



PWNI Monitoring & Evaluation Report: Round IV



Kingdom of the Netherlands



Acronyms

AIHRC	Afghanistan Independent Human Right Commission
CDC	Community Development Council
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DoWA	Department of Women Affairs
EPD	Equality for Peace and Democracy
EVAW	Elimination of Violence against Women
EVAWL	Elimination of Violence against Women Law
HRC	Human Rights Commission
PC	Provincial Council
PPC	Provincial Peace Committee
PWN	Provincial Women's Network
VAW	Violence against women
WPC	Women Protection Centre

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:

Mission

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.

Written By

Ruqaiya Tabasum and farzana Doosti

Acknowledgment:

Like the previous rounds, fourth round of the PWN evaluation in 15 provinces of Afghanistan has been an important endeavor and many people have made invaluable contributions to the successful completion of this study. We would like to acknowledge our colleagues from the core research team, instrumental in developing and implementing this study: Ruqaiya Tabasum, Farzana Doosti and Madina Sahar Nazari. Maseeullah Farahmand Has provided excellent program management support to the team. EPD would like to express its sincere gratitude to all who offered their time and commitment to this monitoring and evaluation Project. We acknowledge with thanks Mr. Wajid Khan for his overall guidance, encouragement, and vision for this study.

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Evaluation Method

To undertake this monitoring and evaluation study, the researchers utilized both qualitative and quantitative methods to evaluate the performance of PWN networks in terms of implementing UNSCR 1325 objectives at the grass root level. The evaluation started with completing a basic questionnaire to assess program management of the PWN and was followed by a survey of PWN members to provide insight into the functioning of the network and to identify challenges. Finally, key informant interviews were conducted with community leaders, civil society and government stakeholders to review the network's impact and progress made. By collecting information from both inside and outside the networks, the evaluation's methodology aimed at providing an objective assessment of the network involving all key actors.

The tools included a questionnaire containing basic questions about the network's administration, logistics and filing. The survey posed questions related to the projects overall operations, activities, outreach, challenges and constraints, with the key informant interview asking basic questions about the network, its influence, coordination with civil society, challenges and impact.

For this evaluation, 149 key stakeholders were interviewed, including interviews with the authorities of the departments of Women's Affairs, Haj and Religious Affairs, Education, Justice and Public Health, the Municipality and members of the Provincial Council, Civil Society Organizations and the Peace Council, as well as community elders and religious leaders. Internally, all the provincial coordinators were interviewed along with 442 PWN members.

Background

Women have experienced tremendous upheaval throughout the history of Afghanistan and have been forced to bear the brunt for over three decades of conflict and insecurity. Women's human right deteriorated to unprecedented levels during the conflicts and war as they were denied their basic rights, including access to education, healthcare, and employment. After the collapse of the Taliban regime, women made a number of gains. Nevertheless, much remains to be done to realize women's full and equal rights and equal participation. Despite the challenges facing Afghanistan, the status of women has improved since 2001. While there remains more to be achieved, increased access to education, healthcare, justice, employment, freedom of expression, and other basic rights has made it possible for Afghan women to participate more fully in public and political life. However, they still remain to a large extent excluded from social and political life, and decision-making pertaining to their own security and well-being. Accordingly, women's participation in official peace building initiatives, the peace process, and security sector reform has been limited. To this end and in order to build link with the women at the grass root level, it is important to develop a network between some strong, influential, and powerful women for advocacy, capacity building and awareness raising regarding women related issues.

On October 31st 2000, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) adopted the historic Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace, and Security. The adoption of UNSCR 1325 was the validation of over 20 years of advocacy by women peace activists and women's organizations globally and it had no precedence before as it recognized that women's increased participation in all decision-making on peace and security related issues, as well as an end to conflict-related sexual violence. The Resolution stresses the importance of increasing women's participation in the prevention, management, and resolution of conflict as well as all matters related to peace and security. As a UN Member State, Afghanistan is committed to observing the principles of the UN Charter, international treaties it has signed, and UNSCRs, particularly those on women's rights. The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, therefore, intends to take practical steps in order to adhere to its women's rights obligations, and contributing to the maintenance of peace and security. To this end and in order to implement UNSCR 1325, the Government of Afghanistan has developed a National Action Plan (NAP). The document calls for the creation of mechanisms that enhance women's participation in negotiations for peace, politics, and decision-making at all levels. NAP 1325 also calls for mechanisms to prevent violence against women and protect women from being subjected to violence. It is the best tool for realizing

the objectives of the UNSCR1325 resolution in Afghanistan as it aims to increase women's participation in peace processes and the security sector as well as address issues around protection and relief and recovery services for women. The Afghanistan NAP 1325, on women, peace and security is developed to address the challenges women face in the aftermath of war and conflict. Thus, the NAP, is important because in any post conflict society the development of the country depends on men and women. To this end, and in order to implement UNSCR 1325, the Government of Afghanistan has developed this National Action Plan to achieve the following:

- Participation of women in the decision making and executive levels of the Civil Service, Security and Peace and Reintegration;
- Women's active participation in national and provincial elections;
- Women's access to effective, active and accountable justice system;
- Health and psychosocial support for survivors of sexual and domestic violence throughout Afghanistan;
- Protection of women from all types of violence and discrimination;
- Provision of financial resources for activities related to women in emergency;
- Implementation of IDPs policy provisions related to UNSCR 1325;
- Put an end to impunity for violence against women (VAW) and related crimes;
- Engage boys and men in fighting Violence Against Women;
- Support and provide capacity building for civil society (particularly women's organizations) on UNSCR 1325 and women, peace, and security;
- Increase economic security for vulnerable women through increased employment opportunities;
- Increase access to education and higher education for girls and women, particularly for the internally displaced persons and returnees;

Introduction

Afghanistan is among those countries which are committed to implement UNSCR1325 agenda as a means to reduce violence against women, foster women's political participation in peace process, and improve gender-sensitivity in the security sector. EPD as a support to this objective has established its networks in 15 provinces of Afghanistan and by support of royal kingdom of Netherlands and Cordaid is implementing MWPS (Monitoring Women's Peace and Security) project. MWPS aims to create an enabling environment for women in support of Afghanistan's commitments to the UNSCR 1325 agenda as a means to reduce violence against women, foster women's political participation in peace process, and improve gender-sensitivity in the security sector.

