

EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy

Annual Report 2016



EPD | EQUALITY
for Peace and
Democracy

Message from the Interim Executive Director

It is my pleasure to present EPDs 2016 annual report. Over the years EPD has shown development in terms of capacity and coverage area.

In 2016 EPD conducted activities for enhancing women's right, good governance and peace building. Through its Provincial Women Networks (PWN) EPD reaches out to needy women in rural areas and mobilize women to monitor their peace and security. EPD along with women affairs directorate has raised awareness on women's rights, supported VAW victims to follow up their cases and seek justice in Kabul, Parwan, Panjshir and Kapisa. EPD has put efforts to decrease gap between people and their political representatives through holding sessions for provincial council members and subsequent dialogues where they could interact with each other directly.

During this year, EPD has also published a number of research reports, most of which were later adopted into advocacy toolkits to support women's economic empowerment and involvement of women in politics. Moreover two rounds of assessment were carried out to understand impact of PWNs in community and their progress in terms of supporting pillars of UNSCR to ensure women's peace and security. EPD successfully brought national and international peace experts to provide insight into peace process of Afghanistan as well as to advocate for women's role in peace building. Like previous years, EPD conducted Afghanistan national budget review to provide an understandable overview of the national budget and encourage community to monitor governmental service delivery financed through this budget.

EPD also conducted numerous awareness raising workshops, skill trainings as well as dialogues to support women empowerment. Hundreds of impoverished women particularly women in shelters received trainings on marketing, management and tailoring courses which would help them to start their own entrepreneurship. EPD has also engaged male influential members of the community to support women's right campaigns and recommend solutions for VAW cases.

During this year, EPD has received remarkable achievements which indicate EPDs potential for stronger progress and bright future. For next year EPDs will continue its activities and will work towards expanding its coverage area to reach out to more women in rural area. EPD will put more efforts in removing violence and help talented women to raise their voice who due to improper custom and cultural norms can't reach social, educational and political status they deserve.

I would once again like to invite all the Afghans to support us in empowering youth and women, bringing peace and enhancing good governance. Netizenship is a good approach to bring change and we hereby ask all volunteers all over of the country to join our networks and participate in our activities and work for development of our country.



Edrees Omarzad

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EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy

About EPD

EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy (EPD) is a nonprofit, non-governmental organization dedicated to empowering women and youth at the community and policy levels in Afghanistan. EPD was established in early 2010 by Ms. Nargis Nehan, 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.

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 2016

During 2016, EPD participated and were encouraged to stand and fight for equality for peace and democracy. EPD invested in capacity building of its Provincial Women Network (PWN) as well as in expansion of the coverage area. Currently EPD has active presence in 17 provinces of Afghanistan including Kabul, Nangarhar, Kandahar, Helmand, Herat, Laghman, Paktia, Bamyan, Daikundi, Parwan, Badakhshan, Balkh, Kunduz, Faryab, Uruzgan, Panjshir and Kapisa.

In this year, EPD has conducted numerous rounds of awareness raising trainings in support of women's peace and security where women from grass-root level

participated and were encouraged to stand and fight for equality for peace and democracy. EPD invested in capacity building of its Provincial Women Network (PWN) as well as in expansion of the coverage area. Currently EPD has active presence in 17 provinces of Afghanistan including Kabul, Nangarhar, Kandahar, Helmand, Herat, Laghman, Paktia, Bamyan, Daikundi, Parwan, Badakhshan, Balkh, Kunduz, Faryab, Uruzgan, Panjshir and Kapisa. EPD has also participated in local monthly meetings, provincial dialogues, quarterly meetings and central exchanges to interact with each other and share experience.

During 2016, EPD



continued awareness raising programs on women's right from Islamic perspective in four provinces of Afghanistan as well as supporting women in follow up of their VAW cases along with ministry of women affairs in Kabul and its branches in provinces. EPD has also undertaken activities to engage the community influential people in monitoring police activities as well as capacity building programs for justice sector in Nangarhar.

