities. Concerning this critical situation, EPD in the aforementioned provinces attempted to reach out to internally displaced students. It contributed to restoring normalcy in the lives of children and providing children with age-appropriate learning opportunities, such as 27 Community based services (CBS) and 19 Accelerated Learning Classes (ALC), community based learning, language and catch-up classes, as well as recreational activities.

Pertaining to this, EPD recruited a team of 35 male and female teachers to train the IDP children on basic literacy courses and prepare them to rejoin the formal education system. Overall, 2100 IDP children were trained and provided them with necessary school kits. With EPD's efforts, 980 students in these community based education centers could join public schools.

EPD also raised awareness on importance of education and hygiene in IDP communities. The initiative has been appreciated by community influential figures, religious elders and Head of school Shura. Last but not least, EPD facilitated regular meetings between parents and the School Management Shuras (SMS) for encouraging child education, exchanging ideas and solving students and school problems.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Women's Day

On occasion of the 8th March, EPD's Provincial Women Networks (PWN) invited distinguished figures in the provinces as representatives of Women's Affairs Department, Independent Human Right Commission, Haj and Religious Affairs and community influential figures to mark this day and reaffirm their commitment to gender equality and promoting women's rights. The events also honored tireless efforts and endeavors towards raising the voice of women, advocating for the violated rights of women and building the capacity and raising the awareness of women on their rights and responsibilities in the province.

The events in almost all of the provinces covered brief information on background and importance of



this day and speeches by the key speakers. The program also provided a chance for different entities particularly MoWA to discuss and share their plans and strategies in regard to capacity building and empowerment of women.

During the event admirable achievements of governmental and non-governmental entities towards empowerment and capacity building of women and elimination of violence against them were highlighted. DoWA and DoHRA also provided further commitments in regards to empowerment and capacity building of women, advocating for their rights and enhancing their participation in various government departments including the peace and security sectors.

It is worth mentioning that the participants in some provinces emphasized that symbolic celebration of women's day is not enough and instead women empowerment and their active presence in key aspects of the government and society should be promoted.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Monitoring Women Peace and Security

EPD has established a wide network of provincial women in 15 provinces of Afghanistan aimed to monitor women's peace and security in alignment of UNSCR 1325. During 2018, the networks continued holding their monthly meetings to discuss identified women problems and plans for resolving them.

EPD's 15 Provincial Women Networks (PWN) completed implementation of their advocacy strategies to address issues such as women harassment, lack of women recruitment, IDP women dire economic situation and improper customs such as high bride price, Bad and Badaal. The M&E report on PWN's advocacy strategies with details of approaches and achievements is accessible on



EPD's website through the following link:

<http://www.epd-afg.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Provincial-Women-Network-ME-5rth-Round.pdf>

The provincial coordinators were invited to Kabul to meet with the Afghanistan first lady and share their achievements pertaining to support of UNSCR 1325 and ensuring women's peace and security. The first lady appreciated the PWN's achievements and encouraged them to conduct more grass-level women empowerment efforts particularly increasing level of women literacy and women recruitment.

PWNs are being supported to work as an independent network to represent their communities, voice women and advocate for women's local peace. The networks received trainings on proposal writing and project management and were empowered to take care of their sustainability. Last but not least, with support of EPD, the networks were registered as independent local associations with the Ministry of Justice. Now they are eligible and empowered to conduct independent volunteer activities.



HUMAN RIGHTS

PWN Central Exchange

On 23rd and 24th June, Equality for Peace and Democracy brought together 75 provincial coordinators, assistants and members of its Provincial Women's Network (PWN), spanning 15 provinces, to share their experiences and knowledge in Kabul. This central exchange program provided the opportunity for members to share perspectives, challenges, lesson learned and successes.

The two-day exchange included presentations on key PWN activities in each province, panel discussions designed to find solutions to issues affecting women



and a Q & A session. EPD were honored with presence of Ms. Safia Siddiqi (Civil Society Activist), Ms. Zaitona Naeemawa (Representative of UN Women), Mr. Joji Tokushi (Cordaid Country Director), Mr. Ahmad Maseeh Hami (Representative of Justice Ministry) and Mr. Mushtaq Rahim (Representative of HPC) during the panel discussion.

Furthermore, Ms. Spozhmai Wardak delivered a speech on MoWA's plan and possible future support of women at the provincial level. She stated that MoWA is committed to promote gender equality and women empowerment. She also added that along with the Ministry of Justice, MoWA is working to prepare and ratify laws and regulations that can enhance the living conditions of women in various sectors and provide women with opportunities which can enable women find access to their basic rights.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Sixteen Days of Activism

In support of the international annual campaign during 16 days of activism, EPD conducted various activities to ensure women's rights and eliminate violence against women. The activities covered both awareness raising and advocacy activities in Kabul, Parwan, Takhar, Kunduz, Nangarhar, Paktia, Panjshir, Daikundi, Bamyán, Nangarhar and Badakhshan.

EPD in Kunduz, Nangarhar, Badakhshan, Takhar and Parwan organized peaceful marches where men stood up for women's rights holding placards and banners with key messages of 16 days of activism. The marches included speeches of key speakers to mark this occasion and express support. Along with civil society activists, EPD



further advocated with justice sector to solve VAW cases which had been pending for a long time in the appellate prosecution offices.

Since lack of awareness is a main reason for committing violence, EPD held awareness raising workshops on Anti-harassment and Elimination of Violence Against Women Law (EVAW law) for around 180 participants including religious elders and representatives from education, judicial and executive sectors. Similar awareness raising sessions were conducted for 187 students in private and public universities of Panjshir, Paktia and Bamyán where male and female students strongly demonstrated their support of women's rights.

