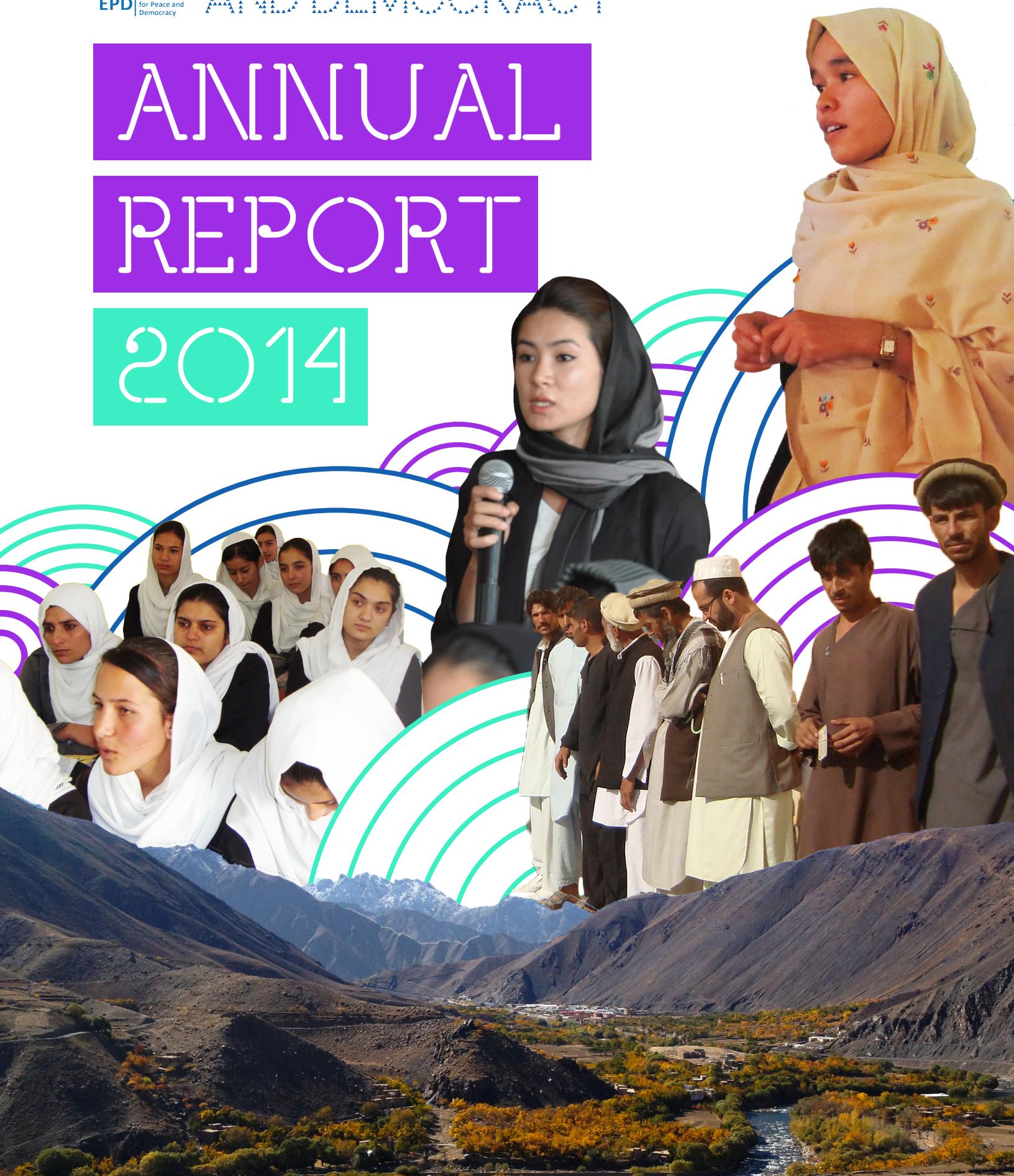




EQUALITY FOR PEACE  
AND DEMOCRACY

# ANNUAL REPORT

2014



# MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As Executive Director and founder of EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy (EPD), I am excited and proud of the work and organizational development EPD has undertaken in 2014. Over this period, EPD has grown in every sense, and made the transition from a relatively new organization founded in 2010 to a well-established leader in civil society implementing programs all across Afghanistan.

In 2014, EPD hosted a number of conferences and debates, including a well-attended national conference on women and elections that brought women from all 34 provinces of Afghanistan and was attended by a number of presidential candidates. Through our ACTA and PWN platforms, the reach of these initiatives spanned the national level all the way to the grassroots, with local awareness raising activities on issues including women's participation in elections, reducing violence against women, and promoting good governance. These activities had incredible results, including mass mobilization of women, citizen activism to promote government transparency and accountability, and promoting active participation in peace and political processes. Furthermore, our 2015 activities saw the continued success of EPD's approach of implementing programs with the support of local traditional, religious, and civil society leaders working together on joint initiatives through EPD platforms.

This year EPD also continued to lead civil society on the national budget and anti-corruption, including active community based monitoring mechanisms across Afghanistan and citizen scorecard assessments to inform EPD's annual national budget review. With many successes, such as ensuring drinking water for an entire village, constructing boundary walls for schools, and advocating for community literacy courses, we are very excited to continue to develop these initiatives and see how much more positive change our members will bring in 2015.

2014 also saw considerable development in EPD as an organization, with new policies and systems for monitoring and evaluation and gender as well as some amazing new staff that has joined the EPD team. Because of our tremendous progress and the passion and dedication I see in my team, civil society partners and donors, I am confident that 2015 has even more success in store for our projects and programs and the future of Afghanistan. We have a number of exciting initiatives planned, including continued work through our PWN and

ACTA platforms, activities promoting women's involvement in national peace dialogues, innovative new research, film screenings, and further collaboration with and training for government actors at all levels. I invite you to join our quest. Each person that volunteers, joins and learns about EPD and its activities is contributing to our mission, and every contribution to our mission helps raise the voice of the most under-served and improves the life of someone, somewhere in a remote valley of Afghanistan.



