



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

During the past quarter in pursuance of its mission to achieve a sustainable peace, enhance women's rights and improve good governance, EPD has carried out a number of activities including launch events, press conference, award ceremony, awareness raising campaigns and assessments.

EPD in support of LoGo project assessed CSO's capacity in 10 provinces of Afghanistan, based on which capacity building and awareness raising materials including manuals and handouts on concepts such as Citizen, "Access to information" and "Fighting corruption" were developed. Accordingly, it conducted extensive awareness raising workshops for the relevant authorities and public to enhance transparency in public service delivery. To link government with locals, EPD has created "Government and CSO Coordination Forums" for exchanging ideas. Radio round table discussions were the other platform used to decrease the gap.

EPD launched its seventh report on "1397 Draft National Budget Review" analyzing GIROA's progress in terms of Public Finance Management and challenges that it is encountering. Moreover, as a follow up for its effort for elimination of violent extremism and radicalization, EPD invited the peace network from Pakistan to publicly share the research report and a policy paper on women's response to radicalization.

In the first quarter of 2018, EPD held an award ceremony in Nangarhar to honor police employees whose hard work and dedication resulted in control of crime and solving community problems. EPD hopes the initiative can build public trust and enhancing good policing. Furthermore, EPD has established a CSO network in the aforementioned province to eradicate human right deviation in justice sector. During past quarter, this network conducted meetings and followed up with the deviation cases. You can find detailed information on EPD's activities in the following paragraphs.

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Women in Pakistan and Afghanistan are faced with similar challenges and forms of radicalization and violent extremism. For decades, they have been playing an active role in sustaining families and communities and preventing family members from indulging in violence. Women peace activist in both countries have been challenging both the militants and the military over violations of human rights. There is a need to bring together responses of women, to radicalization and violent extremism, in Pakistan and Afghanistan, to have a better understanding of the problem in local and regional context, and to have better synergy. EPD along with its partner in Pakistan, Aware Girls, created a network of women peace activists as a platform to facilitate communication and coordination for women initiative

to encounter radicalization and violent extremism. As part of this, a research report and a strategy paper were developed and the network collected documented stories of women experience of radicalization and their struggle to cope.

On 14 January, EPD held a press conference to share the research report and the strategy paper publically. It also covered a panel session inviting of Ms. Nabila Mosleh (Financial and Administrative Deputy Minister at MoWA), Ms. Safia Sidiqi (Head of Gender at MoLSMD), Samina (Researcher), Kiran Fida (Program Manager at Aware Girls), Zarqa Yaftali (Director of WCLRF) and Dr. Huma Zinat (Head of Gender at HPC). The panel discussed main findings of the research, the strategy paper, notable achievements of the peace network and its sustainability.

## Education in Emergency



## Countering Radicalization

War and conflict during past recent years, have resulted in displacement of a significant number of Afghans in volatile provinces. With instability and dire economic situation that Afghanistan is facing, it is often hard for communities to host IDPs and returnees. Sadly, its impact on children particularly girls, is pathetic as they are in high risk of infections, malnutrition, and physical, mental and sexual harassment. Lack of access to education is the other main concern for IDP children. As number of children who has left school due to conflict is drastically increasing, it is very important to support them rejoin school.

displaced children in Laghman and Kunduz. For this purpose, 23 teachers in Kunduz and 12 teachers in Laghman were hired and trained on pedagogy and Wash (Water, Sanitation and Hygiene) to raise awareness and teach IDP children on the school subjects. During past quarter in close coordination with DoE, around 2100 students from returnee and IDP families were identified and are participating in literacy and catch up courses. The courses have been arranged on different topics and school levels to meet diverse language and age group need of the students. In order to help these students rejoin formal schools, EPD is working with DoE to register these students in the nearest school so that they can continue their education normally.

With financial support of UNICEF, EPD is struggling to reach out to internally





## PWN Sustainability

During the past quarter, EPD's 15 Provincial Women Networks (PWN) throughout the country, completed implementation of their advocacy strategies to address issues such as women harassment, lack of women recruitment, IDP women dire economic situation and improper customs such high bride price, Bad and Badaal. EPD has started the fifth round of PWN activities monitoring and evaluation with focus on their advocacy strategies and will soon publish a report on it. Additionally, EPD along with its PWNs in 15 provinces, have honored Women's Day. On 8th March 2017, EPD gathered its provincial women network members inviting representatives of Women's Affairs Department, Independent Human Right Commission, Haj and Religious Affairs, community influential

figures to mark this day and reaffirm their commitment to gender equality and promoting women's rights.

The provincial coordinators also met the Afghanistan first lady to share their achievements pertaining to support of UNSCR 1325 and ensuring women's peace and security. The network will continue meeting high ranking officials and influential figures to link their grass-root efforts with policy level and advocate for women.

PWNs are being supported to work as an independent network to represent their communities, voice women and advocate for women's local peace. The networks received trainings on proposal writing and were empowered to take care of their sustainability.

Women inclusion in different key aspects of the society is a main factor to achieve gender equality, reduce poverty and maintain transparency in governance. USAID Promote: Women in Government has put a lot of efforts to encourage women participation in government. As a result thousands of female fresh university graduates are participating in capacity building and internship programs and some of them could successfully join the government. Certainly, it could not be achieved without dedication of Afghan female and male champions who had struggled to fill gender gap and enhance women participation in Afghan civil service.

EPD with support of USAID Promote: Women in

Government is identifying these champions and will recognize and honor them publically. It is hoped that the initiative can publicize a culture of equality and eliminate gender discrimination and women exclusion. During past quarter, EPD established a committee consisted of the Ministry of Women Affairs, Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyr and Disabled, ALO, ECW and WISE-O for selection of the champions. Currently, the committee is working on finalizing a pre-prepared champion strategy which has been developed as a guide for the champion selection. According to this strategy, EPD will advocate in Kabul, Nangarhar, Balkh, Herat and Kandahar to prepare a list of potential candidates and conduct an award ceremony to appreciate their efforts.

