

# EQUALITY For Peace and Democracy

*Promoting a Culture of Coexistence, Accountability, and peace for All*

In the second quarter of 2016, EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy undertook initiatives to improve women's entrepreneurship and economic independence. To this end, EPD conducted research and raised awareness on the barriers which hamper women's access to market. Skill training, leadership and management courses were also held.

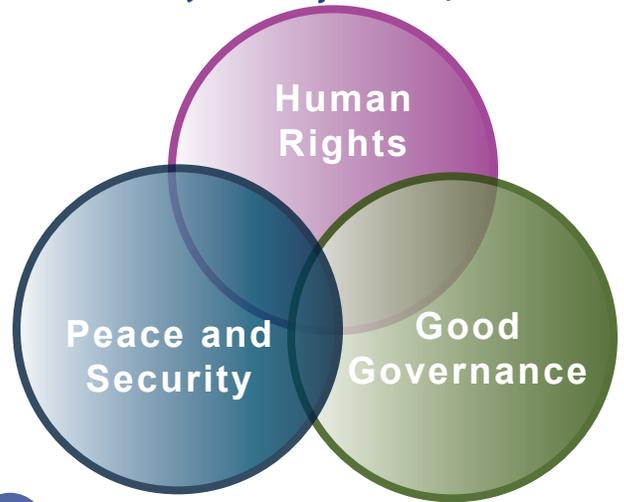
In addition to women's rights, peace building is a key focus of the organisation. EPD has worked jointly with other NGOs, carrying out analysis to promote an understanding of the achievements and weaknesses of APRP and the peace process.

During this quarter, the PWN in 15 provinces have conducted a wide range of coordinated activities, including "In Her Shoes" trainings, documentary screenings, advocacy against violence against women and monitoring service delivery in the community. Furthermore, the PWN conducting a

Barometer survey, designed to identify the problems which local women face and to amplify these issues to international audiences. PWN members were invited to Kabul to build connections with one another and to share experiences and knowledge.

EPD has started its assessments of the PWN network, conducting over 160 interviews and surveying around 450 members, to evaluate PWNs impact and achievements and to understand their needs and challenges.

EPD continued to conducting trainings in Parwan and Panjshir, to raise awareness on women's rights and EAW from an Islamic view. EPD also attempted to promote women's political participation by holding trainings on "Women in Politics, Corruption, Communications and Public Outreach" for Kabul Provincial Council members to advocate for more women involvement in politics.



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EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy has prepared a manual on “Women in Politics, Corruption, Communications and Public Outreach”, based on the findings of its research into the gendered aspects of political corruption in Afghanistan. The manual was designed to help MPs and Provincial Council members to increase their accountability, and to build their capacity in public outreach, communications, and constituent engagement. Furthermore, the manual includes some constructive case studies and information for the participants to analyse and discuss. It also includes instructions for the trainer to facilitate brainstorming sessions during the training.

During this quarter, EPD conducted the first round of the training on the aforementioned manual for provincial council members and candidates for upcoming parliamentary elections in Kabul, Herat and Bamyan.

The training included interactive discussion and knowledge sharing sessions between participants and the trainer. The trainings were assessed using pre & post-tests; statistical analysis revealed a significant increase in knowledge of the participants in such areas as the barriers hampering women’s political participation, the importance of participation of women in politics, and approaches to eliminate corruption.

## Women’s Entrepreneurship and Economic Empowerment



## Documentary Screening & Trainings

On 6th April 2016, EPD held a national launch event on “Barriers to Women Entrepreneurs’ Access to Market” to share the main findings of its assessment of the markets in Afghanistan. This report discusses the barriers to market access that Afghan women face, and suggests policy recommendations aimed at boosting female entrepreneurship. The launch event will cover the assessment’s main findings, panelist speeches and a Q & A session. The research report is available in English, Dari and Pashtu.

empowerment, including research findings and policy recommendations. Exercises were added to the toolkit, to provide the opportunity for those involved to practice lobbying for women entrepreneurship.

The advocacy toolkit was presented to Kabul PWN members as part of a dialogue. The participants received information on women entrepreneurs, and on the opportunities and challenges of entrepreneurship in Afghanistan. As a result, the cohort acquired skills for designed advocacy and awareness raising campaigns, aimed at enhancing women’s economic empowerment.