NARGIS NEHAN

# ABOUT EQUALITY FOR PEACE AND DEMOCRACY

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, the Executive Director of EPD. 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

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

## MISSION

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 FOR 2014

In 2014, EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy made great progress building on the platforms we've been developing since our founding in 2010, as well as initiating a number of exciting new projects and collaborations moving forward into 2015. EPD achieved numerous accomplishments in providing training and capacity building for government officials and Afghan men, women and youth in a number of areas, including good governance, anti-corruption, the national budget, human rights, elections, and promoting gender equality and the inclusion of women in key national processes.

In 2014, EPD continued to lead civil society organization on engaging with the national budget and advocating for better budget planning and execution and improved service delivery. EPD conducted its independent civil society organization reviews of the 1394 draft national budget, and is very excited to announce an expansion of this initiative in the form of the Annual Budget Assessment, which will go further into the 1394 budget and analyzes actual allocations against key targets and indicators, as well as a comprehensive review of the 1392 final accounts. This report will be undertaken in 2015 after the final budget has been approved. EPD completed research on corruption in the budget planning and execution processes, as well as vulnerabilities to corruption in government procurement and recruitment processes.

EPD continued to build its programs and platforms. EPD continued to build the Afghan Coalition for Transparency and Accountability (ACTA) with three new networks and nearly 200 new members in 2014. EPD's Provincial Women's Network (PWN) was active in advocacy at all levels, from the grassroots to national initiatives, to promote women's involvement in peace and transition, raise awareness on women's participation in political processes and elections, and combat violence against women. EPD took steps forward in amplifying the voices of its PWN members through its Women's Perspectives Series, a series of publications and reports on critical issues facing Afghanistan from the perspectives of Afghan women. 2014 saw the publication and launch of papers on women's perspectives on peace and security, and elections and civic participation. We are also proud to introduce the Afghanistan Gender Equality Report Card, which will be conducted through EPD's Provincial Women's Network every year, and an annual report card will be produced as a monitoring tool that enables civil society, the Afghan government, and the international community to hold the government accountable to its commitments to the women of Afghanistan and gender equality. The data collection for EPD's first Gender Equality Report Card was carried out in 2014, and will be released in advance of International Women's Day in 2015.

EPD also continued to build its partnerships with national actors, facilitating cooperation on research and initiatives with the Ministry of Finance, Ministries of Public Health and Education, Ministry of Women's Affairs, Ministry of Justice, and the High Peace Council. Through this active engagement, EPD has come to develop a vast network of national and international partners from the grassroots level, civil society and government with which to continue to expand platforms and advocacies into 2015 and beyond.



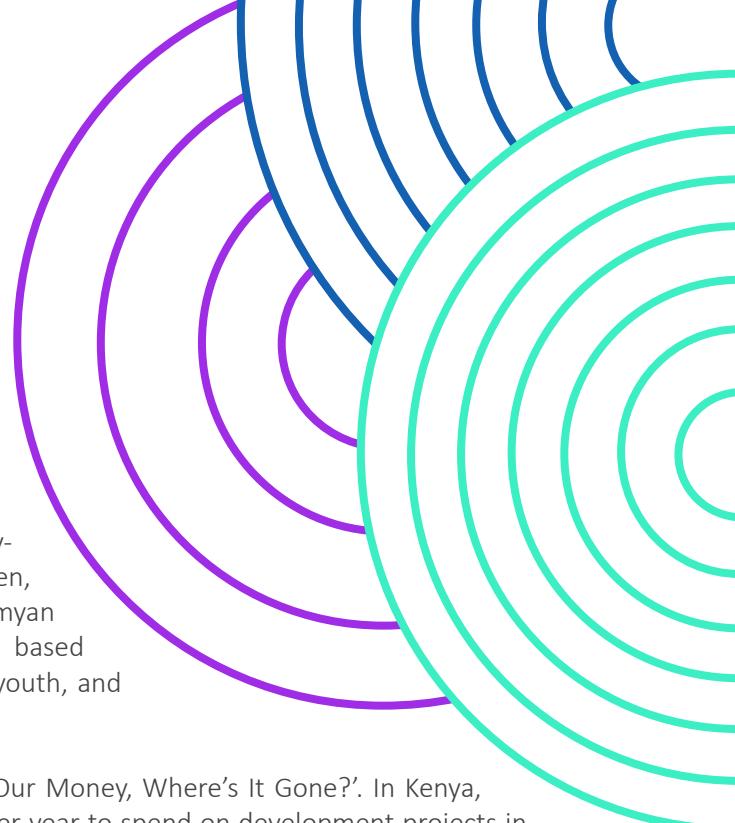
# TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

## TRAINING AND FILM SCREENINGS ON WOMEN'S PARTICIPATION IN PEACE

EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy conducted a five-day Training of Trainers workshop on conflict resolution and peace building mechanisms in 2014. The workshop had 19 participants, including 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. Following the workshop, EPD provincial coordinators and PWN trained members conducted peace building workshops for 210 members of the Provincial Women's Network in the seven provinces where PWN is active. The trainings were delivered in two rounds over 2014. Using what they have learned, these women are identifying cases of conflict that they should work on resolving, and are actively taking part in peacebuilding and resolving conflicts in their communities.

EPD also conducted screenings of the documentary *Pray the Devil Back to Hell*. This documentary chronicles the remarkable story of the courageous Liberian women who came together to end a bloody civil war and bring peace to their country. Thousands of women—ordinary mothers, grandmothers, aunts and daughters, both Christian and Muslim—came together to pray for peace and then staged a silent protest outside of the Presidential Palace to demand a resolution to the country's civil war. Their actions were a critical element in bringing about an agreement during the stalled peace talks. A story of sacrifice, unity and transcendence, *Pray the Devil Back to Hell* honors the strength and perseverance of the women of Liberia. Inspiring, uplifting, and most of all motivating, it is a compelling testimony of how grassroots activism can alter the history of nations. In 2014 EPD translated and dubbed this documentary into Dari and Pashto languages and screened it to over 10,000 Afghan men, women, and youth at schools, universities, and in communities in seven provinces of Afghanistan.