On 5th December, EPD organized a theater with presence of the well-known actress; Ms. Hasiba Ibrahimy to depict domestic violence in communities and its impact on women. The performance was followed by a session during which the audience found the chance to discuss violence against women and approached to eradicate it.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Rapid Assessment of the Economic Status of Women in Bamyan

As part of EPD's commitment toward women empowerment with support of Italian Agency for Development and Cooperation (IADC), EPD in Bamyan will conduct skill trainings for 220 women in Bamyan. Being a secure province, Bamyan has provided a safe workplace for women's work out of home. Moreover, over the time the society has developed a positive view toward women work which has further paved the ground for women entrepreneurs.

EPD designed a Rapid Market Assessment (RMA) to determine market needs and which sectors are viable for creating training programs. This includes the buy-in into community and stakeholders, selection of trainees, structure and content of vocational training including toolkit, selection of business ideas and groups of women, technical assistance to grantees. Additionally, the assessment examines barriers that limit the women entrepreneurs' access to markets and provides information on the size and



growth potential of specific trades in the local and regional markets that impact Bamyan province. The findings of the RMA will be used to choose sectors for developing vocational training materials in support of three key project outputs, listed below, as well as the inception reporting output.

The report on the Bamyan rapid market assessment is available on EPD website via the following link:

<http://www.epd-afg.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Opportunities-Barriers-for-Women-Entrepreneurs%E2%80%99-Access-to-Bamyan-Markets.pdf>

EPD has also established a monitoring committee consisted of representatives of MoWA, IADC, prominent CSOs and EPD's provincial coordinator to oversight the activities and ensure transparency and equal chance for women to benefit the provided skill training opportunities.



Visiting Helmand peace marchers

Afghanistan during 2018 witnessed many brutal terroristic attacks leaving a lot of casualties including journalists, women and children. GIRoA, national and international stakeholders struggled for peace negotiations which seemed to be a long and complicated process. To prevent further harms to civilians, GIRoA called for a three-day ceasefire during Ramdan (Al-Fitr) Eid which was welcomed by Taliban. Peacebuilding civic movements was also mobilized in Helmand where seven peace marcher on 13th May set off toward Kabul. Walking bare foot



through different provinces, the number marcher increased and even in Ghazni 60 civilians stood up with them for stopping war.

The Helmand peace movement was a hope to stop violence and instability through a community-based approach. In support of Helmand peace march, EPD met with the peace delegates in Kabul on 19th June and called upon all Afghans to stand for peace. During meeting with Helmand peace marchers, over 40 women accompanied EPD to show their support and sincere intention for a lasting peace in the country. EPD welcomed Helmand peace marchers with flowers and released doves to support peace process.



Countering Radicalization

Women in Pakistan and Afghanistan are faced with similar challenges and forms of radicalization and violent extremism due to geographical and cultural proximity. For decades, they have been playing an active role in sustaining families and communities and preventing family members from indulging in violence. Women peace activist in both countries have been challenging both the militants and the military over violations of human rights, despite imminent threats to their lives. There is a need to bring together responses of women, to radicalization and violent extremism, in Pakistan and Afghanistan, to have a better understanding of the problem in local and regional context, and to have better synergy.

Keeping the above mentioned points in mind, EPD along with its partner in Pakistan, Aware Girls, created a network of women peace activists as a platform to facilitate communication and coordination



for women initiative to encounter radicalization and violent extremism. A research report was carried out covering various areas of both the countries to document impact of radicalization and extremism on women's lives and women's responses for countering radicalization in Afghanistan and Pakistan. Beside the research study, a strategy paper was developed by the network to advocate for peace building through women initiatives.

In early 2018, EPD held a press conference attended by a total of 80 participants including Afghan and Pakistani women peace activists, representatives of government departments, civil society and media to share the research report and the strategy paper publically. It also covered a panel session to discussed main findings of the research, the strategy paper, and highlight notable achievements of the peace network and its sustainability. Furthermore, the conference included screening documentaries collected by the network on real stories of women's struggle to cope with radicalization and violent extremism.



Commemorating International Peace Day

Peace merely does not mean to stop war and violence but it also refers to an environment where everyone without distinction of race, gender, language and culture has equal rights and access to resources. For 2018, the United Nations has considered 70th anniversary of the universal declaration of Human rights. The Universal Declaration states in Article 3: "Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person." These elements build the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. (United Nations) For the previous year, the theme for the international peace day was celebrated in honor of "Together" and supporting refugees throughout the globe who due to war and conflict, had to flee their homes and seek asylum.



To join and support this international initiative on 21 September 2018, EPD along with WRN and WCLRF has organized an event with participation of CSOs, HPC, governmental organizations and human right activists. During the event distinguished key speaker as Mr. Tahiri (Representative of HPC) and Ms. Safia Sidiqi (CSO and Peace activist) delivered speeches to mark this significant event and demonstrate their commitment to support peace at the grass root and policy level. The event was further honored with presence of Ms. Nargis Nehan (Acting minister of mine and petroleum and the founder of EPD) who further encouraged CSO and public coordination for peace building initiatives. At the end, the participants found the opportunity to discuss peace building with regard to women and its benefits on their lives.



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Affiliations and Memberships

Salah Consortium

SALAH is a consortium of seven well established Afghan civil society organizations with a combined presence in most of the provinces of Afghanistan active in policy and advocacy for promoting peace and security in Afghanistan based on the principles of democracy, respect for human rights, and equal participation of all Afghans regardless of their background: Afghan Women Skill Development Center (AWSDC), Afghsn Women Educational Center (AWEC), Coordination for Peace and Unity (CPAU), EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy (EPD), Peace Training and Research Organization (PTRO), Sanayee Development Organization (SDO), The Liaison Office (TLO) are members of Salah consortium.