



EQUALITY FOR PEACE AND DEMOCRACY

QUARTERLY UPDATE

JAN-MAR 2014

PROMOTING A CULTURE OF COEXISTENCE, ACCOUNTABILITY, AND PEACE FOR ALL

In pursuance of its goal to improving good governance, contributing to peace building and improving human rights in Afghanistan, EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy carried out quite a series of activities in the first quarter of 2014.

As part of its efforts to improve transparency and accountability and combat corruption, ACTA performed monitoring of the Independent Election Commission's (IEC) regional staff exam and recruitment in Bamyan. ACTA networks undertook advocacy activities to solve communities' problems, such as electricity in Enjeel District of Herat, drinking water supply in Qala-e Ahmad Khan Village of Kabul, establishment of literacy courses, construction of a road in Behsood District of Nangarhar, rebuilding of girls school in Kama District of Herat, and addressing the issue of girls' transportation in Qasem Abad

Village of Nangarhar. ACTA supervised Ministry of Public Health's service delivery in Nangarhar, as a result of which Public Health Action Plan was developed to address the health issues in this province.

In the first quarter of 2014, PWN undertook several activities, including a celebration of International Women's Day in the provinces under its coverage. In Kandahar and Nangarhar, workshop were conducted about peace, where participants formed working groups and developed their work plan. The documentary film titled, "Pray the Devil Back to Hell," which shows how Liberian women collectively claimed a role in the peace process and forced the government to negotiate and bring peace to the country, was screened to different community groups in Nangarhar, Herat, Bamyan and Kabul.

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IN THIS
UPDATE



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A critical part of Afghan women's empowerment is to promote their civic engagement including their participation in political processes of Afghanistan. With the support of the United States Institute of Peace, EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy (EPD) conducted a national dialogue with Afghan women about the April 2014 presidential election.

The conference was conducted on the 4th and 5th of February, 2014. Women from all 34 provinces of Afghanistan attended the conference. Women leaders, including the Minister of Public Health, the Minister of Women's Affairs, the Head of Independent Human Rights Commission, and the President of Afghan Red

Crescent shared the inspiring stories of their challenges and accomplishments and encouraged the wide and active participation of women in the upcoming presidential election.

The second day of the conference provided an interaction between Afghan women and electoral institutions and presidential candidates. Panel members included the Chief of Independent Elections Commission, the Chairman of Election Security Threats Evaluation Committee, and United Nations Secretary-General's Special Representative for Afghanistan provided answers and some assurance on the conduct of transparent and secure election. In the afternoon,

WOMEN AND ELECTIONS NATIONAL CONFERENCE



the presidential candidates Mr. Qayume Karzai, Dr. Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai, Mr. Dawood Sultanzo, Mr. Qutbuddin Helaal; and deputies Ms. Safia Seddiqi, the deputy of Dr. Hedayat Amin Arsala; Mr. Sardar Naeem; Ms. Habiba Surabi, the deputy of Mr. Zulmai Rasool participated

This conference concluded a North Dialogue and South Training and Consultation on women's civic participation where 80 women from 23 provinces of Afghanistan participated. The aim of the consultation was to discuss and understand the views of women from the south about elections and peace processes and identify lessons to take forward.

By the end of the conference, the participants drafted a statement with recommendations to different involved actors, namely civil society organizations, religious and community elders, youth, media, Independent Election Commission, Afghan

government, presidential and provincial councils candidates, armed opposition groups, neighboring and Islamic countries and international community, in launching a successful presidential election.

EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy conducted a five-day Training of Trainers workshop on conflict resolution and peace building mechanisms, from February 22-27. The workshop had 19 participants, consisting of 9 provincial coordinators, 6 members of Provincial Women's Network, from Nangarhar, Kunduz, Kandahar, Herat, Faryab, Bamyan and Kabul, and 4 participants from the main office.

The aim of this workshop was to help improve the capacities of the participants in conflict resolution and peace building, specifically understanding and identifying the concept, kinds, causes and factors of conflict, analyzing the



FROM WANTING PEACE TO BRINING PEACE TRAINING OF TRAINERS WORKSHOP

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EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy held a Community Based Monitoring Workshop in November 2013 for ACTA team members in Qala e Ahmad Khan Village of Kabul. The participants divided into working groups to work on improvement of roads, schools, water supply and Fateha home in Qala e Ahmad Khan Village.