## TRAINING AND FILM SCREENINGS TO COMMUNITIES ON COMBATING CORRUPTION

EPD's 199 new ACTA members in Kabul province received two rounds of training on peace and conflict resolution, as well as community-based monitoring and good governance. Over 40 percent were women, and 60 percent youth. 125 ACTA members in Nangarhar, Herat, Bamyan and Kabul received trainings on anti-corruption and community based monitoring. Participants in these trainings included men, women, youth, and grassroots actors in the ACTA communities.

EPD has also conducted screenings of the documentary film, 'It's Our Money, Where's It Gone?'. In Kenya, members of parliament receive approximately one million dollars per year to spend on development projects in their constituencies through a scheme called the Constituency Development Fund (CDF). The MPs are able to spend this money with no meaningful oversight, so the CDF has been plagued with mismanagement and corruption. This documentary presents the powerful story of a civil society organization, MUHURI, that helps a local community in a Mombasa slum investigate their local CDF and take on the challenge of holding them accountable. In 2014, this documentary was screened to over 4,000 Afghan men, women, and youth in the four ACTA provinces as well as over 600 people in the three new ACTA networks in Kabul province.

## TRAINING AND HANDBOOK FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF AFGHANISTAN ON GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING

This project aims to contribute to the achievements of the overall objectives of the UNDP Gender Equality Project (GEP) in collaboration with Ministry of Women's Affairs and Ministry of Finance. The Gender Equality Project (GEP) is collaboration between the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan and UNDP Afghanistan. It aims to develop effective gender mainstreaming models and to strengthen the capacity of government ministries and institutions. The GRB Training Manual and Handbook for the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is the result of a coordinated effort between the Government, UNDP and EPD. Generous support and cooperation was received from the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Women's Affairs, and various sectoral ministries involved in the GRB pilot program.

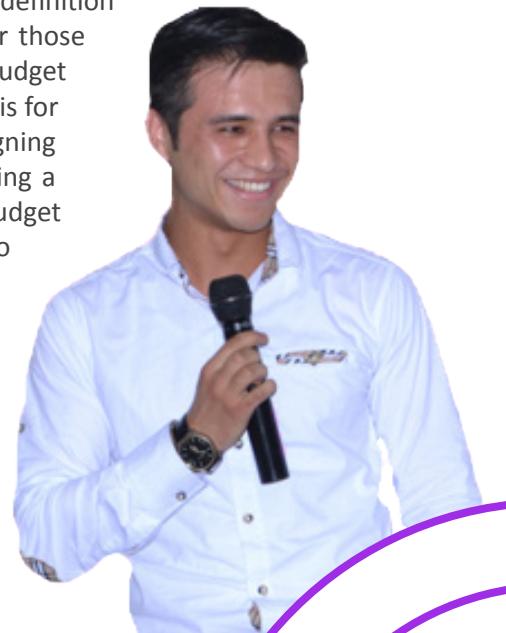
Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) is a means of integrating a gender dimension into all steps of the budget process. It is about taking into account the different needs and priorities of both women and men without gender exclusivity. Men and women often have different priorities, problems, and needs, which should be accounted for in the way that the government provides services and allocates public resources, as well as in a country's macroeconomic policies. GRB is an approach to budgeting that is focused on people, which enables better planning and therefore more effective allocation of public expenditures. GRB ensures that budgets are gender-sensitive and not gender neutral, which means that they are actively promoting gender equality.

In this project, EPD has developed a Training Manual for Trainers and a GRB Handbook for the Government of Afghanistan. The training for trainers of Ministries of Finance, Women's Affairs and EPD was conducted in India for four days and the actual training for government officials from the Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL), Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), the Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD), Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and the Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) was conducted in Kabul for five days

The training manual is developed and designed for trainers to use to train Afghan government officials on Gender Responsive Budgeting. The training manual is divided into five modules on gender and gender inequality, Afghanistan's national budget process, gender-responsive budgeting (including Afghanistan's experience with GRB, the five-step approach to GRB, tools for GRB, overcoming challenges and limitations for GRB, and GRB at different levels of government), designing gender-sensitive indicators, and international experiences with GRB. It includes a number of interactive learning activities as well as a series of short documentaries on gender equality and GRB that EPD translated and subtitled into Dari.

The GRB Handbook was developed to serve as a consultative guide to practicing Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) in Afghanistan. The handbook is designed for use by those responsible for implementing GRB, particularly government officials involved in the budget planning, implementation and evaluation process, but also by actors such as civil society, the Parliament, international donors and development practitioners to understand how effective GRB can be supported and implemented in Afghanistan.

The Handbook is designed to be comprehensive and accessible to individuals at all levels for understanding and experience regarding GRB. It includes basic concepts and definition for those who are new to GRB, as well as more in-depth and advanced tools for those with experience and knowledge regarding gender and GRB. Whether you are a budget expert or a budget beginner, a gender expert or a gender beginner, this Handbook is for you. Whether you are making policy, conducting monitoring and evaluation, designing a program, or formulating budgets, this book is for you. Whether you are planning a development project in a village with 200 households or planning the annual budget for an entire ministry, this Handbook is for you. This Handbook will serve as a go-to guide for addressing gender in budget policies and practices of practitioners at all levels of the government.



