

EQUALITY For Peace and Democracy

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

EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy (EPD) in the third quarter of 2016, implemented activities to ensure women's peace and security. To this end, EPDs Provincial Women Networks (PWN) held monthly and advocacy meetings in 15 provinces across Afghanistan including Kabul, Nangarhar, Herat, Bamyan, Faryab, Kunduz, Parwan, Laghman, Uruzgan, Balkh, Paktia, Kandahar, Daikundi, Badakhshan and Helmand. They advocated for women working in police department in order to remove gender-based discrimination towards female-police officials and also encouraged the department to recruit more women in their concerned provinces. The PWN also conducted film screening and trainings to spread awareness among public regarding women's right, involving men in elimination of violence against women.

In order to facilitate interaction and experience sharing, EPD invited the

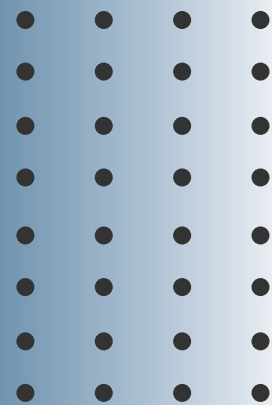
PWNs coordinators to a quarterly meeting. EPD has also started its second round of PWN assessment, to improve the network performance and to assess their activities with particular attention to four pillars of 1325 UNSCR. Furthermore, as an initiative for women economic empowerment, vocational trainings were conducted for those women who live in women in protection centers and also to the women who come from poor back grounds. All the beneficiaries of these trainings were provided with a sewing machine, so they can initiate their business.

EPD celebrated peace day by bringing around 500 attendees from across the country together, in 14 provinces. We also conducted trainings on gender-based political corruption and enhanced interaction between public and their political representatives with participation of provincial council members in the related provinces.



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Monitoring Women Peace and Security



Quarterly Meeting with Provincial Coordinators



Central Exchange



Roadmap to Peace

EPD has established Provincial Women Network as a platform to bring women from different walks of life together. The networks identify issues in their communities that are affecting women's advancement and their participation in political processes. They conduct advocacies to reduce VAW as well as enhance women's role at the grassroots and policy level. EPD has assisted the network with the development of their advocacy plans and their implementation, and facilitate opportunities for them to raise their voice at a national level as well as share their experience with other women from across the Afghanistan.

During this quarter, EPDs Provincial Women Network in 15 provinces held their meetings on monthly basis and according

to the agendas they addressed issues, such as discrimination against female police officers and how to address that, employing disabled women in the government and non-government sectors.

In order to improve effectiveness of these networks, identify their problems and grant solutions, EPD has started second round of PWNs assessment. This evaluation has been undertaken to ensure the activities are meeting objectives of the project and can support women's peace and security. After revising the assessment tools, the evaluation was kicked off from Kabul, and then to other Provinces like Nangarhar, Parwan and Paktia. The assessment process will continue till the end of this year.

To facilitate interaction and experience sharing among the Provincial Networks (PWN), EPD hosted a two-day quarterly meeting on 20 and 21 July with participation of the provincial coordinators from 15 provinces. During the meeting, all the PC's were given the opportunities, to share their issues, achievements and methods of advocacies for addressing the problems in their communities. They also discussed challenges and the means to find solutions for those challenges.

During first day of the program, the coordinators shared their experience regarding "In Her Shoes Training" carried out during past quarter. This training was conducted for men, across 15 provinces. Data analysis of pre & post-test showed increase in knowledge of the participants

and in some of the provinces particularly, this rate was very significant.

The second day of the program was allocated for interaction of the coordinators with the senior management team. Mr. Edrees Omarzad (executive director of EPD) delivered a speech on importance of team work and good coordination between the networks and the central office for smooth functioning of the networks. He also emphasized that the coordinators should follow up with the problems in their related communities especially regarding women's peace and security, address them and change women's life at grass-root level. At the end of this two days event, participants shared their opinions, concerns and problems which were address by the central office.

On 24th July 2016, 71 members of EPDs Provincial Women Network (PWN) from 15 provinces gathered together in Kabul to exchange ideas. Over the course of three days, they shared their experiences, knowledge, achievements and challenges of their concerned provinces. The program included presentations, group works and panel sessions hosted by representatives of national and international organizations, the High Peace Council, the Ministry of Women's Affairs and the Provincial Council.

The representatives of the PWNs presented overviews of advocacy and campaign activities as well as the challenges and lesson learned during the networks' activity. Furthermore, the attendees were divided into groups of

eight, discussing such issues as the gender-based problems in the provinces, the importance of female participation in key aspects of the society and related obstacles.

The last day of the Central Exchange program revolved round a panel discussion headed by Mr. Khalid Siddiqi (Research Manager at Afghanistan Public Policy Research Organisation), Mr. Nawid Zolfaqar (Deputy Director at Women's Peace Study Organization), Ms. Rahima Zarifi (Head of Policy and Planning at the Department of Women's Affairs) and Ms. Nooria Sultani (Program Manager at Equality for Peace and Democracy). Panelists gave their views on factors driving gender inequality in Afghanistan, discussing possible policy solutions with input from the audience.