EPD has established these networks of women called 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. The PWN creates a platform that brings women from different walks of life together for training and capacity building purposes. EPD started the establishment of PWN as early as 2013 and since then it has established its PWNs provinces like Kabul, Herat, Bamyan, Nagarhar, Kunduz, Kandahar, Laghman, Helmand, Uruzgan, Parwan, Balkh, Daikundi, Badakhshan, Paktia and Faryab.

The PWN is administered by Provincial Coordinators (PCs), who is selected from local community and must have considerable influence and a good reputation. Once identified and recommended by the locals, provincial coordinators undergo trainings and participate in capacity building seminars, all of which are aimed at increasing their competence and ability to run the local PWN. Each PWN has thirty members, mostly chosen from local communities and who must meet certain criteria. PWN, in each province has also an advisory committee which consists of six key members and among these, three are provincial council members and the remaining are government employees and civil society members. At present the meetings with the advisory committee are held every six months, however, PWN and advisory committee believe the current time gap to be too long and suggest that such meetings should be held every two months or on a quarterly basis in order to increase the efficiency of the PWN.

The PWN functions in accordance with a written action plan that is prepared by the central office and is distributed

among all members. The members of PWN are committed to learn about peace and democratic processes in Afghanistan and their impact on women's lives, to promote peace in their communities, resolve conflicts, and monitor women's issues at the grassroots level. The networks also identify issues in their communities that are affecting women's advancement and seek to address them. PWN holds regular monthly meetings, with the participation of PWN members and representatives from government entities, civil society organizations and local Shuras. During these meetings, PWN members discuss their monthly activities, identify challenges, talk about coordination with government departments, and decided on future plans. Furthermore, the members also plan advocacy activities which mostly cover issues related to women such as, family disputes, domestic violence, access to justice, peace and security, education, health and other relevant issues. During this year, the networks have been involved in conducting advocacies for the implementation of UNSCR 1325 goals, at the grass root level.

Through this project, EPD will evaluate the performance of PWN in 15 provinces and will assess the change among the PWN members and other concerned stakeholders, regarding their attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors towards UNSCR 1325 goals. This evaluation aims to assess the progress and effectiveness of the PWN regarding the implementation of UNSCR 1325 goals, from the perspectives of both PWN members and the influential stakeholders who support the PWN work in each province. This report will give an insight of the activities that the PWN has conducted to create an enabling environment for women and to support the Afghanistan's commitments to achieve the pillars of UNSCR 1325.

First Pillar-Participation

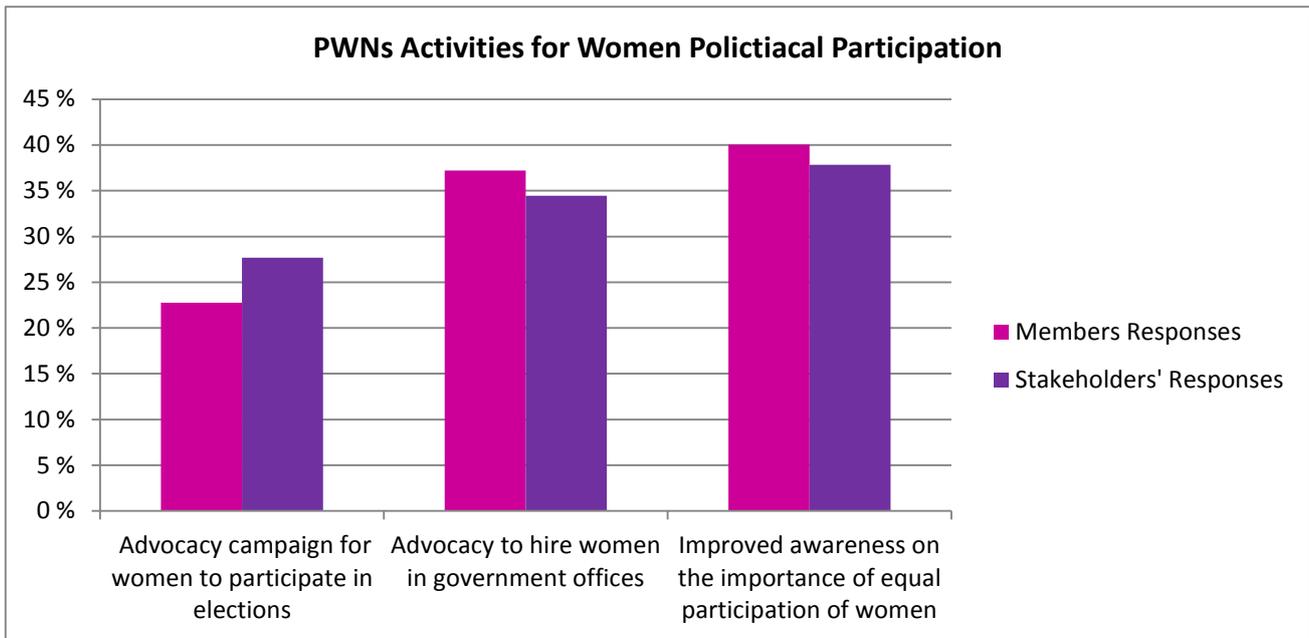
The first pillar of UNSCR emphasizes on enhancing women inclusion in decision making and peace process. It is believed that women are the most vulnerable group during war while they are less involved in fomenting violence. War impacts women in different shapes such as loss of lives, physical and emotional harms, sexual violence, displacement, human trafficking and many more forms of effects.¹ An approach to make women stronger and decrease level of women vulnerability is their involvement in peace process not only in advocacies at the grass-root level but also in policy making. Women usually are more successful in settlement of disputes and making peaceful decisions.² Afghan government has adapted its national action plan toward women inclusion with regards to first pillar of UNSCR 1325.

Considering the above mentioned concerns, EPDs' provincial women networks in 15 provinces of Afghanistan have attempted to enhance women inclusion and efforts have been made at different levels based on opportunities and conditions of each community to support UNSCR 1325 goals. Through this evaluation, we found illiteracy and lack of awareness, as the main reasons for less participation of women in social affairs, political affairs and decision making. In last six months starting from the beginning of 2017, PWN continued their activities to raise awareness on women's participation in peace building, decision making, and in political and social affairs of the community. When the respondents of different cohorts comprising of the stakeholders and members of PWN were asked about the PWN activities regarding women political inclusion, the most frequent answer was raising awareness among women on their rights for equal participation. PWN also advocated for women employment in both governmental and non-governmental organizations which was confirmed by both the cohorts.