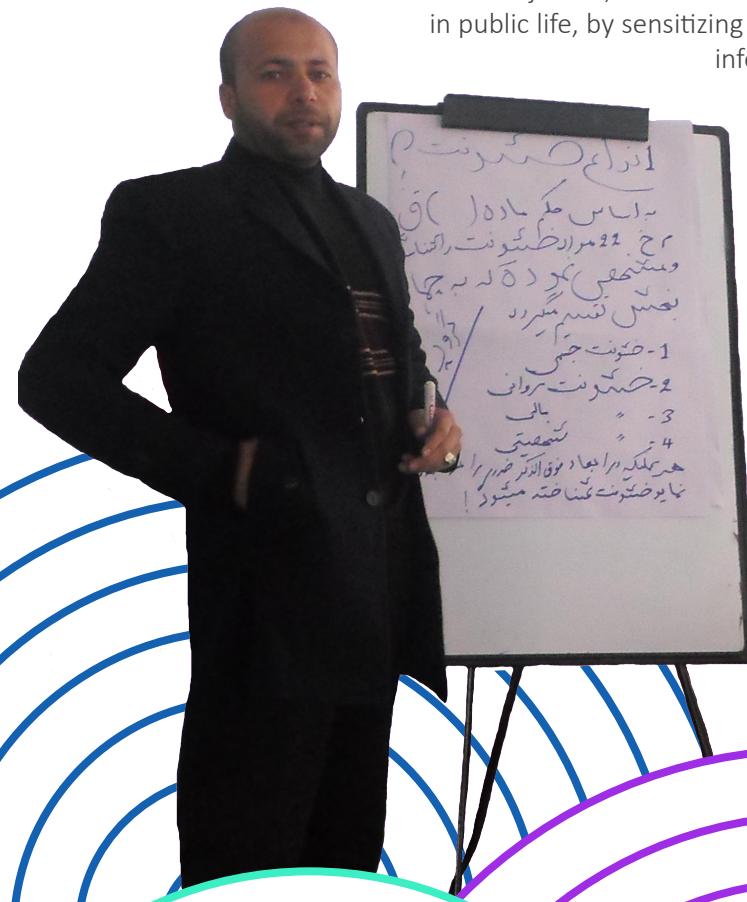
# STRENGTHENED ACCESS TO JUSTICE FOR WOMEN

In 2014, EPD began implementing a new project for improving women's access to justice through culturally sensitive approaches. This project is taking place all across Afghanistan, and EPD is currently implementing the project in the provinces of Parwan and Panjshir. The overall goal of the project is to contribute to a sustained reduction in violence against women (VAW) and sustainable protection of women's personal security by strengthening formal and informal justice sectors and raising public awareness of women's rights within the Islamic framework.

EPD is delivering technical assistance to the DoWA Women's Protection Centers Directorate and the VAW Unit of the Attorney General's Office in each province. We have also established male and female Community Dialogue Groups (CDGs) throughout the districts and two Family Resolution Units (FRUs) in each province. In this project, EPD is providing trainings on women's rights in Islam, the EVAW Law, and tolerance to boys and girls schools, formal justice actors, university lecturers and students, religious leaders, and CDG and FRU members.

As part of this year-long project to strengthen access to justice for women affected by violence, EPD organized several trainings and workshops in Panjshir and Parwan provinces on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW) Law for khateebs, female CDG facilitators and male CDG facilitators as a means to increase community awareness and engagement. The aim was to increase community awareness about constraints for women to have access to justice, women's rights under the EVAW law and the value of women's participation in public life, by sensitizing khateebs on these issues as they represent an important source of information for local populations. In addition, Training of Trainers (ToT) sessions have been held for male and female CDG facilitators on the EVAW law covering the same districts as the khateeb training. These ToTs were aimed to train influential members of the community in order for them to train CDG members in their respective communities.

Future training sessions will entail similar activities as well as selecting and training mobile trainers on the EVAW law and women's rights in Islam who will provide lectures on women's rights issues to students in schools and madrasas as educators. The project aims to train such a variety of Afghan citizens – religious leaders, influential community members and educators – in order to reach out to as many local populations as possible within the targeted districts.



# ADVOCACY AND AWARENESS RAISING

## WOMEN AND ELECTIONS NATIONAL CONFERENCE

A critical part of Afghan women's empowerment is to promote their civic engagement including their participation in political processes of Afghanistan. In February 2014, EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy (EPD) conducted a national dialogue with Afghan women about the April 2014 presidential election. 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, the presidential candidates Mr. Qayume Karzai, Dr. Ashraf Ghani Ahmadzai, Mr. Dawood Sultanzai, 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 and presented their manifestos in regard to the women of Afghanistan, with a subsequent Q&A session.

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 supporting a successful presidential election.

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 and north about elections and peace processes and identify key lessons learned to take forward.





## INTERACTION WITH INDIAN POLICYMAKERS ON GENDER RESPONSIVE BUDGETING

The 4-day Training of Trainers (ToT) in New Delhi was organized for 6 MoF officials and 1 MoWA official with the aim of developing the understanding of GRB among the participants in order to incorporate GRB into their ministry's policies and programs. The training sessions were conducted by three Indian Professors and EPD's Executive Director, and included meetings with four Indian Ministries, a government institution, a NGO and UN Women in order to learn from their experiences with regards to the implementation of GRB.

On the 27th of October, a field visit was scheduled to visit the NGO called Centre for Budget and Governance Accountability, after which the participants met with a Budget Officer from the Ministry of Finance and representatives from the Ministry of Women and Child Development. The day after, the participants met with a Program Officer from UN women in the morning, visited the government institution National Institute of Public Finance and Policy and spoke with representatives of the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Rural Development.

The purpose of the meetings with the ministries were to provide participants with a practical knowledge on GRB and the experiences of India government on incorporating the GRB into their policies and development programs and as well as the challenges and ways of overcoming. The visit from the institutes also provided the participants on how civil society played the key role for mainstreaming the gender and making sure their voices in relation to gender are heard by the government.

Moreover, the meetings with Mr. Uthaya Kumar, Additional Budget Officer of Ministry of Finance and Ms. Bhumika Jhamb, Programme Officer - UN Women's Office were held on 27th and 28th October 2014 respectively. In the meetings, they shared the GRB initiatives and its progress within the Ministry of Finance of government of India and as well as around the globe. In addition to that, the dinner program was also organized on 27th October with the human rights and women rights activists and the experts from Ministry of Finance and Ministry of Child and Development and civil society. This dinner also provided a very fruitful discussion for the trainees to listen and interact with the activists who devoted many years of their life for improvement of women's lives and empowerment.