Based on this research report, an advocacy toolkit was prepared to advocate for women’s economic

## Promoting Women’s Political Participation



EPD undertook activities to support women’s economic empowerment and to promote female entrepreneurship. The organization has conducted tailoring training for 30 women, selected by Provincial Women Network (PWN) and who currently struggle with financial hardship.

Tailoring production training began on 3rd April 2016 and finished on 5th June 2016. The participants were trained on a wide range of topics, from basic hand stitching to learning cutting garment procedures and making fashionable dresses. As the participants were from wide range of backgrounds, the attendees were divided into groups of basic and advanced learners, and received different training accordingly. It is worth mentioning that at the end of

the course the participants were provided with a sewing machine with which to start their own projects.

Besides the paucity of skills and education among many local women, weaknesses in marketing and product promotion is another constrain limiting female entrepreneurship. To address this, EPD incorporated marketing and management courses into its training syllabus. From 8th to 30th June 2016, the 30 women selected by PWN members received training on marketing and management. The training provided information on business strategies for medium and small businesses, aimed at helping the tailors to promote their products to a wider audience.

Considering that women’s right are usually violated by men, it seems that ERAW efforts that do not incorporate any of the input of men are somewhat limited. such an approach can improve solidarity, cooperation and understanding among men and women locally.

EPD has developed a training manual entitled “Engaging Men on Women’s Rights”, covering topics aimed at raising awareness on different types of violence and methods to address them.

During this period, EPD conducted two rounds of training workshops for 600 male community leaders in 15 provinces of Afghanistan. The community leaders were selected as influential individuals who are able to go some distance in challenging

problematic customs with the support of their communities. The trainings targeted them to convey the message to other men in the community to stand with women so as to eliminate VAW.

EPD has successfully held a series of screenings for the documentary Six Days, showing the challenges and achievements of a number of social activism projects globally.

Furthermore, EPD has finalized a manual on “Women’s Peace and Security” to raise awareness and ensure women’s security. From 26th – 29th May 2016, 15 provincial coordinators received ToT on this manual in Kabul province and EPD in coming months will arrange several rounds of workshops on it.



## Rapid Market Assessment Launch Event

## Strengthened Access to Justice for Women



EPD had held numerous trainings aimed at solving VAW cases in Parwan and Panjshir. The main aim of the project was to contribute to a sustained reduction in violence against women (VAW) and the sustainable protection of women's personal security by strengthening formal and informal justice sectors, and to raise public awareness of women's rights within an Islamic framework.

In Parwan and Panjshir provinces, EPD has undertaken different approaches. A number of male religious leaders in targeted areas were gathered to establish a Community Dialogue Group (CDG). EPD believes that effective awareness raising on women rights is more effective through

such a group, which has a high degree of influence over the community and which takes the risks of cultural sensitivity into account.

The other targeted groups are university and school students and lecturers, who have the opportunity to increase awareness among their peers at each respective institution. EPD successfully trained these two groups in this quarter.

Besides the trainings, EPD has hired legal management experts to provide legal support for women affected by violence. These specialists have already begun to successfully resolve VAW cases in the two target provinces.

## New Staff at EPD



**Zohra Nasrat**  
Senior Program Officer

Zohra Nasrat joined EPD as the Program officer on June, 2016. She has several years of experience in Program coordination and admin assistance with several governmental and non-governmental organization of Afghanistan. She has graduated in Literature from Kabul University. Zohra speaks Russian, Dari, English, and Turkmen and has received trainings in computer skills, capacity building, public awareness and teamwork. She has traveled to India, Pakistan, Tajikistan, Moscow, and Turkmenistan.

### Her Excitements about EPD

Joining EPD is a great experience as we get to work with national and international coworker, where we can share views on different cultures and actually get an opportunity of learning about those cultures without even visiting the places. EPD has a very professional environment and all the departments work together as a team rather than on hierarchy basis. Working with EPD is very respectful.

## Donors and Supporters

Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands  
Department of State  
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The Asia Foundation  
Salah Consortium

## Where we work



## How to Get Involved

To learn more about our work and organization, email us at [admin@epd-afg.org](mailto:admin@epd-afg.org) or visit our website at [www.epd-afg.org](http://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 college/university 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>