Other significant activities carried out by PWN for women inclusion include awareness raising on voting rights of women and right to contest election. To this end, the PWN in some of the provinces encouraged potential young women to nominate themselves for Youth Parliament and increase women representation. The successful candidates still have PWNs membership and enhance impact of the activities. They have political influence and are supporting networks' activities and advocacies in subnational governmental entities. Lack of confidence, awareness, qualification and cultural barriers were identified as main factors for low percentage of female candidates during elections in provinces. To address it, the PWNs especially, attempted to remove cultural limitations, increase awareness and enhance women self-esteem and confidence through workshops, documentaries and social gatherings.

1 Afridi, S. and Tabasum, R. (2017), "Sharing Women's Responses to Radicalization in Afghanistan and Pakistan", Equality for Peace and Democracy

2 Klot, Jennifer F., 2007. 'Women And Peacebuilding.' Independent Expert paper commissioned by UNIFEM And UN Peacebuilding Support Office. Retrieved from http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/pdf/doc_wgll/wgll_backgroundpaper_29_01_08.pdf



Women Employment

Across all the coverage area, PWNs advocated for increasing women representation in governmental offices. In Badakhshan, PWN members met with the heads of independent administrative reform and civil service commission and asked them for transparency in recruitments and also to ensure increase in women representation in all the governmental offices. These head of civil service commission assured he will increase extra scores (a positive discrimination for women) from 10 to 20 in order to increase women’s representation. He also confirmed to the network that there are two vacant positions and the network introduced two women for those positions. After the official process is complete, these two women introduced by the PWN members will be appointed.

Similarly, Balkh PWN communicated with DoWA to advocate for women employment. The directorate encouraged the initiative and promised for cooperation. Masooda an employee in DoWA Balkh stated she is the Balkh DoWA representative in employment committee and advocates for gender equality to ensure women’s representation. In Paktia, the network had significant achievement in enhancing women employment. The network went to public health department and identified those positions specified for female staff and could place 22 women as nurses in different districts. They also introduced many women to promote program as interns to acquire skills and experience. As a result, 15 women after participation in internship programs have been assigned as permanent staff in different governmental entities. Before this, women representation in Paktia was very low but now because of women empowerment program, number of women has been increased.

Female inclusion in education

Lack of female teachers in schools is a main reason for low attendance among girls, especially in areas where Purdah (the separation of males and females in public) is observed strictly.³ In order to increase the attendance of girls PWNs advocated for increasing number of female teachers in girls-schools. To this end, PWN members met the concerned authorities in directorates of women affairs, education and also in the governor offices to ask them to assign female teachers in schools at the district level. This initiative can enhance both women inclusion and increase literacy level among women.

3 UNESCO (2006), The Impact of Women Teachers on Girls’ Education - Advocacy Brief. Bangkok, UNESCO Bangkok, Retrieved from <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0014/001459/145990e.pdf>

Central Statistics Organization (2014), National Risk and Vulnerability Assessment 2011-12. Afghanistan Living Condition Survey. Kabul, CSO retrieved from <http://cso.gov.af/Content/files/Chapter8%20EDUCATION.pdf>

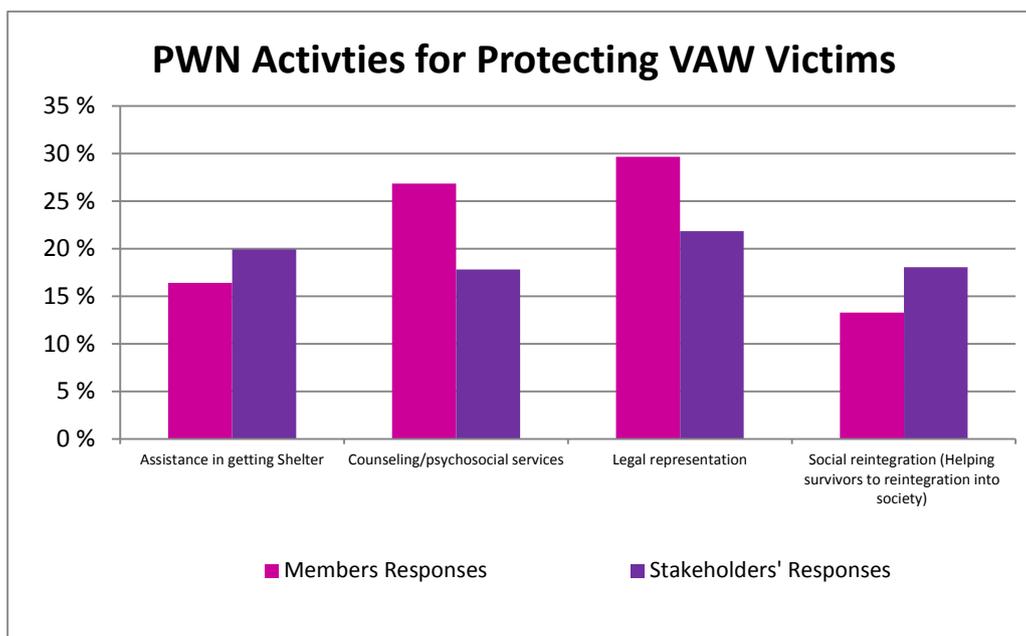
Also during the monitoring of education sector, PWN identified a series of problems in schools. In Kabul the PWN found lack of teacher, lack of kindergartens, lack of school books and desks the most crucial problems. To address the issue Kabul PWN met the authorities in education directorate and the head of education directorate promised to solve the problem and at some place the problems were solved to some extent; a few number of teachers were appointed in schools where it was required, books were distributed to some of the schools and the efforts are still going on to distribute books to all of schools.

Badakhshan PWN advocated for solving the problem of less teachers' in schools. Balkh and Parwan had many cases in which girls dropped out of schools because of the family restrictions and poor economy. The members mediated and as a result of their efforts some of the girls got permission from their families to continue education.

Second Pillar-Protection

In Afghanistan women have always been subjected to violence and have experienced the most brutal forms of physical, verbal, sexual, economic and physiological abuses. According to AIHRC, 1468 cases of physical violence were recorded only in year 2014. Honor killing is another type of violence frequently occurring in Afghanistan against women. In Herat, many women were set to fire as a result of domestic violence. Additionally, early marriage and forced marriage are the other types of mistreatments putting women at risk.

