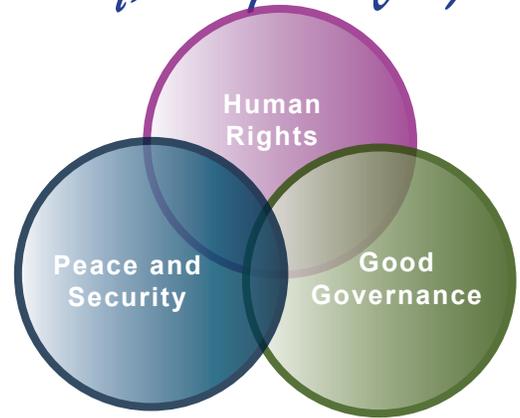


# EQUALITY For Peace and Democracy

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

During this quarter EPD has been involved in conducting activities on diverse issues ranging from different areas of countering violent extremism, eradication of illiteracy, involving public in monitoring justice sector and establishing community watch committees to enhance police performance to trainings, workshops, conferences and monitoring the networks in the centers and provinces. EPDs review over Afghanistan National budget was shared with the parliament and EU delegation for consideration of civil society's view and influencing policies. In order to eliminate radicalization and violent extremism, EPD along with Aware Girls has conducted a research in Afghanistan and Pakistan reflecting impact of radicalization on women's right. Simultaneously, a network of Afghan peace activists has been established to share experience among

women and stand for peace building and stop war. EPD also continued its training on women's right from the Islamic perspective in Kabul and Kapisa. "In Her Shoes" trainings are the other significant activities took place in last quarter during which community leaders and policy makers were invited to support women take their rights and eliminate VAW. Moreover, EPD is monitoring police and Justice Sector in Nangarhar to enhance their performance by inserting civic pressure and involving media. EPDs activities are elaborated in the following lines. For more details about this organization please refer to our website and Facebook pages.



- 2 **Countering Radicalization**
- 2 **Research on Radicalization**
- 3 **PWN Monitoring and Evaluation**
- 3 **Women's Day**
- 4 **Campaign for Eradication of Illiteracy**
- 4 **Quarterly Meeting with PWN coordinators**
- 5 **In Her Shoes**
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- 6 **National Budget Review**
- 6 **Access to Justice**
- 7 **Community Watch**

The aim of this project is to enhance women's exchanges between Afghanistan and Pakistan for countering radicalization and building peace in both countries. EPD has selected the peace activists across the country who will take part in this peace exchange programs. This 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

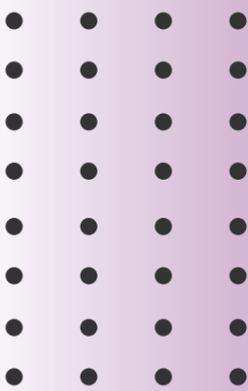
responses to it, to build collective peace initiatives, and to advocate for inclusion of women in peacebuilding processes. On 23rd Jan 2017, an orientation meeting was conducted in EPD's central office gathering all the peace activists from Afghanistan in EPD's office. The peace activists from Kabul, Nangarhar and Balkh. During this event, members of peace network were asked to provide their feedback about the nature of peace talks, storytelling activities, developing strategic paper and similar activities. The first peace exchange will be conducted in Afghanistan where peace activists from Pakistan and Afghanistan will gather and share the experiences.

## Countering Radicalization



## Research on Radicalization

Equality for Peace and Democracy (EPD) along with its partner Aware Girls in Pakistan has conducted a research on "IMPACT OF RADICALIZATION ON WOMEN, IN PAKISTAN AND AFGHANISTAN" to document the impact of radicalization on women's life and their role and responses for countering radicalization in Afghanistan and Pakistan. This study charts and assesses impact of radicalization and violent extremism on women, in Pakistan and Afghanistan; and strategies women use to cope with, and counter, radicalization. Both countries are faced with endemic radicalization and violent extremism that directly or indirectly affects individuals, institutions, communities and infrastructure. Radicalization in both countries primarily hit against women's rights. Women not only suffer direct physical and sexual violence in the form of flogging, stoning and beating to death, forced marriage and rape etc., but also bear most of the brunt of loss of livelihood and displacement; disappearances, disabilities and killing of family members. This study documents both direct and indirect adverse effects of radicalization and violent extremism on women, in Pakistan and Afghanistan. The study is divided into two parts; Part I focusses on Pakistan and Part II on Afghanistan. The research will act as a resource and rationale for civil society to develop programs for peacebuilding focussing on engaging women as partners in peacebuilding, and will be used as an advocacy tool to advocate for inclusion of women in peacebuilding process at all levels.