# DEBATE ON LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE ELECTIONS

EPD and other Salah Consortium members held a debate titled 'Lessons Learned from the Elections' on 26th June 2014 in Kabul to reflect on lessons learned in the 2014 presidential elections. A total of 68 participants attended, which included social activists and community leaders from 30 provinces of Afghanistan. Participants included women and men who had previously attended the National Conference on "How to Make the Upcoming Elections a Success" in December 2013.

Participants divided into three working groups by region to discuss: (1) the performance of the government, the IEC, the IECC, candidates, and the Afghan people in the elections process; (2) their overall impressions from Election Day; (3) lessons learned for future elections. The one-day event also included a presentation by Free and Fair Election Foundation of Afghanistan (FEFA) on election challenges and reforms.

Two main questions were put forward for discussion: (1) what are the causes of the post-election crisis and what strategies could be implemented to reduce political tensions; (2) what could electoral commissions, candidates and the government do to solve the political dispute? Suggestions included: laws and national interests should be respected; the election issues should be handled through legal channels; civil society should actively take part to prevent crisis; the Election Commissions should be impartial in all elections processes.



## PWN NATIONAL ADVOCACY

In October, twenty-one women from EPD's Provincial Women's Network in Bamyan, Nangarhar, Kunduz, Faryab, Herat, Kandahar, and Kabul Provinces came to Kabul for three days . While in Kabul, the PWN members had meetings with the Deputy Director of the Independent Election Commission of Afghanistan, the Secretariat of the High Peace Council, and other key stakeholders and civil society activists. In these meetings, PWN members interacted with officials and personally undertook advocacy regarding the role of women in peace and security, the role of women in election processes and their role in terms of corruption, the low capacity of government officials at the subnational level, and issues regarding lack of infrastructure.

On the final day of the advocacy visit, EPD launched the second paper of its Women's Perspectives Series on women and elections and future challenges and opportunities for women's civic participation. The PWN members attended the event and participated in the panel discussion and personally discussing the issues with attendees, other panel members, and the media. The PWN members communicated the local face of civic participation issues, bringing firsthand observations and experience from their own participation in the elections at the provincial level as well as the work the PWN networks undertook to increase women's voter registration, recruit female security personnel for election day, and promote women's participation in election as both candidates and voters.

## PROMOTING THE RIGHTS OF AFGHAN WOMEN

In April Nigena lost her husband in a bomb blast. Three months after her husband's death, she was forced by her uncle to marry a nine year old boy from her husband's close relative. Because of her financial problems, her uncle wanted to sell her to the boy's family. Faryab Women's Network started following her case. With the support of PWN members and with help from religious leaders and community elders, Nigena was able to raise her voice and she was able to successfully prevent her forced marriage. Nigena did not want to go back to her uncle's home because she was afraid of being sold for the second time. She is now in a women's shelter in Faryab province of Afghanistan.

Nigena's case followed two other cases of domestic violence were identified by one of the Faryab Women's Network members. PWN members immediately stepped up to help and respond to these issues and coordinated with government authorities after approval from the victims and ensure that victims are provided with the adequate support. PWN members are making follow up visits and assigned a village elder to ensure that the victim is protected. Similarly, PWN members in several provinces took a supporter role in responding to cases of violence against women and domestic violence. These involved referring the victims to authorities, following the cases with authorities and coordination of assistance for these victims. Additionally, members of Faryab, Nangarhar, Bamyan, Kandahar Women's Networks participated in the EVAW workshops.



# RESEARCH AND ASSESSMENT

## EPD WOMEN'S PERSPECTIVES SERIES

This year, EPD undertook a series of researches titled '2014 Women's Perspectives Series,' a series of publications and reports on critical issues facing Afghanistan from the perspectives of Afghan women. The first paper of the series was titled 'Women, Peace, and Security in Afghanistan: Looking Back to Move Forward.' Based on a series of 9 consultations with 74 women from 20 provinces in late 2013, this research revisits the Peace Process Roadmap to 2015 from the High Peace Council as a means of looking back in order to determine how to move forward as Afghanistan undertakes critical political and security transitions. The full report can be found on EPD's website in [English](#), [Dari](#), and [Pashto](#).

The second paper of the series was titled 'Women and Elections in Afghanistan: Challenges and Opportunities for Future Civic Participation.' This research was based on 8 consultations with 70 women from 19 provinces in late 2013 and individual interviews with 38 women who attended EPD's national Women and Elections conference before and after the first round of the 2014 Presidential Election. Reflecting on the lessons learned from the 2014 Presidential Elections and looking forward to the possibilities for the 2015 Parliamentary Elections, this brief examines what can be done to enhance and improve women's democratic engagement. It becomes evident that, despite strong achievements, work remains to be done to guarantee the full exercise of women's civic rights. This paper outlines EPD's findings and recommends policies that seek to overcome or mitigate some of the obstacles to women's democratic practice in 2015. The full report can be found on EPD's website in [English](#), [Dari](#), and [Pashto](#).

Capping off the series for 2014, EPD is pleased to announce its new annual paper, '2014 Afghanistan Gender Equality Report Card: Evaluating the Government of Afghanistan's Commitments to Women and Gender Equality.' Since 2001, the government of Afghanistan has made over 2,300 explicit commitments to the women of Afghanistan or gender equality in laws, treaties and agreements, policies, and strategic documents, a figure that does not even include the innumerable verbal commitments made over the past fourteen years. These commitments cover a



range of areas, spanning from education and health to access to Internet services and raising public awareness on the rights of women in Islam. Despite the strong rhetorical commitment from the GIRoA, overall the advancements made for the women of Afghanistan have fallen egregiously short of these ambitious goals.

This paper reviews these government commitments in a number of key areas: peace processes, security, health, education, access to justice, violence against women, access to resources and services, political participation, economic opportunity and employment, protection of vulnerable groups, and awareness raising among the public. It assesses progress and shortcomings in each of these areas from the perspectives of Afghan women, according to a survey completed with members of EPD's Provincial Women's Network in six provinces of Afghanistan, combined with desk research and key informant interviews. In each commitment area, the GIRoA is given a grade from the women surveyed, which is followed by a more in-depth analysis and triangulation with factual information regarding government progress and performance. This paper highlights the GIRoA's successes as well as identifies areas for continued improvement entering the transformation decade. The paper and its findings will be released in early 2015.