Peace building is another area where EPD has focused on during this year. Two symposia in national and regional level were conducted inviting peace experts to share their views

on peace building in Afghanistan and progress of reintegration process. EPD has also conducted several researches in 2016, including "Barriers to Women Entrepreneurs' Access to Market", "Governance, Gender and Corruption", "National Budget Review" and two rounds of PWN assessment which were shared publicly and were used in campaigns in provincial and national levels for supporting women.



EPD works in three major areas of Good Governance, Human Rights and Peace Security. Accordingly, in this reports EPD activities in 2016 are divided into 3 sections:



**Good
Governance**

**Human
Rights**

**Peace and
Security**

GOOD GOVERNANCE

Awareness raising on UN 1325 and Documentary Screening

EPD, with the support of Cordaid, has continued to conduct trainings on “UNSCR 1325” and women’s rights. Training sessions on UNSCR 1325 was followed by documentary screening entitled “Six Days” in seven provinces of Afghanistan including Kabul, Faryab, Nangarhar, Kunduz, Kandahar and Bamyan. This film was shown to a wide variety of community groups including official at DoWA, the ANP, the Provincial Council, the formal justice sector and FRUs. The film documents the struggles of women in Liberia, Abkhazia, and the

Kurdish region of Iraq. It shows women’s rights defenders working to improve the lives of women dealing with issues related to VAW, poverty, economic disempowerment and forced marriage in the context of post-conflict societies. The film raises awareness to the struggles of women in daily life around the world, particularly in the context of women’s rights defenders.

Both the trainings and the screenings were rated by the participants as being highly insightful in raising awareness about women’s struggle and violence against women occurring across the world.



Decreasing gap between people and their political representative

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.

EPD conducted two round of the training on the aforementioned manual for provincial council members and candidates for upcoming parliamentary elections in Kabul, Herat, Nangarhar 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.



Good Governance

Outreach sessions

In 2016, EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy facilitated three rounds of public outreach sessions with the support of the Provincial Council members in seven provinces including Kabul, Nangarhar, Bamyān, Kunduz, Faryab and Kandahar. Over 1566 participants attended this program, including PWN members, representatives of DoWA, Department of Haj and Religious Affairs, DoPH, DoE, AGOs, Provincial Peace councils, AIHRC, provincial and local shura and CSOs. During these events the main finding of EPDs research report on “Gender, Governance,

and Corruption” was presented. Speeches delivered by the provincial councilors to raise awareness on issues including women’s political participation, gendered networks and the elimination of corruption. These events provided this opportunity for the community people to directly interact with their political representative and share their concerns regarding community development. During all the session, there were a consensus among the participants that women political participation is restricted due to wide corruption in the state. It was also emphasized that since women are less inclined to bribery, increase in number of female politicians can highly control corruption.

Community Watch

Accountable policing raises public confidence in the rule of law and the strengths the trust between people and the state. A representative Community Watch is key to the type of systematic and local monitoring that underpins any accountability efforts in this direction. Further, recording incidences of insecurity and/or positive trends in police performance helps build evidence-based reporting and advocacy, which in turn can be directed to relevant authorities and policy makers in order to strengthen police performance.

EPD along with The Liaison Office (TLo) and Sanayee Development Organization (SDO) work for enhancing police performance in three provinces including Nangarhar, Balkh and Khost. EPD will use civic pressure, which is a key tool of civil society through engaging media, and information sharing with civic groups to influence the process

of reward, punishment and recruitment. To strengthen trust and involve communities in positive feedback the project will encourage a community award process for best police and this will encourage positive feedback beside the usual civil society critical feedback of security forces.