## PWN Monitoring and Evaluation

EPD has established Provincial Women Network in 15 provinces of Afghanistan to strengthen the role of women in social, political, development, advocacy and decision-making processes, while providing accountability and oversight into public service delivery. EPD evaluates the performance of PWN in 15 provinces biannually to assess the change among the PWN members and other concerned stakeholders, regarding their attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors towards UNSCR 1325 goals. Which talks about women's participation in negotiations for peace, politics, and decision-making at all levels and also calls for a mechanisms to prevent violence against women and protect women from being subjected to violence. EPD has

already conducted the first and second round of this evaluation in which very amazing achievements of these networks at the grass root level were identified. These assessment reports identify opportunities for strategic and operational improvements through recommendations proposed by the networks and stakeholders to enhance the condition of women's peace and security at the grassroots level. Currently data collection is going on for the third round of the monitoring and evaluation in order to understand the networks' activities regarding women's peace and security, community based monitoring mechanism, their impact on the community as well as their recommendations for betterment of the activities.

EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy is a women-led Organization and is always ahead when it comes to the celebration of international women's day. On 8th March 2017, EPD gathered its provincial women network members together in 14 provinces of Afghanistan including Kabul, Nangarhar, Bamyan, Herat, Faryab, Kandahar, Kunduz, Daikundi, Laghman, Parwan, Balkh, Uruzgan, Helmand and Badakhshan. All the prominent representatives of department of women affairs, department of Haj and religious affairs, department of justice, department of education, youth parliaments, were invited in all the provinces to this event. In each province the provincial coordinators welcomed guests and congratulated all the women on women's day.

Women's day is celebrated to mobilize women's right activists to protest against inequality, oppression and violence faced by women. During the event, all the network members discussed about their achievements and advocacy plans for enhancing women's rights at the grass root level. EPD also marked this event by organizing a female demonstration in Badakhshan. Many women participated in this movement and asked for ending violence against women, improving women involvement, implementation of anti-harassment law and rule of law. Furthermore, EPD has set up banners in different areas in Helmand province to raise awareness on women rights and eliminate violence.

## Women's Day



EPD, along with SALAH members are working to decrease the level of illiteracy, spread the culture of volunteer work and enhancing the ability of Afghans' to bring change by themselves.

As an inauguration for this campaign, EPD and its partner CSOs participated in an event held at KLID Radio group's main office. A panel discussion was organized and the event was attended by many participants from the civil society and the ministries of Education and Media. The panelists emphasized the urgency of efforts to be made in order to eradicate illiteracy throughout Afghanistan. During the event a statement was issued publicly, asking all Afghans to cooperate to eliminate illiteracy in the country. All participants committed to educating at

least one illiterate Afghan. At the end, some participants committed to their vows by starting to help others in their efforts to combat illiteracy.

As an effort to put its commitments to practice, EPD started a campaign to eliminate illiteracy in Kunduz, Parwan and Panjsher by awareness raising events. The provincial governor, representatives of subnational ministry branches, civil society organizations and community members were invited and encouraged to work voluntarily to decrease level of illiteracy. Video clips for raising awareness were broadcasted asking for support of the campaign. As an extra awareness-raising effort, glasses with logos of the campaign were distributed to the people aiming at spreading the message.

## Campaign for Eradication of Illiteracy



## Quarterly Meeting with PWN coordinators

Each quarter EPD invites the PWN coordinators from 15 provinces to the central office in Kabul to discuss about the activities and the limitations they face in implementation of the activities.

EPD conducted its 6th round of quarterly meetings with the coordinators on 12th March 2017 which lasted for three days. During this meet all the coordinators shared their achievements they had during last quarter and the challenges they were confronting in conducting their activities with each other.

The first day was inaugurated with a speech by Mr. Wajid Khan, director of EPD welcoming the coordinators and appreciating their achievements. Within the course of these three days, all the coordinators presented their activities that they had conducted in previous quarter

such as trainings, conferences and the advocacies. All the coordinators challenges were also addressed by the authorities in the central office. The meeting on third day invited representatives of Cordaid; Ms. Arezo Mirzad and Mr. Hamid Ataei to discuss opportunities and barriers for sustainability of the Provincial Women Networks. It was suggested that the members should be economically empowered to ensure the network's sustainability.