## 1394 AFGHANISTAN NATIONAL BUDGET SNAPSHOT AND EXTENDED REVIEW

Through its Afghan Coalition for Transparency and Accountability (ACTA) platform, EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy (EPD) has pioneered the utilization of the national budget as a monitoring tool for monitoring government resource distribution and service delivery. EPD conducts an annual review of the National Budget, which started in 1391 (2012), to provide a clear and simple snapshot of the budget to parliament, civil society and media . 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.

With this annual project, 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. This independent budget review also provides details to Afghan parliament to review and approve the national budget. The process furthermore provides a platform for input on national budget planning from a civil society perspective.

This snapshot budget review is a summary review released along with the sending of the budget to Parliament to provide a timely review of the budget and this year's developments in public financial management, reforms, and benchmarks. In 2014, EPD was very excited to also introduce a larger 1394 Annual Budget Assessment, which goes further into the 1394 budget and analyzes actual allocations against key targets and indicators, as well as a comprehensive review of the 1392 final accounts. This Annual Budget Assessment will be released in first quarter of 2015 based on a review of the final approved budget.

EPD's Independent Review of Afghanistan 1394 Draft National Budget can be found on EPD's website in [English](#), [Dari](#), and [Pashto](#).

# BUILDING A BETTER BUDGET: ASSESSING NATIONAL BUDGET EFFICIENCY AND SERVICE DELIVERY IN THE MINISTRIES OF EDUCATION AND PUBLIC HEALTH

While the government of Afghanistan is in transition, EPD conducted research on the budget-service delivery nexus, examining the linkages between the national budget process and service delivery. With the ongoing political and security transition entering the Transformation Decade, effective budgeting will become even more crucial with impending budget constraints as foreign aid is likely to decline. The report examines the multi-faceted ways national budgeting in Afghanistan affects the quality of education and health service delivery based on data collected from 8 provinces and extensive research, as a means of addressing deficiencies in the budget process and informing recommendations to various stakeholders.

The research found relationships between budgeting inefficiency and service delivery ineffectiveness by triangulating thematic patterns of the interviews with national budget data and relevant literature. It can be concluded that a lack of discretionary budget in the national budget, complex procedures and a lack of capacity at the provincial level (and to a lesser extent at the central level), ubiquitous corruption, and the inability of the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GIRoA) to facilitate an effective mechanism for provincial budgeting, represent the main deficiencies in the budget process that affect the quality of education and health service delivery in the targeted provinces.

The launch of the report presented EPD's findings with Afghan citizens and national media in order to engender a public debate on budgeting and service delivery. An audience of around 50 people from civil society, NGOs and government and several national media attended the event. The event's panel consisted of Mr. Edrees Omarzad representing EPD, Mr. Hayatullah Bayan representing EPD's Afghans' Coalition for Transparency and Accountability (ACTA) network, and Mr. Farhad Faqiri representing the project's donor Open Society Afghanistan (OSA).

The report can be found on EPD's website in [English](#) and [Dari](#).



# PROVINCIAL WOMEN'S NETWORK - PWN

EPD established the Provincial Women's Network (PWN) in 2012 for creating a platform to bring women from different walks of life together for training and capacity building and establishing coalitions and alliances amongst themselves and with other groups in their communities. The members work to learn about the peace and transition processes in Afghanistan and their impacts on women's lives, promote peace in their communities, resolve conflicts, and monitor women's issues at the grassroots level. The networks also identify issues in their communities, which are affecting women's advancement and address them.

This year, EPD independently conducted a midterm evaluation of its Provincial Women's Network program to evaluate progress made and lessons learned to improve the program even more and maximize the program's impact.

## SUPPORTING WOMENS PARTICIPATION IN PEACE PROCESSES AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Throughout 2014, PWN members across Afghanistan were very actively advocating for women's participation in peace processes. Faryab Women's Network is working on different issues related to women and their families. In March, the

Faryab Women's Network organized meetings with families of individuals that had recently joined the peace process, as it was reported that 276 insurgents had recently joined the peace process in Faryab province. Faryab Women's Network has a good relationship with the Provincial Peace Committee (PPC). Regular coordination meetings are held to ensure that the Faryab Women's Network members are kept updated of the overall peace progress in their province. PWN members play an intermediary role between families of reintegrated individuals and the PPC to ensure that they receive the assistance they were promised. So far, vocational training sessions have been provided to the reintegrated individuals. Faryab Women's Network is conducting regular visits to ensure that they stay motivated and do not return to violence.

In coordination with several elders from the community, Kunduz Women's Network organized meetings with the Provincial Peace Committee. The meetings focused on the way forward and what needs to be done.

The head of the PPC promised to look into the performance of the PPC members, especially women, and respond to this after presidential elections are over. Nangarhar Women's Network is working with women at the community level, especially in those communities where members of families are bonding with insurgents. Through regular meetings and advocacy, mothers are asked not to send their sons and husband to join insurgents. One of the mothers has presented her story of how she prevented her son from joining the group of insurgents.



The High Peace Council (HPC) together with Afghan women, civil society, women and youth networks initiated a countrywide campaign to call for peace and an end to violence. The campaign ran for 30 days and was aiming to widely circulate the call for peace and to collect signatures of women from all walks of Afghan life for peace. It was an appeal and offer to the Afghan Government, the armed opposition groups and international community to search for common ground as basis for a peace settlement. EPD through Provincial Women's Networks managed to collect around 7,000 signatures from all provinces. EPD was also the member of working committee for the design and implementation of the campaign.

