

# Profile

## EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy



Promoting Culture of Coexistence, Accountability, and peace for All

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# Strategic Areas



EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy (EPD) is an Afghan non-profit, non-governmental organization founded in 2010 for empowering women and youth at the community and policy levels in Afghanistan. The aim of EPD is to increase the capacity of women and youth in order for them to represent their needs in development, peace building and democratic processes.

EPD envisions Afghanistan as a peaceful, prosperous and democratic state where all Afghans enjoy equal rights without any form of discrimination. To empower and strengthen women and youth at the community and policy levels, build coalitions and networks, and jointly promote and advocate for human rights, peace and good governance, EPD focuses on the following strategic areas:

## **Peace Building**

EPD works to encourage and influence the people of Afghanistan, men and women alike, to participate and engage in peace building and conflict prevention, mediation, and resolution.

## **Good Governance**

In contributing towards improvement of governance, EPD aims to increase transparency and accountability of public institutions for the use of public resources and policies. EPD strengthens communities by engaging them in the process of budget planning, implementation and monitoring and reporting of development programs. EPD also trains communities to monitor service delivery and the implementation of development projects and to keep institutions accountable for the quality of services provided.

## **Human Rights**

Peace and good governance are critical to ensuring respect for human rights. EPD takes a rights-based approach to development by implementing programming that aims to empower all people of Afghanistan to know and exercise their rights as Afghan citizens regardless of age, ethnicity, gender, or other factors.

# Approaches

In support of these objectives, EPD uses the following approaches:

## Research and Assessment

Identifying the roots of a problem or issue is the most important step towards addressing it. EPD carries out research and assessments in the areas of peace, human rights, gender and governance to identify and address the root causes of the problems at hand. EPD uses its research arm as a foundation and reference for all program development and advocacy activities.

## Training and Capacity Building

EPD focuses on training and capacity building as a means to provide the people of Afghanistan with the tools to take active roles as agents of change in their respective communities. EPD develops and implements capacity building trainings on a range of issues related to peace, human rights, gender, good governance, accountability, advocacy and leadership at the local, sub-national and national level. These activities are meant to enable people to identify issues and challenges affecting their lives and communities, to build alliances with other groups, and to address the issues themselves or advocate for solutions.

## Advocacy and Awareness

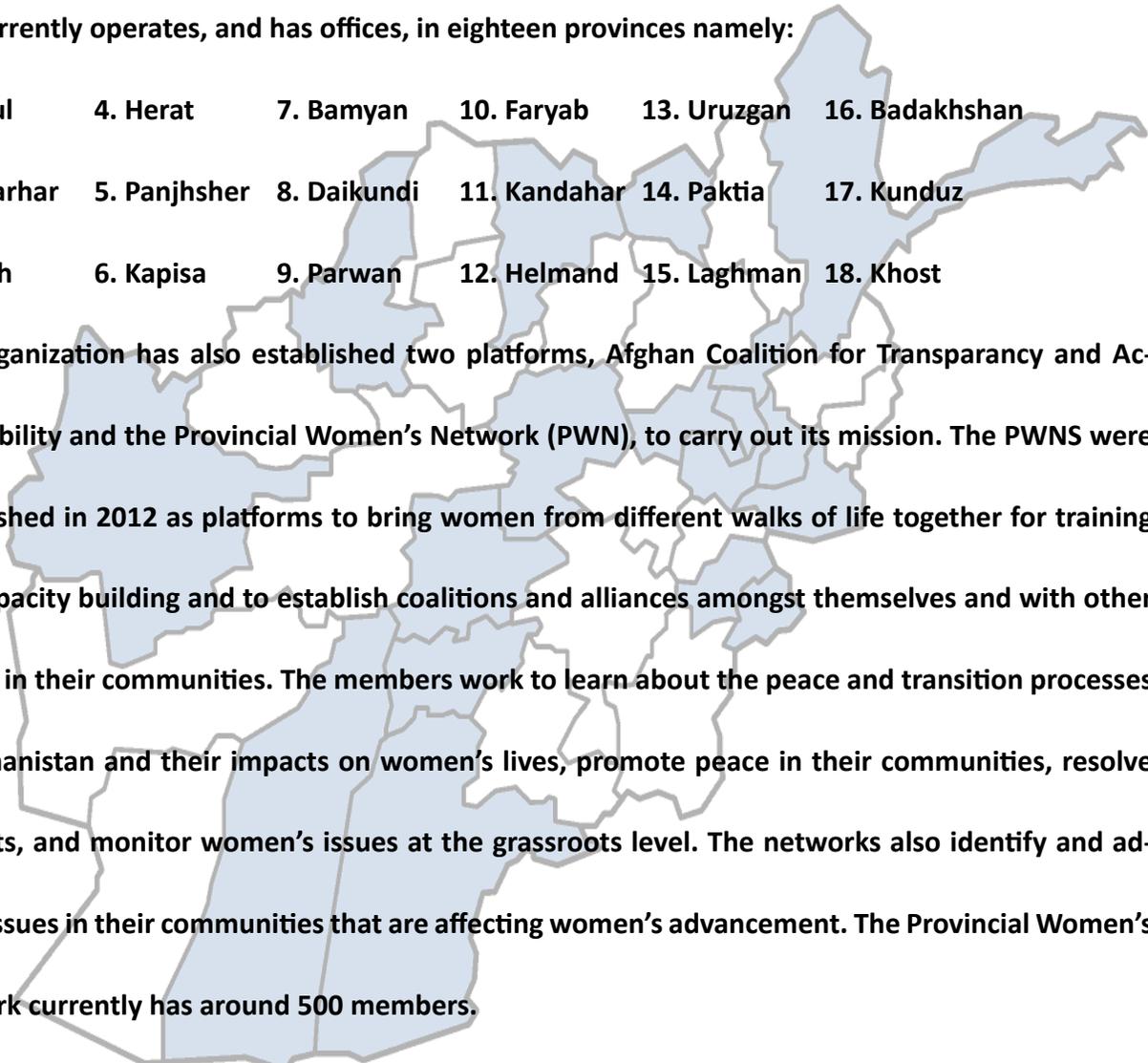
Public support is necessary to advocate for change. In order to have public support, it is necessary to raise awareness about the issues, challenges and opportunities and mobilize people for demanding change. EPD carries out advocacy activities at the provincial, national and international levels.