One out of three women in the world is suffering sexual harassment and most of the incidents are perpetuated by a partner intimated to the victim.⁴ Women not only in Afghanistan but also in other post-conflict countries are in high danger of sexual violence. Vulnerability of women invokes need for women protection from possible threats. During past six months, PWNs in response to their commitment to protection of women from all possible abuses at the grass root level conducted a series of activities ranging from helping women to get legal aid to reintegrate the rape survivors with the community. Most of the respondents confirmed that in order to support the second pillar of UNSCR 1325, PWN has advocated for women's legal representation and has helped women to get access to shelters. Also PWN has succeeded in providing psychological counseling to the victims of violence.



4 World Health Organization (2012a). Intimate partner and sexual violence against women. Fact sheet No. 239. Geneva. Available from <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/factsheets/fs239/en/>.

Access to justice

PWN has developed good reputation and positive image in the community over the time and has acquired enough experience to mediate in VAW cases and to provide solution to the parties involved. Women in community considers PWN as the centers for solving women problems and also refer other women to the PWN to seek solution to their problems.

Legal assistance provided by PWNs is mostly in shape of informal approaches such as holding Jirgas, involving influential and religious leaders. Cultural norms, especially in remote areas, decrease women's application for formal justice. That's why women usually prefer to solve domestic problems inside house or within the community, instead of going to courts and DoWA. PWNs are subjected to respect the norms and values of the community in order to make a difference and within the limits of the cultural norms PWNs intervene to solve the problem through informal justice approach and reduce risk of subsequent threats to the victims. In some cases where this informal approach fails to bring good results, PWNs start advocating for formal justice system through higher levels such as DoWA, AIHRC and helping victims to start the case.

The respondent from justice sector in Badakhshan confirmed during the interview that the network regularly visits the department for advocacy of women's rights, peace and security and gender equality. The respondents stated that there is coordination between the PWN and the justice sector which can highly reduce violence against women at the grass root level.

In Balkh, PWN has recruited two prosecutors who provide free legal services to the women introduced to the network for legal services. The network is also receiving full support from community and religious leaders to solve the VAW cases through informal justice system. A respondent in Balkh narrated how PWN solved a VAW case with the support of Community Development Council (CDC), in which a widow had failed to take her share that she was supposed to receive from her husband's property. Her sons had refused to give her any share several times before the PWN intervened in this case. PWNs advocated for this widow and with the help of local influential managed to put pressure on the sons and asked for her share of property. As a result of this advocacy the widow received some money. A respondent in Balkh mentioned that the network is helping to raise voice in order to take their rights. The network acts as a bridge to fulfill the gap between women at the grass root level and the authorities concerned to ensure women's peace and security.

PWN in Kunduz communicated with different NGOs which deliver legal services in order to provide legal support to VAW victims. The network introduced women affected by VAW to these organizations to seek justice for them.

Psychological counseling

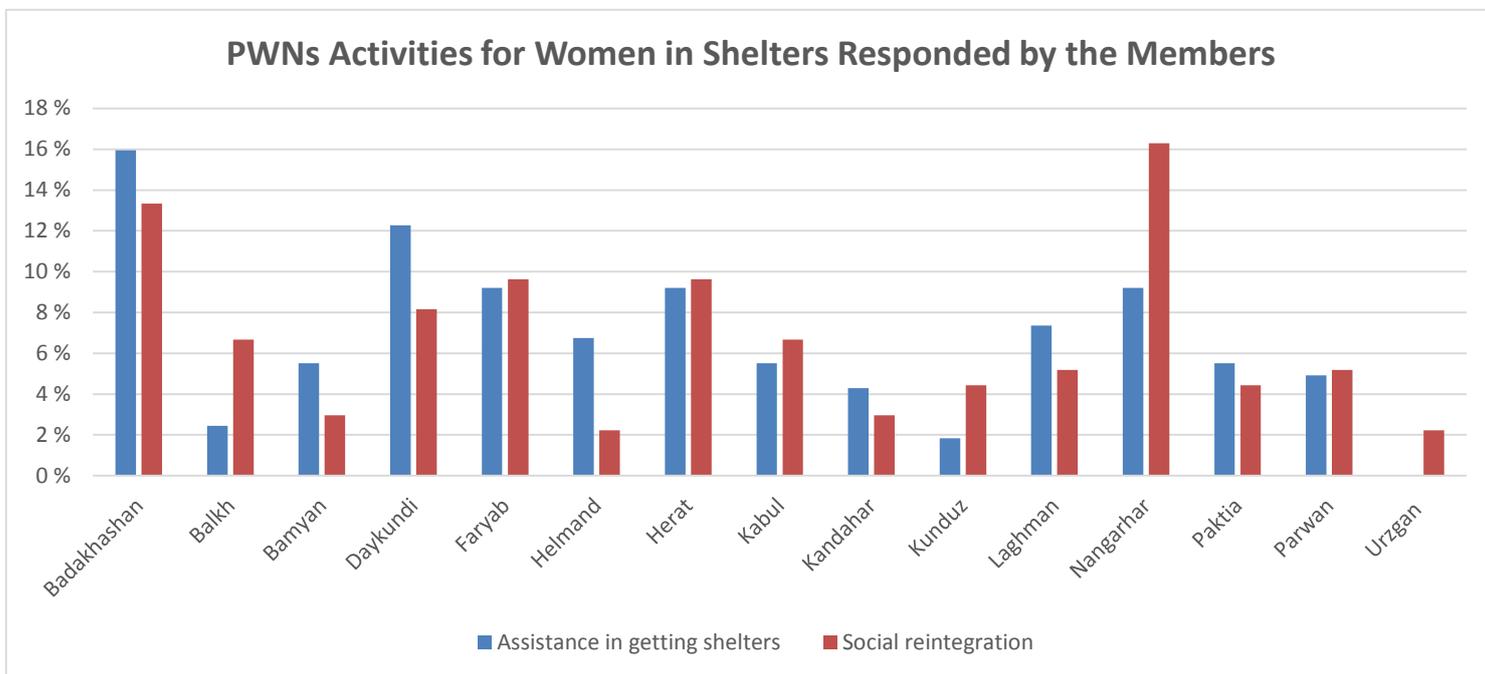
Almost all of PWNs are capable of providing psychological counseling to the victims of violence. VAW victims are usually at the high risk of developing depression and mental disorders; psychological counseling was categorized a prior activity by PWNs for the protection women. The network in Kabul has managed to develop good relationship with a group of psychologists and doctors who are willing to provide mental health services to VAW victims that come to the network for help.