EPD in Nangarhar established a committee of eight influential members of community as a Community Watch (CW) to promote a culture of reward and punishment by engaging citizens to systematically monitor police performance and to contribute to evidence and research-based advocacy on behalf of, and with the direct involvement of the communities themselves. EPD will encourage good policing by introducing community reward of good police every six months and report on abuses where necessary to relevant authorities involved in police appraisal processes.



1396 National Budget Review



On 26th December 2016, EPD launched its research report on “Independent Review of Afghanistan 1396 National Budget Draft” with participation of over 90 representatives from national and international organizations working across all the provinces of Afghanistan including Cordaid, integrity watch, The Liaison Office, WPSO and other CSOs, Ministry of Women Affairs, community members as well as the media.

Each year, EPD conducts an independent review of the Afghanistan National Budget, to provide further details to Parliament to review the national budget. The process

gives insight to the national budget from a civil society perspective on national budget planning, execution, monitoring and reporting with special emphasis on the role of civil society and citizens in the entire process.

With this annual project, EPD aims to present a simple and coherent review of the budget so that people can understand its relevance in their daily lives and review the quality of services allocated via resources. 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.

Recognizing persistent gender inequalities and their consequences, Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) was introduced as a budget policy reform in Afghanistan in 1390. Furthermore, MoF released

the GRB Strategic Action Plan in 2015. According to the research report on review of the national budget 1396, national budget draft for fiscal year 1396 considers gender equity in the provincial budgeting proposal and the integration of gender into BC1 and BC2 forms for provincial budgeting and this year an analysis from a gendered perspective is reflected in the draft national budget. In spite of some progress in consideration of gendered aspects in the draft, still implementation of GRB remains a main concern in terms of capacity and securing buy-in on the concept of GRB from the government staff.

Based on the findings of the research, EPD has developed some recommendations for the Afghan government, international donors and civil society, implementation of these recommendations can promote better budgeting and good governance.

Access to Justice

EPD along with the other 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. Salah consortium has already received activity permission from ministry of economy and has signed MoU with ministry of justice and attorney general office.

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.

HUMAN RIGHTS

Campaign for Sixteen days of Activism

EPD organized events to mark 16 days of activism across all the 17 provinces where EPD has active offices. This 16 days of activism starting from 25th November till 10 December is an international campaign dedicated to women issues especially removing violence against women. EPD believes that lack of awareness is one of the main factors which leads to violence and provide the opportunity for the perpetrators to violate women's right. Keeping this issue in mind, EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy

(EPD) during 16 days of activism has undertaken a series of activities for raising awareness among university students, other academia and community people both in center and rural areas, to support this international campaign. To actively participate in the sixteen days of activism, EPD has set up awareness raising billboards in Kabul, Parwan, Kapisa and Panjshir to raise public awareness regarding VAW and its prohibition through Islamic law and EVAW law.

Furthermore, on 5th December 2016, EPD held two debates on "Sixteen days of Activism" in Rana University and Afghan Technical vocational

Institute (ATVI) in Kabul. The events invited around 145 participants including university students and teachers to support the campaign of removing violence against women. During the session, information about anti-harassment law for women and children was shared with the participants. Later the participants shared their views and posed their questions which were answered by the moderators. The participants highly supported the anti-harassment law and campaign for removing violence. Moreover, this program was also implemented in Ustad Borhan-u-Din Rabani and Bakhtar university and this time attended by 160 students.

Similar programs were also conducted on 4th December in three other provinces of Afghanistan including Parwan, Panjshir and Kapisa in high schools and universities with participation of around 30 participants in each debate session. Youth shared their opinion and there was a consensus among the participants



that women's right should be enhanced and efforts should be put for reinforcement of EVAWL and supporting the anti-harassment law.

It is worth mentioning that during these events hundreds of awareness raising brochures and orange scarfs were distributed among participants to support this international campaign. A Facebook page was also created with 2587 members supporting the page in raising awareness.