In 2014, EPD also launched the Women's Regional Network research report [Surviving War and Transition](#). The event was attended by university students, media and civil society. The key speakers and panel members were Ms. Najla Ayubi, Deputy Director of The Asia Foundation and member of WRN, Mrs. Hossai Wardak, Deputy Director of EPD and member of WRN, Mr. Masood Azizi, Deputy Minister of Interior, Mr. Nematullah Sayer, Technical Advisor of the Independent Joint Anti-Corruption Monitoring and Evaluation Committee (MEC) and Mr. Shahpoor Ahmadi, Advisor of Minister of Interior. All the speakers showed their support for this landmark report on the struggle for women's rights conducted in eight provinces. Based on the lived-experiences of Afghan women, the report was able to highlight women's perspectives about security, corruption and the militarization of aid.



# AFGHANS' COALITION FOR TRANSPARENCY AND ACCOUNTABILITY - ACTA

The Afghans' Coalition for Transparency and Accountability (ACTA) is a coalition of experts and community based youth groups, women, elders and religious leaders who voluntarily promote transparency and accountability for public policies, strategies and resources. While ACTA's Advisory Committee in Kabul reviews national budget planning and execution at the national level, ACTA groups in the provinces monitor the implementation of projects and service delivery in their communities by relevant institutions and holding them accountable. EPD assists in establishing these networks, trains the members in anti-corruption, transparency, accountability, and community-based monitoring, and assists them in developing and implementing their advocacy and monitoring action plans.

## EXPANSION OF ACTA

In July 2014 EPD undertook a new project called 'Kabul Urban Transitions', which facilitated the expansion of EPD's ACTA network to three new chapters in Deh Sabz, Qarabagh, and Dasht-e Barchi areas of Kabul province. Urbanization will shape Afghanistan's future as profoundly as the political and security transitions. Urban growth in Kabul province has far outpaced the ability of its municipal and district governments to deliver services. These areas have been chosen because of their mix of conflicts and community resiliencies, youth demographics, political importance, and geographic location along major transit routes connecting the capital to the northern, eastern, and southern regions of the country.

The goal of this project was to establish three youth ACTA networks and assist them in developing advocacy action plans to strengthen community capacities to promote peaceful transition, and to build community capacity to engage in civic advocacy in pursuit of greater transparency and accountability. EPD established ACTA networks in Qarabagh, Dasht-e Barchi, and Deh Sabz districts of Kabul with 199 new ACTA members. In addition to the advocacy and service delivery monitoring projects carried out by these new networks, EPD's donor, CCI, supported two projects in each community based on concept notes developed by EPD and the ACTA members. In Qarabagh, the communities have received projects on tailoring and farming, Deh Sabz on tailoring and a library, and a library and computer courses in Dasht-e Barchi.

## PROMOTING GOOD GOVERNANCE AND COMBATING CORRUPTION THROUGH ACTA

In 2014, EPD's ACTA networks across Afghanistan were very active putting what they have learned into practice monitoring government service delivery and promoting good governance. Bamyan ACTA members of Sheerbar district met their District Administrator in January to share their community problems with local government and request for necessary measures in this regard. The participants shared and discussed the lack of health, education and water services, bad condition of the roads, the non-functioning hydroelectric dam in the community and seek for attention of local governance. A peaceful demonstration was also held in January to advocate for the government to sign the Bilateral Security Agreement with the USA. In this peaceful and non-violent demonstration, the social



and civil activists of Bamyan requested President Hamid Karzai to follow the decision of the Loya Jirga regarding the signing of Bilateral Security Agreement.

EPD's ACTA network in Bamyan also took initiative in producing a newsletter twice a month based on the problems that people in Bamyan are facing in their everyday lives. The ACTA network started this newsletter in order to find solutions to problems that the government and local people don't pay attention to. The subjects that are in the articles are mostly about advocacy issues that ACTA members are finding and working on, as well as activities by the Bamyan Women's Network. The newsletter is distributed to all people in Bamyan through government offices, universities, local shops and many other places. The government of Bamyan has had a good reaction toward this publication, welcoming such contributions from local active people in Bamyan.

In Herat, EPD's ACTA members organized a meeting with Herat Municipality and Water Supply Department regarding drinking water in Naw-Abad village of Enjeel district3. ACTA members convinced officials to carry out a survey in this area and identify drinking water sources. Site Engineers were assigned for this assignment and ACTA members also assigned team members to assist site engineers for carrying out this survey. The high speed of police vehicles had caused many accidents within Herat city, and has caused injuries and deaths in some instances. It was a major concern of the people and needed to be addressed. Herat ACTA members shared the concerns of the people with the Head of Herat Police Department. The Head of the Police Department agreed to take necessary actions in this regard and promised to make sure all the police are notified to slow down their speed.

In Nangarhar, ACTA members met with the Deputy Director of Education Department regarding the problems of female students, including limited access to transportation facilities and lack of drinking water inside the school campus. ACTA members prepared a list of students who had limited access to shuttle services and the Deputy Director was convinced to try to find a proper and affordable solution for the problem. As a result, an official letter was sent to Ministry of Education seeking support for provision of transportation for the female students.



# ORGANIZATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION TRAINING

This year, EPD upgraded its M&E system to a results-based system and introduced a new M&E Policy. This document is a guideline for the framework of the M&E system for EPD. This M&E system for EPD describes how performance should be monitored and how outcomes and impact will be evaluated. This guideline covers the basics of M&E, outlines the overall EPD M&E system, and details specific M&E procedures according to three components of EPD activities: (1) Projects/Programs, (2) Trainings, and (3) Research.

Rather than just focusing on the question of whether we did the project as we agreed (an implementation-focused M&E system), EPD's new approach to M&E also addresses the quality and impact of what we have delivered. EPD's M&E approach is designed to give feedback on the outcomes of our activities, and look for successes and shortcomings as opportunities for learning and improving existing organization practice, as well as for providing feedback to donors and partners about their objectives and approach.

From 10-13 August 2014, all EPD staff was trained on the new M&E system in the Kabul Office. The aim of this training was to develop an integrated M&E system and provide a capacity building training for EPD employees. In order to be successful in all projects EPD had this training to help the organization implement projects efficiently and effectively and track not only outputs and activities but also outcomes and impacts. The 1st to 3rd days of the M&E training were for general information about monitoring and evaluation and EPD's new system. On the 4th day of the training the trainers prepared practical exercises in order to give trainees the chance to understand how M&E works in practice. Exercises included completing a Risk Assessment, Stakeholder Analysis, Project Logical Framework, and Data Collection Plan.