In Balkh, coordinator herself is a psychologist and along with the other network members has conducted many psycho-counselling sessions for the victims of VAW victims and helped them to get rid of the mental stress. Similarly in Daikundi, a network member is a psychologist and provides free counselling to the VAW victims referred by the network. In Bamyan, PWN introduces such cases to one of the organization which provides counselling services to the VAW victims.

Access to Shelters

Assistance in social reintegration and providing access to women shelters to VAW victims are one of the very significant activities that the PWN has been involved in last six months. Particularly as suggested by the data, some of the provinces like Nangarhar, Badakhshan, Daikundi, Faryab and Herat are very active in this regard.

The coordinator in Nangarhar has developed good relationship with the Women Protection Centre (WPC) and also introduce victims of VAW to these shelters when required. The network in Daikundi also provides indirect access to shelters to the victims of VAW through DoWA. Similarly in Badakhshan, PWN has managed to develop good connection with DoWA and WPC.



Herat PWN has introduced three VAW victims to WPC in order to help them to get access to shelter and legal services. PWN coordinator along with some of the network members advocated for these VAW victims and with the help of directorate of DoWA managed to send the victims to WPC. In addition, PWN also advocated for their legal services as all the victims had very bad financial condition. The network lobbied with lawyer bar association in Herat and two lawyers agreed to defend their cases without any legal fee, voluntarily.

In Balkh, PWN reached out to women who had left women protection centers after their cases were solved and helped them to learn skills like tailoring and handicraft in order to make them economically independent.

In Helmand and Uruzgan, there are no WPCs. As there is a need for WPC in both these provinces, the network has communicated the issue with governor office and police headquarter to establish shelters for the victims of VAW.

Access to Health Facilities

PWN in all the target provinces advocated for women’s access to basic health services. It was observed that mother and child mortality is quite high despite all the efforts of public health department. Basic health services were not provided in many hospitals and the patients were suffering due to lack of doctors and medicine. A respondent from Badakhshan health department stated that it is around one and half month that the network is communicating with the department and is advocating for women’s health in general and mother care in particular. She further added the assistant of PWN (Alina Gheyasi) campaigned for blood donation in close coordination with department of public health and as a result which, around 16 units of blood were collected through that donation campaign.

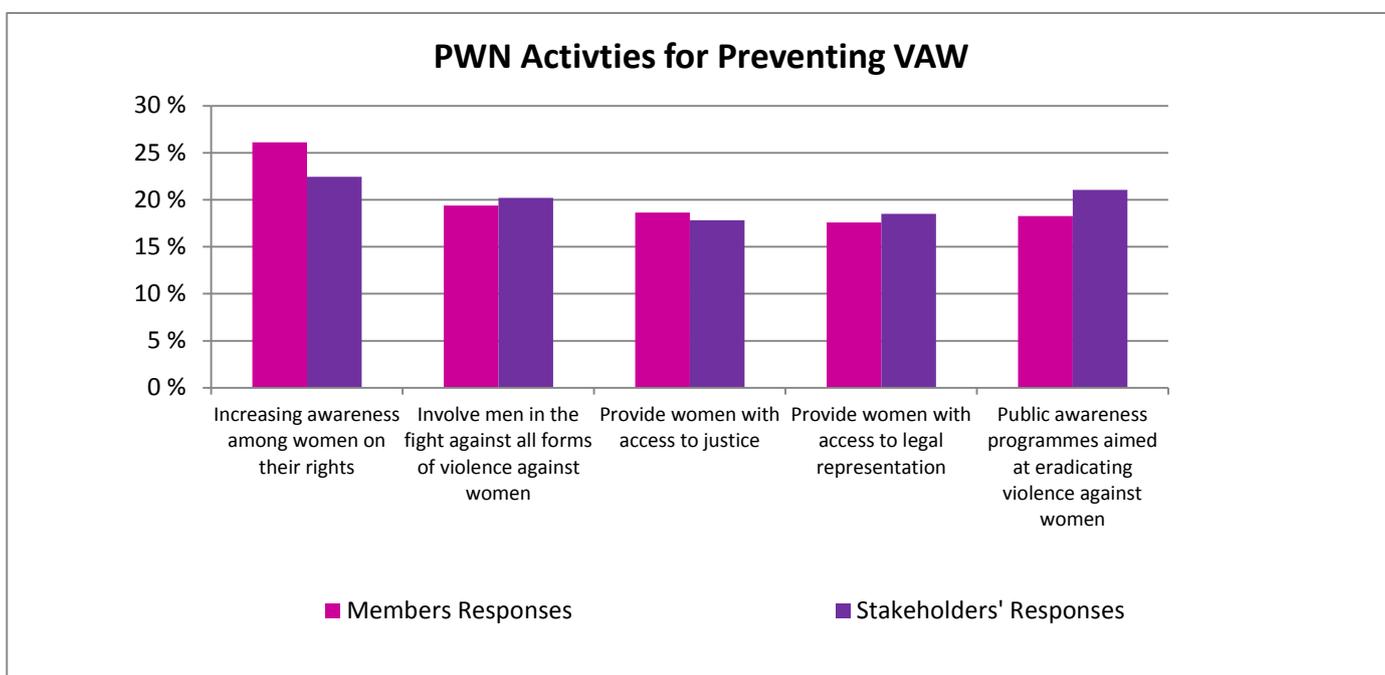
In terms of service delivery of health services, Balkh PWN introduced some VAW victims to DoWA in order to help them with some basic health services. In response to this DoWA sent an official letter to public health department and asked them to provide free health services to the victims. Public health department followed the instructions of DoWA and offered health services to the victims.

Kabul network monitored the service delivery in some hospitals and it was revealed the basic health services were

not delivered properly. Lack of doctors was a common problem found in most of the hospitals. Furthermore, the medicine provided by the government (which is supposed to be distributed free) was sold illegally to the patients. After monitoring all this Kabul PWN referred to public health directorate and the authorities promised to take action in this regard. Recently the PWN again monitored the service delivery in these hospitals and found the directorate is monitoring the service delivery closely.