## Mobilization

EPD believes in building partnerships and inclusive approaches. This entails developing partnerships and platforms at the local, national, and international level to encourage support for and foster wide-reaching involvement in EPD's projects and initiatives.

# Coverage Area

EPD currently operates, and has offices, in eighteen provinces namely:

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1. Kabul
  2. Nagarhar
  3. Balkh
  4. Herat
  5. Panjsher
  6. Kapisa
  7. Bamyan
  8. Daikundi
  9. Parwan
  10. Faryab
  11. Kandahar
  12. Helmand
  13. Uruzgan
  14. Paktia
  15. Laghman
  16. Badakhshan
  17. Kunduz
  18. Khost

The organization has also established two platforms, Afghan Coalition for Transparency and Accountability and the Provincial Women’s Network (PWN), to carry out its mission. The PWNS were established in 2012 as platforms to bring women from different walks of life together for training and capacity building and to establish coalitions and alliances amongst themselves and with other groups in their communities. The members work to learn about the peace and transition processes in Afghanistan and their impacts on women’s lives, promote peace in their communities, resolve conflicts, and monitor women’s issues at the grassroots level. The networks also identify and address issues in their communities that are affecting women’s advancement. The Provincial Women’s Network currently has around 500 members.

# Platforms

## Provincial Women Networks and Afghans' Coalition for Transparency and Accountability



EPD has successfully established Provincial Women's Network (PWN) networks in fifteen provinces of Afghanistan and ACTA in five provinces in last four years. EPD's Training and Capacity Building Team has developed a number of training curriculums and implemented trainings with over 2,500 Afghan community members in areas directly related to this project. EPD has established constructive working relationships with the High Peace Council, Ministries of Finance, Women's Affairs, Rural Rehabilitation and Development, Education, and Public Health, Provincial Councils, Provincial Peace Committees, and the Parliament, in addition to active roles with the Afghan Civil Society Joint Working Group, Peace Watch Committee, Afghan Women's Advocacy Coalition, Salah Consortium, and Women's Regional Network. Through this experience, technical capacity, and well-established government and civil society networks and partnerships, EPD has a number of strengths and advantages that put it in a position to successfully implement this project.