Last but not least, EPD held two live radio discussion sessions in Panjshir and Parwan broadcasted respectively in Khurasan and Shar-ba-Shar local radios. The sessions lasted for 30 minutes in which anti-harassment law and women's rights were discussed from Islamic perspective.



Barriers to Women Entrepreneurs' Access to Market



The US State Department has supported EPD in conducting a Rapid Market Assessment, aimed at identifying the barriers restricting women entrepreneurs' access to market. The report also analysed which industries maybe most receptive to female participation. The assessment looked into the current status of women entrepreneurs in Afghanistan, the country's economic outlook, the socioeconomic context for women and women's role in the private sector. Moreover it highlights the improvements that have taken place in the living condition, education level, political participation and economic status of Afghan women in the post-Taliban era. The assessment includes a number of recommendations designed to improve women's participation in the business sector. The research was also adapted for an advocacy toolkit, to enable women's rights activists to demand greater support from local investors and government

entities.

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. The launch event covered the assessment's main findings, panelist speeches and a Q & A session. The research report is available in English, Dari and Pashtu on EPDs website.

EPD also facilitated a training event on 25 August with Kabul Provincial Women Network members to share the findings of this research with women working at grass root level and advocating for women's economic empowerment. The event included session such as information on women entrepreneurs, opportunities for women to start their business, challenges, awareness on role of women in financial support to families, and approaches to facilitate reintegration of women in protection center within the community.

Women Day's Celebration

EPD celebrated Women's Day (8th of March) with special events in 15 provinces. Speeches were delivered by distinguished guests and provincial coordinators, reflecting on the progress and ongoing challenges regarding women's rights.

Over 650 men and women across the country gathered to celebrate this outstanding event. The participants included representatives of DoWA, the departments of Health, Education and Justice, the Governor's office, the local Attorney General Office, Local Shuras, teachers, civil society representatives and media representatives. During the events, the coordinators delivered their speeches on history of the celebration of women rights and followed by the speeches delivered by guests about women's rights and government's lack of attention regarding increase in rate of violence against women. Furthermore, importance of women's role in different key aspects of the society

and approaches for elimination of violence against women were discussed. Rule of law, tracing and punishing the perpetrators of violence and raising awareness were among those practical ways to prevent violence.

EPD also distributed gifts to more than 450 women across the country to mark this event and appreciated those women who struggle for gender equality and removing violence.



Provincial Dialogues on Women Entrepreneurship

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 which EPD jointly with AWSDC (Afghan Women Skill Development Center) organization had conducted were presented. It was explained that numerous rounds of tailoring, marketing and management trainings were conducted, 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.



Strengthening Women's Access to Justice

EPD with the support of the Asia Foundation has been working in Parwan and Panshir to raise awareness of women's rights from an Islamic framework. During 2016, EPD representatives have successfully given trainings to representatives of Justice Sector CDG members, Khateebes, FRC Members, Teachers, University professors and students. The topics covered included women's political and social rights, environmental protection from an Islamic perspective, mediation of family disputes, marriage and engagements, Mahr and Nafaqa, divorce, corruption and women's educational rights. It is worth mentioning that the curriculum used in these trainings is reflected in 18 easy-to-read booklets, given to each participant to facilitate further study.

Besides the trainings, EPD legal management experts were hired to support women affected by violence and they have resolved a number of cases of domestic violence in both Parwan and Panshir. These experts support the Family Resolution Centres (FRC) and male and female Community Development Groups (CDG), established by EPD as part of this project. The specialists at these institutions are currently being trained to assist the public with informal judicial services.

During this year, EPD after holding numerous trainings aimed at solving VAW cases in Parwan and Panjshir 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 in each respective institution. EPD will also work with other groups such as police, prosecutors, and judges to raise awareness and build their capacity. Besides the trainings, EPD will also hire legal management experts to provide legal support for women affected by violence.