Third Pillar-Prevention

Violence against women is a human right abuse and originates from gender-based discrimination. Maybe the best approach for removing violence against women is to prevent it from happening at the first place. Increasing level of education and awareness has been recommended as a tool of women empowerment and a preventive approaches to remove violence. Furthermore, violence against women is mostly perpetrated by men, it is believed that without involving men in the campaign it is almost impossible to eliminate the VAW from the communities. So, men and boys should be involved in the campaigns aimed at preventing violence against women.⁵



In order to prevent violence against women, PWN has raised awareness on various issues related to women’s right and UNSCR 1325. First of all a ToT was conducted for all the provincial coordinators in Kabul on UNSCR 1325 and the coordinators gave training to the PWN members in their respective provinces. The training on the main objectives of UNSCR1325 was given to 450 PWN members across all the target provinces in order to raise awareness among the members. These trainings were meant to help PWN members to know how they can reach out to affected women at the grass root level and how they can prevent VAW. During these workshops an advocacy toolkit developed by EPD was used to lead the session, which also includes important topic as women’s role in in peace building, a brief history of UNSCR and detailed explanation on four pillars of the resolution; prevention, protection, participation and relief/recovery. Furthermore, it explains how Afghan government is planning to implement this resolution through its inclusion in its national plan (NAP 1325).

Involving men to Prevent VAW

Women have the equal right to get access to education, health, employment opportunities, politics, property, resources

5 OHCHR (2015) INFORMATION SERIES ON SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH AND RIGHTS, retrieved from http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Issues/Women/WRGS/SexualHealth/INFO_VAW_WEB.pdf

and justice services. Considering vulnerability of women, international entities are advocating for involving men to fight the gender inequalities.⁶ In a traditional and patriotic context, it is not easy to change conservative views toward women however it is not impossible as well. PWN has been instrumental to get the support of influential men and community leaders to fight against VAW.

“Engaging with men on women’s rights” is an initiative facilitated by PWNs to provide this opportunity to the male members of the community to understand VAW victims’ situation and find solutions to remove it. During past six months PWN across all the target areas conducted series of workshops inviting male members of the community particularly religious and community leaders to raise awareness on EVAW law and other preventive measures. PWN invited these people to recreate situation of women along with the risk of violence that women face in order to make them understand women’s every day struggle. These workshops are named as “In her shoes”. The leaders after participating in the workshops have started awareness raising on gender equality and prohibition of violence against women.

Lobbying and campaigning

Though extensive advocacies have been conducted to prevent violence against women but lack of political will and law enforcement have always been the main factors to hamper gender equality and restrict initiatives for preventing VAW. To prevent VAW, PWN members have surveyed around 2250 women (150 per province) at grass-root level using a specific survey tool (Barometer) to understand main challenges which puts women’s peace and security at risk. Based on these inclusive surveys, lack of women representation, lack of education, insecurity, women inclusion and insecurity were identified as main barriers. Accordingly, PWNs referred to department of education, Women’s Affair, Haj and Religious Affair, Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service commission (IARCSC), Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) and other related entities and advocated for women inclusion in decision making, increase in literacy rate among girls, awareness raising on laws and also PWN encouraged these departments to make the law enforcing units accountable. PWN in Badakhshan along with other CSOs arranged a peaceful female demonstration in order to claim their basic rights. The network also increased number of the volunteers and expanded the network in the districts in order to reach more women.

Challenges

The PWN in different provinces face a number of challenges. However, most of these challenges are deeply-related to the overall political, economic and social situation of Afghanistan. Some of the main challenges that PWNs face are as following:

1. **Insecurity:** The volatile security situation in a number of provinces has hampered the implementation process to some extent like Badakhshan, Kunduz, Kandahar and Uruzgan. It has restricted visits of PWN members to the districts and remote villages as well as affected the data collection process for this evaluation. Insecurity has also led to the postponement and forced relocation of trainings from insecure areas to relatively secure ones.
2. **Cultural restrictions:** Another major challenge that has affected PWN’s performance and activities is cultural restrictions. In few of the provinces, the PWN has not succeeded much to attract the support of local stakeholders like community elders and religious leaders because they believed PWN to be the women-led organization, so men were not supposed to participate.
3. **High rate of illiteracy among women:** Prevalence of illiteracy among women is also an obstacle and has affected PWN activities in many provinces to some extent. When establishing PWNs in provinces, the provincial coordinator and delegation from central office had tough time finding and recruiting literate members for PWN. Similarly, whenever PWNs want to conduct seminars for capacity building and awareness raising of local women, it requires a lot of time and resources to find literate participants, otherwise, the contents of such seminars have to be

6 The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. (2014). Women’s rights are human rights. New York and Geneva. Retrieved from <http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Events/WHRD/WomenRightsAreHR.pdf>

modified and adjusted according to the knowledge of participants.

4. Limited coverage area: According to the stakeholders of some of the provinces, PWN has limited coverage area. They believe that the current coverage area of PWN, which mostly comprises of the provincial capital and one or two other districts, is very limited and needs to be expanded. According to them, in order to have a balanced impact the network should cover all districts or allocate equal number of PWN members to women of all districts.
5. Lack of knowledge about advocacy: Advocacy is regarded as the most important activity and it has significant impact on improvement of women's conditions. All PWNs conduct advocacies and even some PWNs have created committees for this purpose. However, a major issue related to advocacy is lack of knowledge about the importance, conduct, methods and results of advocacies. All PWN members conducting advocacies need to be well informed about the impact and results of advocacies. Central office should prepare guideline related to advocacy activities. None of the networks interviewed stated to have a written advocacy policy or strategy. All activities and actions are designed and undertaken on ad hoc basis, depending on the situation and the targeted individuals. The advocacy strategy and approach is generally coordinated by program and research managers from EPD, with coordinators being primarily in charge of the execution. None of the networks stated to have a written structured methodology or manual on gathering evidence. All evidence-gathering activities are based on intuition and ad hoc methods.
6. Lack of sustainable Mechanism: Findings from the assessment show that most networks interviewed and monitored follow the work plan and guidelines provided to them by EPD. They have not developed their own defined missions to make their networks more agile and allow them to communicate their goals and ambitions better with their members.

Recommendations

- The coverage of the PWN in all the provinces should be expanded to the other remote areas. In such areas, the plight of women is particularly pronounced, and it is there that the work of the PWN is needed more than the capitals.
- Several PWN members suggested, that provincial level conferences would be beneficial for reaching more women in matters related to political participation of women and other objectives of UNSCR 1325.
- Young and educated should be worked with closely, also through schools and universities a large number of people could be sensitized on the objectives of UNSCR 1325.
- Support should be provided to PWN so they can do conduct effective advocacies, capacity building and awareness raising programs on women rights, EWAV and changing attitudes toward women in peace and security.
- The sustainability of the PWN for the realization of the UNSCR 1325 objectives in the provinces is also very important.