The other network of EPD, Afghans' Coalition for Transparency and Accountability (ACTA) is currently working in five provinces including Kabul, Nagarhar, Herat, Bamyán and Kunduz and has 173 active members. In last few years, EPD expanded the Afghans' Coalition for Accountability and Transparency from a Kabul-based platform to a network involving Afghan men, women, and youth and civil society organizations in five provinces of Afghanistan. Members have been given trainings on peace, transition, conflict resolution, anti-corruption, transparency and accountability, good governance, the national budget, and community based monitoring. Through ACTA, EPD has been reviewing Afghan government National Budget since 1391 (2012). EPD has been the first Afghan civil society organization pioneering utilization of the national budget as an advocacy tool for monitoring government service delivery. Through the ACTA platform, villages and communities have solved drinking water issues, asphalted roads, advocated for schools and education for girls, and many other achievements through nonviolent coordination and cooperation with local government. In each ACTA province, ACTA networks held conferences on rule of law and justice to discuss issues of violence against women.

# Advocacy for women

Peace  
Justice  
Security



EPD has established itself as one of the lead civil society organizations advocating for gender-based public policy and legislation. For example, the Ministry of Women's Affairs drafted two Policy Actions for increasing girls' enrollment in primary and higher education, which were then shelved. EPD took the initiative to renew discussions on these policies, assisting MoWA in improving them through consultation with civil society, and presented them to the Ministries of Education and Higher Education as well as the Women and Education Commissions of Parliament. Both Policy Actions were subsequently submitted to the Office of the President and were approved as a result of EPD's advocacy efforts. EPD successfully established a civil society corner and resource center for female Parliamentarians, functioning as a bridge to members of the parliament and increasing the access and interaction of female parliamentarians with the Afghan people and civil society. The research center served to assist female parliamentarians with resources and best practices from other countries, providing them with up-to-date facilities including internet, printing, copying, and also resource information.

EPD has also managed to successfully engage with religious leaders by effectively promoting its objectives of peacebuilding, human rights, women's empowerment, and good governance through an Islamic perspective. EPD organized Awareness Raising Workshops and Interactive Discussions with more than 5,000 young student and non-student boys emphasizing a culture of tolerance, do-no-harm, and nonviolence. Through religious leaders, EPD also organized workshops and interactive discussions for more than 10,000 community elders, girls, boys and parents raising awareness on educational rights of women from Islamic perspective. This initiative focused on taking religious leaders out of mosques and going to the communities. EPD undertook a project promoting women's political participation through four TV and radio spots in Dari and Pahsto based on specific verses of Holy Quran promoting women's political participation during parliamentary election, which was supported by the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs.

# Projects

Womens' Peace and Security  
Access to justice  
Women Economic  
Empowerment



EPD is currently receiving funding for six projects. The first one is “Monitoring Women’s Peace & Security in Afghanistan” supported by Dutch embassy, which aims at monitoring Women’s Peace and Security at the grass root level in 15 provinces of Afghanistan. The second, undertaken with the support of The Asia Foundation namely “Strengthen Access to justice for Women Affected by Violence through Proven Culturally Sensitive Approaches”. The third one funded by the US Department of State “ Improving the Economic Independence of Women Protection Centers and Its Beneficiaries Through Market-Driven Entrepreneurship” aims to build the foundations for AWSDC in Kabul to enable them to provide comprehensive package that will last post-project and can serve as a potential template for other women’s protection centers to emulate and learn from. It will bring financial security to the AWSDC center in Kabul. EPD is also receiving funding from Open Society of Afghanistan for the project namely; Sharing Women’s Responses to Radicalization in Afghanistan and Pakistan, which aims at enhancing women’s exchange between Afghanistan and Pakistan for countering radicalization and building peace in both countries, to create platform for harbouring bridges between women peace activists of Pakistan and Afghanistan, enabling women-women exchange of learning and strategizing together for countering radicalization and peacebuilding. The fifth one funded by USIP, “Community Watch” aims to establish a systematic evidence collection mechanism and analytical reporting of the ground situation based on direct and indirect community feedback to the relevant Afghan government and EUPOL, CSTCA, and LOTFA offices. The project aims to improve police performance through accountability, tackle systemic corruption at the local level, and strengthen community and police relations and mutual trust and confidence building. Another project funded by Cordaid, “Strategic Partnership on Lobby and Advocacy” aims 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. The last ongoing project is “Research and Advocacy on Gendered Aspects of Political Corruption”

undertaken with the support of Cordaid aims at supporting the principle of UNSCR 1325 through two key approaches: (1) conducting research and providing training and support to female politicians to increase their effectiveness and promote support for women's political participation; (2) conducting advocacy and awareness raising on issues of VAW, the importance of women's involvement, and the daily challenges of protection and participation for women around the world and in Afghanistan with government officials and security providers .EPD has also experience of working with UNDP. It has worked with UNDP for many projects in past.