In this quarter, the finalized version of the "Roadmap to Peace" report was publicly disseminated with media. During this launch event, main findings of this comprehensive research report were discussed with the representatives of civil society, governmental and non-governmental organizations as well as with the community members. During the event a panel session was facilitated and representatives of Salah consortium (EPD, HERVO, CAPAU, PTRO, and TLO) jointly shared the main findings of this report and also emphasized the government representatives and high peace council to incorporate recommendation of this report in the related policies.

The analysis was put together on the basis of numerous interviews and community consultations with local mediators, religious

leaders, tribal elders, civil society activists, APRP officials, provincial government representatives, and reintegrated insurgents. The research aimed to examine the current situation of the peace process at local level, with a particular focus on the role of local civil society groups and actors.

It is worth mentioning that EPD by gathering national and international experts enriched the report. For this aim two symposia in national and regional level were held and the participants' opinions were incorporated into the report.

EPD also shared the main findings of the roadmap to peace with senior representations of High Peace Council, USIP and shared the findings with UNAMA.

Peace Day



On 21 September 2016, EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy celebrated the international peace day by holding conferences in 14 provinces of Afghanistan including Kabul, Nangarhar, Bamyan, Herat, Faryab, Kandahar, Kunduz, Daikundi, Laghman, Parwan, Paktia, Helmand and Badakhshan. In this program around 500 attendees throughout the country were invited to mark this significant event and determine their commitment to support peace process at the grass root and policy level. In this event, the representatives of provincial councils, justice department, the governor office, women's affair department, civil society, community member, media and many other

governmental and non-governmental institution participated from across all the aforementioned provinces. The provincial coordinators of the concerned provinces delivered speeches about PWNs aims and objectives, importance of peace building and its future effects on women's lives. It is worth mentioning that during these events, EPD also used posters designed to raise awareness on this event and ask the participants to contribute in peace building in Afghanistan. The participants discussed about the importance of peace day and importance of women's role in peace building.

Engaging with Men on Women's Rights



In the movement of gender equality, both men and women should be involved as equal partners. Generally gender discrimination is experienced far more by women than men. Perhaps for this reason, traditionally in the gender equality movement, men have always been excluded. Only in recent times, there been a slow change of engaging men in this movement – a movement characteristically led by both men and women in order to get better results.

To address this issue, EPD during the 3rd quarter of 2016, conducted 3 rounds of trainings entitled "Engaging with Men on women's Rights" to raise awareness and practically bring change in the mindset of male members of the community. This training was designed for male participants and they were

given information on domestic violence and its different types. It also included an experiential exercise of role playing, role of women played by men, was an important exercise to sensitize men.

The training was implemented in 15 provinces of Afghanistan and participants from different community level were gathered. EDP especially tried to target influential male members of the community including religious, community leaders and policy makers. as it is expected that raising awareness among them can lead to change mindset of a larger community members.

Additionally, EPD has screened a documentary film titled "Six Days" in 15 provinces of Afghanistan to raise awareness on women's right and elimination of violence against women.



Training on Marketing and Management

On 25 August 2016, EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy facilitated a training on findings of EPDS' research report with participation of Kabul on "Barriers to women's access to market" Provincial Women Network. The training was held with the aim of raising awareness on role of women in financial support to families, women entrepreneurs, opportunities for women to start their business and challenges and approaches to facilitate reintegration of women in protection center within the community.

According to this research, the important reasons for low women entrepreneurs in Afghanistan were found to be lack of skills among women and lack of information on

promotion of the goods. In spite of the qualification of women in producing good, lack of skills for their promotion is a major threat to the prosperity of women entrepreneurship. EQUALITY for Peace & Democracy started the second round of marketing and management skill and development course for 30 women aimed at enhancing women economic empowerment. The course lasted for 18 days and 30 women received information on time management, leadership, and characteristics of a successful manager, advertisement and skills for promoting the products. It is worth mentioning that the participant received a certificate on confirmation of completion of the course.



Provincial Dialogues in Kabul

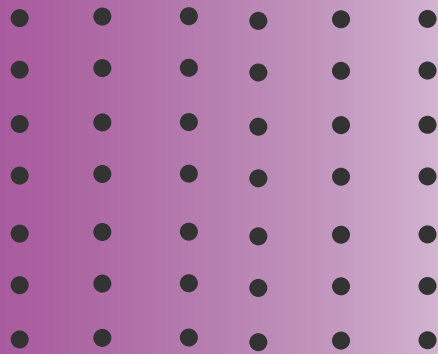
EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy jointly with Afghan Women' Skill Development Center (AWSDC), on 21th and 28th August 2016 conducted two rounds of provincial dialogue in Kabul. 40 participants (20 in each) from different governmental and non-governmental institutions such as Kabul Governor Office, the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG), Ministry of Justice, Ministry of women's Affairs, National NGO and Religious and community elders were invited to spread awareness and exchanging ideas on importance of Women Protection Centers to reduce violence against women and the main findings of EPDs assessment of markets in Afghanistan.