Conclusion

This report presents the finding, conclusion and recommendations of a monitoring and evaluation project on the peace and security of women in 15 provinces of Afghanistan. The purpose of this report is to present the findings and conclusions of an assessment of the Provincial Women's Networks regarding the implementation UNSCR 1325 goals in Afghanistan.

In order to build link with the women at the grass root level, it is important to develop a network between some strong,

influential, and powerful women for advocacy, capacity building and awareness raising. EPD created a network of these women called 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. The PWN creates a platform that brings women from different walks of life together for training, awareness raising and capacity building purposes.

EPD has already conducted the first three rounds of evaluation in which achievements of PWN has been presented. The aim of this round of evaluation is to assess the networks' achievements in terms of enhancing women's peace and security in community.

The PWN is evaluated on its ability to govern the network, skills to build the links with other stakeholders and ability to successfully engage in advocacy and awareness raising to enhance women's peace and security. Based on findings upon each one of these indicators, the networks has been very successful in monitoring women's peace and security at the grass root level. Of the four pillars of UNSCR 1325, the PWN has successfully advocated for the first three pillars including, participation, protection and prevention. To ensure women participation in decision making, PWN advocated for girls education and women's employment in governmental offices. In response to the commitment to protection of women from all possible abuses at the grass root level, PWNs conducted a series of activities ranging from helping women to get access to justice, shelters and basic mental health services. In order to prevent violence against women, PWN has raised awareness on various issues related to women's right and has involved men in their advocacies to prevent VAW.

PWN across all the target provinces has managed to develop strong links with the stakeholders. Effective advocacy relies heavily on the network's ability to engage with partners and sustain a good relationship. Almost all monitored networks reported excellent relationships with other stakeholders, including non-governmental entities. There was a general consensus among PWN members that collaboration has enabled the PWN to expand its reach in advocacies, to coordinate larger campaigns and to draw on the skills and strengths of parallel organizations.

In terms of areas for improvement, virtually all PWN branches expressed a need for the organization to operate in more districts of each respective province. A common reason given for this is the fact that the needs of local women may be particularly pronounced in remote areas, against a background of limited education and resources as well as particularly conservative and traditional norms.

Overall, the report confirmed that a great deal of progress has been made in setting the groundwork for further grassroots advocacy and campaigning to enhance women's peace and security at the grass root level.

This assessment falls under the goal of the Monitoring Women's Peace and Security (MWPS) project, generously funded by the Royal Netherlands Embassy, to contribute towards an enabling environment for women across Afghanistan.

Annex 1: Research Questionnaires

Questionnaire for PWN Members

Section 1: PWN Activities (Asking you about the activities of your PWN)

101. What are the biggest problems that women face in your community?

- Violence against women
- Lack of education and awareness
- Lack of women political participation
- Financial dependence

102. What preventive measures does PWN take to tackle these problems of women?

- Awareness raising among women on laws
- Awareness raising on the importance of education among women
- Involve men to fight against VAW
- Advocating for participation of women in decision making
- Advocating for increasing female staff in government offices
- Increase awareness through documentary screening on peace

103. What are the PWN's top advocacy priorities regarding women's peace and security for year 2017?

- Women's participation in peace building and peace negotiations
- Women's participation in decision making
- Promoting laws that advance gender equality and women's rights
- Prevention and protection of women from sexual and gender-based violence
- Access to justice in response to violations of women's
- Women's economic empowerment
- Involving male members of the community on gender based issues

104. In which governmental departments do you conduct advocacies for women?

- Department of education
- Department of health
- Shelters
- Police department
- Department of women affairs
- Human rights commission

105. What are the areas that the PWN is advocating for in the above mentioned departments?

- Increase the number of female staff
- Access to Mother and childcare
- Helping women in shelters to reintegrate with the society
- Basic facilities for women in government offices
- Access of women to political participation and decision making
- Increase in access to justice for women at the grass root level

106. What are the activities that the PWN has conducted regarding the implementation of UNSCR 1325 goals in last six months

- Workshops on engaging with men on women's rights/ In her shoes
- Workshops on Women's Peace and Security
- Workshops on UNSCR1325 goals
- Advocacy skills for women on peace and security
- Reporting and access to justice for victims of sexual and gender-based violence
- Communications/ to raise awareness of VAW
- Women's economic empowerment

107. What kind of activities does PWN conduct for the prevention of violence against women?

- Increasing awareness among women of their rights
- Involve men in the fight against all forms of violence against women
- Provide women with access to legal representation
- Provide women with access to justice
- Public awareness programmes aimed at eradicating violence against women

108. What kind of activities does PWN conduct to protect VAW victims?

- Counseling/psychosocial services
- Legal representation
- Assistance with livelihoods
- Assistance in getting Shelter
- Social reintegration (Helping survivors to reintegration into society)

109. What kind of activities does PWN conduct for the enhancement of women's political participation?

- Improved awareness of the importance of equal participation of women
- Advocacy campaign for women to participate in elections
- Advocacy to hire women in government offices

110. Which of the following groups has your Provincial Women's Network met with or reached out to on advocacy issues? (please mark all applicable selections)

- Religious leaders
- Youth in the community
- Elders
- Local shuras/jirgas and other councils
- Line ministry government officials
- Administrative officials at institutions such as schools, hospitals, or clinics
- Provincial Peace Committee members
- Provincial Council members
- Members of Parliament
- Provincial or District Governor
- Police officials
- National and International NGOs or civil society organizations

111. In next 5 years, where do you see Provincial Women's Network and what are the activities for its survivability?

- Expansion in coverage area
- Increase in activities (Conducting the workshops, advocacies)
- Increased number of members and staff
- Solving more women's problems and VAW cases
- Close bond and interactions with other institutions and offices
- Holding more frequent meetings

- Conducting more women empowerment programs
- Other

112 What are your recommendations for the survival of PWN?

Section 2: PWN Members Involvement

201. On average, how often do you talk to other PWN members about PWN activities or issues?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Every few months
- Never

202. On average, how often do you talk to other women in your community who are not members of PWN about PWN activities or issues?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Every few months
- Never

203. How often do you talk about PWN activities or issues in your household?

- Daily
- Weekly
- Monthly
- Every few months
- Never

204. To what extent does your family support you being a member of the Provincial Women's Network in your province today?