Women Empowerment

EPD has undertaken activities to enhance Afghan women empowerment in Kabul. 30 impoverished women from across the localities were trained to use Afghan fabrics to produce clothing that is both fashionable and culturally appropriate. EPD established a tailoring training center in Kabul for women in shelters to help them to start their entrepreneurship and be financially independent.

Tailoring production training began on 3rd April 2016 and continued for three quarters in 2016, resulting in training 270 women in different fields including tailoring, marketing and management. Tailoring course included 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, they 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 by which they can start their own projects.

Besides the scarcity 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. 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.

PWNs Monthly Meeting

EPDs Provincial Women Networks identify issues in their communities that affect women's participation in political processes, conducting advocacies to reduce VAW and to empower women at a grassroots and policy level.

Each month, PWNs hold meetings locally to discuss pressing issues and to plan activities for the coming month. Over this year, PWNs have identified such challenges as the lack of female representation in the police, protection centers and prisons, contributing in implementation of four pillars mentioned in UNSCR 1325 as well as the need for advocacy on EVAW (the elimination of violence against women). The members in each province have made efforts to meet the female staff of the police, protection centers and prisons to discuss their problems and to identify levers of increased female participation.



Central Exchange

In order to facilitate more interaction among the members of the networks from different provinces, EPD invited the PWN members to come together in Kabul. During 2016 two rounds of exchanges were carried out with participation of around 75 members in each round and each one lasted for 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.

In first round of the exchange, 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.

In the second round of the central exchange, 75 members of PWN representatives attended. Mr. Edrees Omarzad, EPD's Executive Director commenced the first day of the program and formally welcomed all the participants from 15 provinces. In his address, Mr. Edrees Omarzad talked about the importance of women's role in key aspects of society both at the gross-root and policy level. He described EPD's Provincial Women Network (PWN) as a strong platform for women to advocate and monitor the status of women's peace and security at the community level. Following this, the PWN representatives delivered a presentation highlighting their activities in their respective provinces, achievements, the challenges facing women and the possible solutions for tackling such challenges. This session also revealed PWN achievement in the face of many obstacles at their respective provinces.



PWNs Monitoring and Evaluation

EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy (EPD) has successfully established Provincial Women Networks in 15 provinces such as Nangarhar, Kandahar, Helmand, Herat, Laghman, Kabul, Paktia, Bamyan, Daikundi, Parwan, Badakhshan, Balkh, Kunduz, Faryab and Uruzgan. Each network has 30 volunteering members, brought together by a provincial coordinator in conjunction with the central office to implement the programs designed to further EPDs key objectives. The networks also attempt to address problems specific to each community, and to advocate for the elimination of violence against women.

In order to understand the level of the network's impact on the community, EPD has started a comprehensive assessment spanning all 15 provinces. The



assessment includes a PWN membership survey, key informant interviews (KII) with prominent stakeholders and interview with the coordinator. Data assessment reports are being developed for each province, incorporating the perspectives of PWN members, local stakeholders and the overall network achievements and challenges.

Thus far, EPD has conducted two rounds of assessment to improve effectiveness of these networks, identify problems and their solutions. This evaluation has been undertaken to ensure the activities are meeting objectives of the project and can support women's peace and security. Both of the assessment reports are available on the EPDs website.



Quarterly meetings

During 2016 to facilitate interaction among networks, EPD hosted four rounds of quarterly meetings with the participation of the provincial coordinators of all 15 provinces, in the central office, Kabul. The sessions provided the opportunity to all the provincial coordinators to share their own concerns and to seek shared solutions to problems in their communities. They discussed the achievements of their PWN branches, and brainstormed for innovative strategies to be included in future plans.

Provincial coordinators had an opportunity to present information on the implemented activities during the past quarter and shed light on the changes brought to the perceptions of the participants.

The meeting also facilitated interaction of the coordinators with the senior management team. Speeches were delivered from the authorities in the

central office on importance of team work and good coordination between the networks and the central office for smooth functioning of the networks. The coordinators were also encouraged to 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.