The continued their advocacy in 2014. As a result, the Ministry of Finance agreed to allocate budget for asphalt of Qala e Ahmad Khan Road. Now, 30 percent of the work has been completed; the asphalt will start in the beginning of 1393.

of Kabul Municipality and Minister of Finance, and discussed that budget should be allocated for the asphalt of the ring road in the 1393 annual budget. The team also met with General Nazifa Zaki, the representative of the people of Kabul in the Afghan Parliament.

ASPHALTING OF QALA-E AHMAD KHAN VILLAGE RING ROAD



Budget development and execution in Afghanistan are quite complex due to a combination of factors including political uncertainty and stability, lingering insurgency, and the strong presence of the international community. These factors have hindered the development of public finance management systems and motivated the strong centralization of budget processes.

This research aimed at exploring the development and execution of the national budget in Afghanistan, with a focus on two sectors-public health and education. EPD surveyed public officials as well as members of civil society and the grassroots population regarding their perceptions of national budget development and execution

processes in the public health and education sectors.

Data was gathered from across seven provinces of Afghanistan-Balkh, Bamyan, Herat, Kandahar, Kunduz, Nangarhar and Uruzgan, in addition to interviews with central-level government officials in Kabul.

The findings of the research suggested that the issues for budget planning and execution fell into five main categories:

- 1) shortcomings in procedures, capacity, and resources,
- 2) centralization of the national budget and lack of clarity in the roles and responsibilities of actors involved,
- 3) corruption and a lack of transparency and accountability
- 4) a lack of space for civil society and grassroots input,
- 5) quality of service delivery.

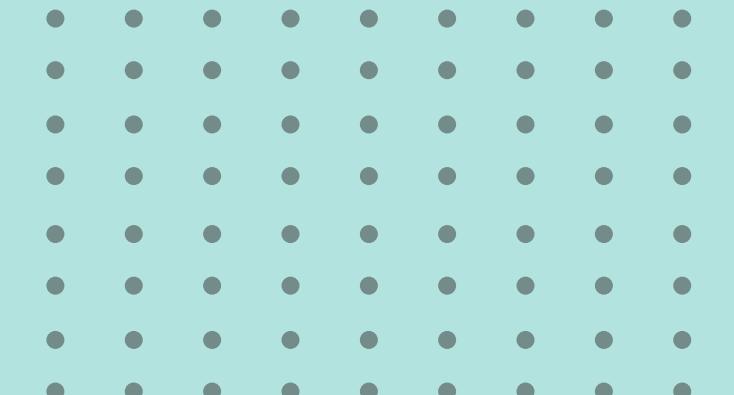
A RESEARCH ON ASSESSING NATIONAL BUDGET EFFICIENCY AND SERVICE DELIVERY EFFECTIVENESS



EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy Executive Director, Nargis Nehan, attended a roundtable discussion and an international conference in her trip to Germany in the month of March 2014. On March 11, she attended a roundtable discussion on "Promotion of Women's Affairs in Afghanistan from the Perspective of the State, Civil Society and the International Community" where she spoke about past decade's successes, the present situation and prospects for the future after the transition period. She also discussed the advancement of women's affairs and rights in Afghanistan.

On March 13, she joined a conference in Berlin titled, "Reliable Partnership in Times of Change- New Country Strategy for Afghanistan 2014-2017". The conference focused on Germany's Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) country strategy for development cooperation with Afghanistan beyond 2014.

The conference and roundtable discussions were organized by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) and the Development Policy Forum of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ).



DONORS AND SUPPORTERS

United States Institute of Peace (USIP)

Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands

Open Society Afghanistan (OSA)

Tawanmandi

To learn more about our work and organization, email us at admin@epd-afg.org or visit our website at www.epd-afg.org.

Currently, EPD offers two platforms, Afghan's Coalition for Transparency and Accountability (ACTA) and Provincial Women's Network (PWN), under which the college/university

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

students or fresh graduates can volunteer in different positions and be a part of the dynamic EPD team and gain on the ground experience of project management, event management, and operations.

To learn more go to: <http://www.epd-afg.org/working-with-us.html>