- Very much
- Some
- A little
- Not very much
- Not at all

205. How much has your involvement with PWN increased your own awareness on women's rights?

- Very much
- Some
- A little
- Not very much
- Not at all

206. How much has your involvement with PWN increased your family's awareness on women's rights?

- Very much
- Some
- A little

- Not very much
- Not at all

Questionnaire for Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) with Community Leaders, CSOs and Government Officials

Network Name

Date

Interviewer

Interviewee

Position

101. What are the biggest problems that women face in your community?

- Violence against women
- Lack of education and awareness
- Lack of women supporters
- Lack of women political participation
- Financial dependence

102. In your opinion, what preventive measures PWN takes to tackle these problems of women?

- Awareness raising among women on laws
- Awareness raising on the importance of education among women
- Involve men to fight against VAW
- Advocating for participation of women in decision making
- Advocating for increasing female staff in government offices
- Increase awareness through documentary screening on peace

103. In your opinion, what are the PWN's top advocacy priorities regarding women's peace and security for year 2017?

- Women's participation in peace building and peace negotiations
- Women's participation in decision making
- Promoting laws that advance gender equality and women's rights
- Prevention and protection of women from sexual and gender-based violence
- Access to justice in response to violations of women's
- Women's economic empowerment.
- Involving male members of the community on gender based issues

104. In your opinion, what are the activities that PWN has conducted regarding the implementation of UNSCR 1325 goals in last six months?

- Workshops on engaging with men on women's rights/ In her shoes
- Workshops on Women's Peace and Security
- Workshops on UNSCR1325 goals
- Advocacy skills for women on peace and security
- Reporting and access to justice for victims of sexual and gender-based violence
- Communications/ to raise awareness of VAW
- Women's economic empowerment

105. In your opinion, What kind of activities does PWN conduct for the prevention of violence against women?

- Increasing awareness among women of their rights
- Involve men in the fight against all forms of violence against women
- Provide women with access to legal representation
- Provide women with access to justice
- Public awareness programmes aimed at eradicating violence against women

106. In your opinion, what kind of activities does PWN conduct to protect VAW victims?

- Counseling/psychosocial services
- Medical services
- Legal representation
- Assistance with livelihoods
- Assistance in getting Shelter
- Social reintegration (Helping survivors to reintegration into society)

107. In your opinion, What kind of activities does PWN conduct for the enhancement of women’s political participation?

- Improved awareness of the importance of equal participation of women
- Advocacy campaign for women to participate in elections
- Advocacy to hire women in government offices

108. In your opinion, what kind of work they do?

109. Does PWN visit your department for advocacy on women’s rights?

110. How often do you meet with PWN coordinator or the members?

111. What are the activities of PWN that you have participated in?

- Documentary screening
- Workshops/ In her shoes
- Out reaching women

112. When you meet PWN members, what kind of issues you discuss with each other?

113. Do you think the PWN is needed in your community for empowerment of women?

114. How do you think the PWN affects women in your community and helps to change attitude towards women?

115. What are your recommendations for the improvement of PWN activities?

Expand the activities and conducting more workshops

Increasing number of staff and the members

Issuing official letter

Issuing membership card

PWN Questionnaire for the Coordinator

1. On an average how many participants get involved in your activities apart from your members?

2. Are these members a reasonable reflection of this community makeup in terms of ethnicity?

3. Does this PWN hold monthly meetings for doing advocacy on the issues they are monitoring?

4. Have PWN members attended Kabul meetings with the PWN members from other provinces?

5. Do PWN members engage in outreach to other members of their community?

6. Have the PWN members identified male supporters in their community?

7. What are the biggest problems that women face in your community?

- Violence against women
- Lack of education and awareness
- Lack of women political participation
- Financial dependence

8. What preventive measures does PWN take to tackle these problems of women?

- Awareness raising among women on laws
- Awareness raising on the importance of education among women
- Involve men to fight against VAW
- Advocating for participation of women in decision making
- Advocating for increasing female staff in government offices
- Increase awareness through documentary screening on peace

9. What are the PWN's top advocacy priorities regarding women's peace and security for year 2017?

- Women's participation in peace building and peace negotiations
- Women's participation in decision making
- Promoting laws that advance gender equality and women's rights
- Prevention and protection of women from sexual and gender-based violence
- Access to justice in response to violations of women's
- Women's economic empowerment
- Involving male members of the community on gender based issues

10. In which governmental departments do you conduct advocacies for women?

- Department of education
- Department of health
- Shelters
- Police department
- Department of women affairs
- Human rights commission

11. What are the areas that the PWN is advocating for in the above mentioned departments?

- Increase the number of female staff
- Access to Mother and childcare
- Heling women in shelters to reintegrate with the society
- Basic facilities for women in government offices
- Access of women to political participation and decision making
- Increase in access to justice for women at the grass root level

12. What are the activities that the PWN has conducted regarding the implementation of UNSCR 1325 goals in last six months?

- Workshops on engaging with men on women's rights/ In her shoes
- Workshops on Women's Peace and Security
- Workshops on UNSCR1325 goals
- Advocacy skills for women on peace and security
- Reporting and access to justice for victims of sexual and gender-based violence
- Communications/ to raise awareness of VAW
- Women's economic empowerment

13. What kind of activities does PWN conduct for the prevention of violence against women?

Increasing awareness among women of their rights
Involve men in the fight against all forms of violence against women
Provide women with access to legal representation
Provide women with access to justice

Public awareness programmes aimed at eradicating violence against women

14. What kind of activities does PWN conduct to protect VAW victims?

- Counseling/psychosocial services
- Legal representation
- Assistance with livelihoods
- Assistance in getting Shelter
- Social reintegration (Helping survivors to reintegration into society)

15. What kind of activities does PWN conduct for the enhancement of women's political participation?

- Improved awareness of the importance of equal participation of women
- Advocacy campaign for women to participate in elections
- Advocacy to hire women in government offices

16. What are the main problems which hampers PWN activities?

- Lack of support from governmental office
- Insecurity
- Improper custom
- The office is not registered with the related offices

17. What are your recommendation for the improvement of PWN activities?

- Expand the activities and conducting more workshops
- Increasing number of staff and the members
- Issuing official letter
- Issuing membership card

18. What are your recommendation for the survival of PWN?

19. Provide a list of the PWN achievements.



EPD | **EQUALITY**
for Peace and
Democracy

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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. 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.