Documentary Screening & “In her Shoes” Trainings

With the continuing abuse and violation of women's rights in the hands of their male counterparts, it is evidently clear that any attempt to deal with violence against women would fail without adequate support by men. Prevention of further violence against women entails educating and working with men and engaging them in efforts to prevent and end VAW. For this reason, EPD has conducted the training workshop on “Engaging with men on Women's Rights” for a total of 5400 male community leaders within 8 rounds in 15 provinces of the country. This training was conducted using the ‘in her shoes’ toolkit, that reflects the day-to-day violence against women. The toolkit presents information on the day-to-day violence confronting women and aims to personally connect participants with experiences of violence faced by women. EPD believes that these community leaders can subsequently have a positive influence on the negative perceptions of individuals in their respective communities towards women's rights.

As well as offering the In Her Shoes trainings, 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. It depicts the struggles of 3 women's right activists from Iraq, Liberia and akhbazia working to improve the lives of women dealing with violence. During 2016, the documentary has been screened for 75 participants in 15 provinces of Afghanistan.



PWN Provincial Dialogues

EPD during 2016 conducted two rounds of provincial dialogues inviting PWN members to Kabul to facilitated interaction between the members from different provinces. Wide variety of background knowledge, culture and community context gave this chance to the participants to share the different view. The members discussed about the barriers women are facing in their societies and how the related networks are struggling to reach to them. The participants from Helmand, Paktia and Laghman discussed cultural obstacles for women while participants from Herat raised issue of high rate of suicide and self-immolation among girls. They also discussed examples of cases where the network advocated for some of the victims with department of women affairs and human right commission. Similarly, the participants in Daikundi shared their experience of holding female demonstration in response to damaged road and transportation problem in this province.



The first round of Bi-annual provincial dialogue was conducted in the month of July 2016 with 51 participants present in each province. The participants included PWN members, representatives of DoWA, Department of Haj and Religious Affairs, Department of Justice, Department of Education, Attorney general Office, HPC, police Headquarter, provincial council, AIHRC, and CSOs.

The second round of the bi-annual provincial dialogue was held in the month of December 2017 in all targeted provinces. In attendance at the dialogues were 51 participants comprising of representatives of CSOs and governmental organizations namely DoWA, DoPH, DoJ, DoE, community elders, students, and PWN members. The participants in all targeted provinces discussed about the root causes of gender based violence and exchanged ideas on how to promote gender equality. Furthermore, participants talked about challenges pertaining to women's involvement in political positions.



Training of Trainers

From 23th – 26th May 2016, 15 (1 male, 14 female) provincial coordinators gathered to attend a ToT held in EPD's central office. The training was organized with the aim to allow the provincial coordinators to have an understanding of the 'Peace and Security manual'. The training manual 'Women's Peace & Security' was designed to develop the PWNs understanding about the concept of peace, peace building, principles of peace building, inclusion of women in peace building, women and conflict as well as security and women's role in promoting security. The training provided an extensive range of information on 'Women's Peace and Security', UNSCR 1325 including its significance and importance in Afghanistan to the PWN PCs

On 22nd and 23rd November, EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy (EPD) held another two-day ToT on 1325 UNSCR for its Provincial Women Networks' coordinators from 15 provinces of Afghanistan. EPD has already developed a manual and an advocacy toolkit on this topic entailing



information such as four pillars of this resolution, implementation of UNSCR in Afghanistan and how PWNs can advocate for women's peace and security as a support to these four pillars.

After being trained, the coordinators were assigned to hold the same training for the members and subsequently raise awareness among other women in their own communities.

Following the completion of the first round of ToT, a 3-day workshop focused on 'Women's Peace & Security' was delivered by the provincial coordinators to PWN members in their respective provinces. The training was conducted in the month of June for 30 PWN members in all targeted provinces.