EPD's M&E system includes individual monthly work plans and all-EPD quarterly meetings and action plans. These M&E templates will be a requirement for all new projects and will be incorporated into ongoing projects, including ACTA and PWN. An M&E database has also been developed which is actively maintained and regularly updated for effective in-process project monitoring.

## DEVELOPING EPD GENDER POLICY

In addition to a new M&E Policy, in 2014 EPD also introduced its Gender Policy. EPD's Gender Policy was developed with the understanding that gender inequality has deep roots and that gender-based discrimination can manifest in many different forms. To whatever extent EPD and its staff may be assumed to be sensitive to gender issues as a women focused and lead organization, conscious and continuous efforts are required to ensure gender-sensitive approaches and practices both at organizational level and also in work with partners and at the local level. The Gender Policy is a commitment towards those efforts. The overall goal is to provide an enabling environment for women within the organization, various partners and in the communities in which we are working and to strengthen the gender sensitivity among all.



The EPD Gender Policy is designed for use both internally for the organization and externally. Internally, this document serves to outline the policies, requirements and guiding principles for all EPD staff, operations, projects and programs regarding gender. All EPD staff members are required to undergo training on the EPD Gender Policy, and new EPD staff is required to have an orientation session on the EPD Gender Policy. Every unit is required to have one hard copy of the EPD Gender Policy.

Externally, the EPD Gender Policy serves as a resource and knowledge source for individuals and organizations on gender inequality and strategies for streamlining gender considerations into all aspects of NGO operations. It also serves as a public commitment on behalf of EPD to the principles outlined herein, and an accountability tool for holding EPD to fulfilling its commitments regarding gender equality.

#### EPD's Guiding Principles for Gender in Practice:

1. Promote women's quality participation at the local and national levels
2. Empower women to identify and advocate for their own solutions
3. Build networks and coalitions
4. Promote women's participation and perspectives in all areas
5. Advocacy
6. Promote gender equality with empowering images and rationale
7. Do no harm
8. Engage male supporters
9. Promote gender equality through Islam



# NEW STAFF AT EPD

We would like to acknowledge the work and contributions of valuable staff members who have left EPD in 2014. We are very grateful for the tireless efforts of Ms. Samima Durrani, who was with EPD as the Institutional Development Advisor and helped us to develop and improve key policies and guidelines and contributed greatly to the continued growth of the organization. We also appreciate the hard work of Deputy Directors Ms. Hossai Wardak and Ms. Huma Safi in advancing the rights and participation of women and youth across Afghanistan through their work on programs and vigorous advocacy efforts in promotion of EPD's vision. We thank Mr. Saleem Anwar for his great work as EPD's Finance Manager. Ms. Marie Huber, EPD's Technical Advisor, has also left EPD but we are looking forward to continuing to work with her as she continues to manage EPD's research activities as a consultant in 2015. We would like to acknowledge the invaluable contributions each of these team members has made, and wish them all the best in their continued efforts on behalf of the women and youth of Afghanistan.

Along with this, we are excited to introduce a number of new staff who have joined our team. Mr. Edrees Omarzad has come on board as EPD's new Deputy Director, bringing over 10 years of experience working in different managerial positions for a variety of Afghan ministries, ranging from project management to communication strategy. He has worked hard on EPD's programs throughout 2014 and we are looking forward to his continued contributions to EPD's mission this year. We also welcome Mr. Wajid Khan, EPD's new Finance Manager. . He has 6 years of experience in accounting, auditing and financial management, and brings extensive experience in overseeing the financial operations of large projects. He holds two accounting certificates, a Bachelor of Arts in Economics, and a Diploma in Commerce.

Ms. Nooria Sultani has joined EPD as the Program and Advocacy Manager. She holds a Bachelor of Social Law from Pune University in India and has several years of work experience in the field of Management, Advocacy, Program and Evaluation. EPD looks forward to Ms. Sultani further developing her career at EPD and using her full potential for the success and further development of the EPD.

Mr. Maurits Rade joined as the EPD Associate in 2014, and is supporting EPD's work in the areas of research, resource mobilization, and advocacy. He holds a Masters degree in Violence, Conflict and Development from SOAS, University of London, and he has been trained in social science research. At EPD, Mr. Rade has done research on issues related to good governance, the budgeting-service delivery nexus, subnational governance, transparency and accountability, government M&E, and corruption.

Dr. Pam Green is the most recent addition to EPD's staff, having joined as the new Technical Advisor in early 2015. She holds a Doctorate of Social Science in Developmental Socioeconomics, as well as Masters of Science (Psychotherapy), Business Administration, and Philosophy (Media and Culture). In addition to her extensive education, she has several years of experience in development, including working on grassroots programming and partnership and promoting human rights, gender equality, and youth involvement in Burma, as well as previous experience in Afghanistan.

# DONORS AND PARTNERS

## 2014 DONORS



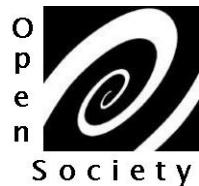
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Ministry of Women's Affairs  
High Peace Council and Provincial Peace Councils  
Ministry of Justice  
Ministry of Public Health  
Ministry of Education

## AFFILIATIONS AND MEMBERSHIPS

### Salah Consortium

SALAH is a consortium of eight well established Afghan civil society organizations with a combined presence in all 34 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 Community Rehabilitation Unit (ACRU), Afghan Public Welfare Organization (APWO), Afghan Women Education 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.

### Civil Society Joint Working Group

The Civil Society Joint Working Group (CSJWG) is composed of some 30 coordinating bodies representing more or less 1,400 organizations of all sizes. The CSJWG can be credited with being an Afghan-led network that embraces the diversity of Afghan civil society. Its members include Non-government Organizations (NGOs), Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), social organizations, unions, associations and other registered entities working on broad (civic education to natural resources management) and specialized areas (budget analysis and transparency) throughout the 34 provinces.