During the program, main activities of AWSDC organization

were presented. AWSDC has conducted numerous rounds of literacy and skills trainings, as well as advocacies to support women in the Women Protection Centre (WPS) and also to the victims of violence at local, national and international levels.

The participants were given the opportunity to share their ideas regarding female entrepreneurship, the role of women in providing financial support for their families and opportunities for women to start business, as well as challenges and approaches to reintegrate former residents of women's protection centers into the community. During the discussion, the prominent participants delivered speeches and discussed the related issues with the other participants.

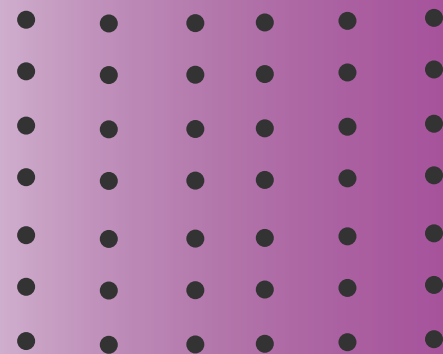
Sharing Women's Responses to Radicalization in Afghanistan and Pakistan



EPD along with its partner Aware Girls in Pakistan plans to start a research to document the impact of radicalization on women's life and their role and responses for countering radicalization in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It will create a bridge between Afghanistan's and Pakistan's women peace activists, enabling them to take joint actions for inclusion of women in peacebuilding processes across borders, a network of Afghan and Pakistani Women Activist will be developed. The network, will be a platform to build connections between Pakistan and Afghan women working on counter radicalization, learn about dynamics of violent

extremism in both countries, women's responses to it, to build collective peace initiatives, and to advocate for inclusion of women in peacebuilding processes. EPD has started working on developing the research methodology and research tools for this study and will start the data collection very soon.

Access to legal services in target areas for women affected by violence



EPD After holding numerous trainings aimed at solving VAW cases in Parwan and Panjshir and has extended its activities to two other provinces, Kabul and Kapisa. The main aim is to contribute to a sustained reduction in violence against women (VAW) and the sustained 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. The other targeted group for this project are university and school students and teachers, who have the opportunity to increase awareness among their peers at each respective institution. EPD will also work with other groups such as police, prosecutors, and judges to raise awareness

and build their capacity EPD will train these two groups in this quarter. Besides the trainings, EPD will also hire legal management experts to provide legal support for women affected by violence.

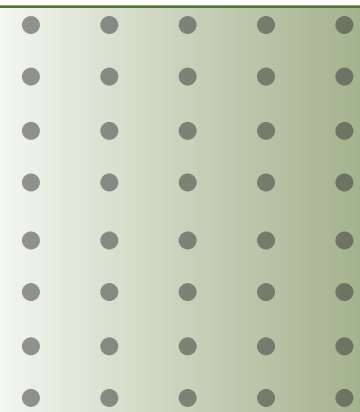
Reducing Gap between Public and their Political Representatives



On 28th July, EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy facilitated a public outreach session with the support of Kabul Provincial Council members. Around 75 members participated in the program, including civil society actors, representatives of Cordaid, Kabul's Provincial Women Network (PWN) and men, women and youth of the community in general. During this event the main finding of EPDs research report on "Gender, Governance, and Corruption" was presented. Prior to this, Provincial Council members and possible candidates for future election had participated in EPD workshops on the role of gender in governance. During this program, they brought this expertise to the outreach

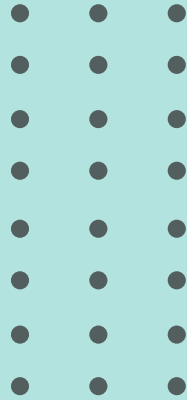
session, to raise awareness on issues including women's political participation, gendered networks and the elimination of corruption. The program also included preparing a press release by considering and incorporation the discussed issues. Followed by the outreach session, EPD started second round of the similar trainings on gender based political corruption in Kabul, Nangarhar, Bamyán, Faryab, Kandahar and Herat. In these trainings the participants were given information about the main findings of this research and also information on the development of communication skill were imparted to them.

Access to Justice



EPD along with the members of Salah, including CPAU, PTRO, SDO and TLO has undertaken an initiative towards the enhancement of access to justice in five provinces like, Kunduz, Nangarhar, Kandahar, Balkh and Khost. The aim of this initiative is to strengthen the engagement of CSOs and their networks and also to lobby and advocate for improved access to and quality of justice provision, especially for women in both formal and informal justice system. EPD on 5th September 2016 has facilitated an orientation session with the representatives of the partner organizations to discuss about the activities like how to reach out to the stakeholders, different approaches to tackle

barriers and also how to overcome the challenges. The activities will spread awareness on rights and procedures of legal system both statutory and customary in order to support the citizens to claim their rights more effectively. Furthermore, it will increase trust in customary and statutory justice providers among the citizens, particularly women. The activities will lead to an increase in the number and capacity of female prosecutors and judges in formal system. Additionally, it will ensure their employment beyond the major regional urban centers including in leadership positions.



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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 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>