Dr. Akmal Samsour, the director of JS Consultancy delivered training on barometer data collection, data entry, numbering of houses and preparing the target mapping for the provincial coordinators. They will continue data collection at rural areas for the aim of women's peace and security.

## In Her Shoes



Violence against women is mostly perpetrated by men. Hence, it is highly crucial to work with men and make them understand that violence against women is illegal. Men can have an important influence in reducing violence by challenging their own attitudes and behavior and by intervening to prevent VAW.

Taking this issue in mind, EPD has developed a toolkit "IN HER SHOES" which reflects the day-to-day violence that women go through and helps men to understand how the experience is for the women. This tool was developed and finalized during early 2016 and EPD has been conducting workshops on this tool kit with men in 15 provinces since last one year. The toolkit aims to personally connect

participants with experiences of violence faced by women and allow them to have an understanding of women's sufferings. During this quarter, EPD conducted three rounds of trainings on "Engaging with Men on Women's rights" inviting around 300 male influential to prevent and reduce violence against women and more generally to build gender equality. These workshops also aimed to persuade male participants to engage in critical reflection on their own behaviors and social practices that lead to gender discrimination. It is also expected that these workshops would further shift the common attitudes, behaviors and inequalities associated with violence against women.

EPD has carried out training and build capacity programs for a wide range of participants from different level of society in Parwan, Panjshier, Kabul and Kapisa under the project entitled "Strengthened Access to Justice for Women Affected by Violence through Proven Culturally Sensitive Approaches" in order to help women to get access to justice. The main emphasis in this project is given to the fact that awareness should be raised regarding women's right in Islam and EAW Law in order to help women to access to justice. The curriculum used in these trainings include 18 booklets on EAW law.

During this quarter, EPD conducted numerous trainings for around 200 university students, school

teachers, Khatibs and FRCs in Kapisa and Kabul. Different topics such as registration of marriage and child birth, Mahr and Nafaqa from the Islamic perspective, the government's responsibilities toward women and access to formal and informal justice were discussed.

Furthermore, the legal management experts have also contributed to solving a number of VAW cases in their communities. These cases are mostly the victims of domestic violence who received support through formal justice sector.



## Strengthened Access to Justice for Women

## National Budget Review



We launched the research report on “Independent Review of Afghanistan 1396 National Budget Draft” in our previous quarter and we shared findings of this research with some donors and ministries during this quarter. On 8th January 2017, EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy shared the main findings of its research with women affairs, civil society and human rights parliamentary committee and on 26th January 2017, we shared it with the delegation of European Union to Afghanistan. According to the research report, security sector has received a high proportion of the budget but in comparison to the previous year it has decreased significantly. Considering the volatile security situation in Afghanistan, decreasing budget

of this sector may lead to critical situations. Furthermore, Health sector is among sectors with low budget which seems to fail in meeting needs of the society in terms of health especially in rural areas. This year the national budget included a gender analysis section as well. This section provides some analytical information about the ministries which has considered gender equality and attempt to fit their budget more gender responsive. However, a lot of work needs to be done to publicize and institutionalize GRB concept in most of the ministries.

## Access to Justice



Salah consortium consisted of 5 afghan civil society organizations including Cooperation for Peace and Unity, Equality for Peace and Democracy, Peace Training and Research Organization, Sanayee Development Organization and The Liaison Office is working together to narrow the gap between state structures and the people they are meant to serve, particularly in the justice sector. This will be done by increasing the capacity of CSOs to lobby for change and influence policies, as well as that of both formal and informal justice actors while also encouraging citizens to make use of state justice mechanisms. This project’s primary goal is to strengthen the engagement

of CSOs and their networks to lobby and advocate for improved access to and quality of justice provision, especially of women, to both the formal and the informal justice systems AWJA, AIBA, AGO lobby for behavioral change, record and publicize deviations, improve court oversight, need and evidence-based planning and budgeting, ensure local judges respect human rights, and increase budget for justice sector. Till now meetings have been conducted for communication between the justice sectors and civil society organizations for mutual cooperation and to discuss approaches through which change can take place in justice sector.

## Community Watch



Community Watch (CW) will 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. The programs 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. The activities of CW will help to empower communities to take part in good governance, and not to stick with grudges or grievances and passively involve themselves in antigovernment activities for revenge. EPD will use civic pressure as the most important

tool, 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 has established community watch committee in Nangarhar consisted of influential members of community. This committee regularly meet with police and other authorities of executive sector and holds conferences with involvement of media to monitor service delivery and bring accountability and transparency.

## 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>