Furthermore, after being trained on 'UNSCR 1325' EPD's provincial coordinators conducted the same training for 30 PWN members in their respective provinces. These trainings were conducted in the month of November in all targeted provinces.



PEACE AND SECURITY



Roadmap to Peace

With input of the Salah consortium, consisting of five prominent Afghan CSOs and the financial support of Open Society Afghanistan, a research on the Roadmap to Peace was conducted. The document was based on in-depth analysis aimed to fill a gap in existing research by examining the strengths and weaknesses of the peace process from local perspectives.

In order to enrich the research report, EPD conducted two symposia at national and international levels. The national symposium conducted on 18th and 19th of January 2016 in Kabul brought together around 110 peace activists and representatives of CSOs from across Afghanistan. Panel discussions headed by experts discussed Afghanistan Peace and Reintegration Program (APRP) and its prospects for bringing long-lasting stability to the country. The insights shared were subsequently incorporated into the research.

Following this EPD held a two-day regional symposium on 28th March, 2016, bringing together

international experts from neighboring countries as well as representatives of civil society and the media in Kabul. The participants had experience in supporting a range of national and international peace efforts, and provided feedback so as to finalize the draft of the Roadmap to Peace.

On 6th July 2016 the Roadmap to Peace report was shared publicly, through a launch event attended by national and international organizations and the media. The findings of this research has revealed that people generally want the negotiations and peace talks between Afghanistan and Pakistan to reduce the lack of trust between the two countries. It also provides some suggestions so as to bring improvements to the process of peace building in Afghanistan. A policy brief was also prepared by EPD aimed at furthering the advocacy aims of the project.

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 Celebration

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 participants were invited throughout the country to mark this significant event and determine their commitment to support peace process at the grass root 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 on importance of

peace building and its impact 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.



Sharing Women's Responses to Radicalization

EPD along with its partner Aware Girls in Pakistan is in the process of conducting a research to document the impact of radicalization on women's life and their role and responses for countering radicalization in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This project 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.

EPD further aims to enhance women's exchange between Afghanistan and Pakistan for countering radicalization and building peace in both countries. At least two exchange programs will be organized for Pak-Af women peace activists providing the opportunity to women activists to build linkages and develop a better understanding of the impact and women's responses to radicalization and violent extremism, and a Strategy Paper on "Women-Women Exchanges for Countering Radicalization" will be published, to be used as a global advocacy document for promoting more women-women exchanges/linkages and co-operation for countering radicalization.

New Staff at EPD

EPD is indebted to efforts and expertise of the current staff members, without their cooperation successful implementation of all these activities during 2016 was impossible. We would like to express our deep regards and thanks for valuable contribution of those colleagues who left EPD in 2016. We appreciate support of our senior colleagues Mr. Abdul Halim Achakzai and Mr. Abe Simons for the tireless efforts and expertise they have provided for the research department. EPD wishes success for them in their future work and life.

EPD also would like to express its gratefulness to Ms. Shamsia Elham whose talent and amazing writing skills were valuable support in conducting activities. She was an asset for EPD and we are proud of working with her. We are also grateful to Ms. Nooria Sultani and Zohra Nasrat who provided guidance in arranging and conducting programs.

EPD also welcomes Ms. Ruqaiya Tabasum, research and resource mobilization expert, who is leading the research department. Ms. Tabasum started her career as a project associate with JPAL South Asia. At JPAL, She worked on mother literacy project in India. She then moved on to International Centre for Research on Women, working as a research coordinator. At ICRW, she worked on various research and evaluation projects focusing on women health, education, reproductive health and sex ratio. While working with ICRW, she developed her interest in gender issues and worked extensively

with gender related projects. Ms. Tabasum is pursuing her PHD from Aligarh Muslim University and holds a Masters in human rights from the same University. Ms. Tabasum is fluent in Kashmiri, Urdu, Hindi and English.



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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.