## Champion Strategy



On 10 January 2018, EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy (EPD) launched the “1397 Draft National Budget Review” in an event which was attended by over 50 representatives of government officials, national and international organizations, media and civil society.

It is the seventh annual report that is published which provides a snapshot of resources, allocations, and Public Finance Management Performance (PFMP). Afghanistan national Budget for the FY 1397 has been subjected to some notable changes pertaining to budget allocation particularly developmental budget. The draft has been prepared based on international standards of Government Financial Statistic (GFS) and Classification of the Functions of Government (COFOG) aimed to enhance transparency and achieving

a better budget expenditure. EPD’s launch event covered presentation on the main findings of the research report and a panel discussion followed by a Q & A session.

In comparison to the previous years, the overall core budget has been decreased drastically. Considering unforeseeable security situation in Afghanistan, the 1397 budget is very limited. Most of foreign countries are enforcing policies of refugee reversion and if the security situation improves, Afghanistan will confront with reversion of returnees while still the government doesn’t have enough budget to host them. While there has been steady progress made to increase domestic revenue, projections remain well below the total amount of revenue required to meet future recurrent costs.

## Access to Justice



## National Budget Review



Corruption, violation of law and weak law enforcement not only in Afghanistan but in all post-conflict countries impedes access to justice. In such conditions, it will be very difficult for the judicial system to meet people’s needs and will create gaps between public and this governmental body. EPD in Nangarhar, is struggling to improve access to quality service provided by the justice sector and build trust on courts. It has created a network of the governmental entities and local CSOs which provides legal aids including Afghanistan Independent Bar Association (AIBA), Afghanistan Prosecutor Association (APA) and Afghanistan Women Judge Association (AWJA) and many other local CSOs.

The network held monthly meetings to facilitate coordination between CSOs, justice sector and key influential stakeholders of society such as provincial council. The meetings are an opportunity to lobby and advocate for women’s access to formal justice and elimination of human right violation in justice sector in Nangarhar. During last quarter, the network could identify 25 cases of human right violation within courts and justice sectors which some of them have been addressed. Additionally, the network raises awareness among local judges, prosecutors, local CSOs and media on court procedures and Human Rights to reduce occurrence of the cases.



## Accountable Service Delivery

Accountability in service delivery at provincial level in Afghanistan, due to factors such as insecurity and corruption, is a major challenge for the government. Lack of transparency and accountability not only affect the local services but also increase gap between government and its citizen. Local people's engagement in monitoring public service delivery can highly empower local governance and enhance transparency and quality of services. As a support for LoGo project, EPD is struggling to create networks of CSO, raise awareness and establish platforms for dialogues among the governmental sectors and CSOs in 10 provinces spanning Balkh, Nangarhar, Kandahar, Khost, Bamyan, Kapisa, Daikundi, Paktia, Herat and Panjshir.

During the past quarter, EPD carried out a CSO capacity building assessment to measure their skills and experience in terms of social monitoring. Based on findings of this study, EPD in close coordination with Deputy Ministry Municipality (DMM) worked on handouts and manuals for awareness raising campaigns. Utilizing the mentioned material, EPD held a workshop with public inviting over 500 participants including influential figures of community, community councils and media to sensitize community members aimed to create a culture of accountability and eliminate corruption. Furthermore, a documentary entitled "It Is My Money, Where Has It Gone?" to around 1400 citizens in the mentioned provinces to encourage public

engagement in monitoring sub-national service delivery. EPD is also strengthening networking among CSO, governmental stakeholders and other interested stakeholders to facilitate interaction between public and the governmental authorities, bridge gap and promote accountable governance. For this aim, EPD has created Government and Civil Society Organizations Coordination Forums in all 10 targeted provinces. They held their second meeting during March and discussed solutions to encounter challenges that hamper accountability and transparent public service delivery. In order to raise awareness and encourage a climate of dialogue, networking workshops were organized for 570 representatives of the

governmental sectors, CSOs, elders, locals, PWN and ACTA networks. Besides raising awareness on responsibilities of the community and the governmental sectors pertaining to social monitoring, the sessions provided an opportunity for exchanging opinions.

Live media roundtable discussion were arranged during which people could ask their questions and share their concerns with responsible authorities such as Municipalities, Provincial Council and Anti-corruption committee. The program was broadcasted in 124 districts in the targeted provinces and could successfully reach to a significant number of locals. Last but not least, EPD held cross-cultural youth events to encourage their involvement in monitoring service delivery.

## Police Award



Law enforcement and effective police performance is not possible without public support. Unfortunately, corruption and lack of awareness has created a wide gap between citizen and the police sector. It can both decrease trust and increase level of crime in the communities. With the financial support of United States Institute of Peace (USIP), EPD in Nangarhar, has established a Community Watch (CW) committee to monitor police performance with public engagement, raise awareness, bridge the gap and enhance police performance.

During first quarter of 2018, the committee conducted the third round of police award ceremony where 10 police officers including a female employee, were honored for their cooperation with community

members and efforts to tackle crime. The ceremony also hosted a panel discussion with participation of Head of Crime Investigation, Head of Human Rights Commission, Police Head of Internal Affairs and representative of Local (Mardomi) Police. The panel stressed on importance of police and public mutual respect and cooperation and accepted that there are some cases of police failure but it can be improved only by community members' support.

The committee endeavored to promote a culture of public reward and punishment and accountability to enhance policing. Many cases were reported to prevent crime where police could act more effectively with community support.

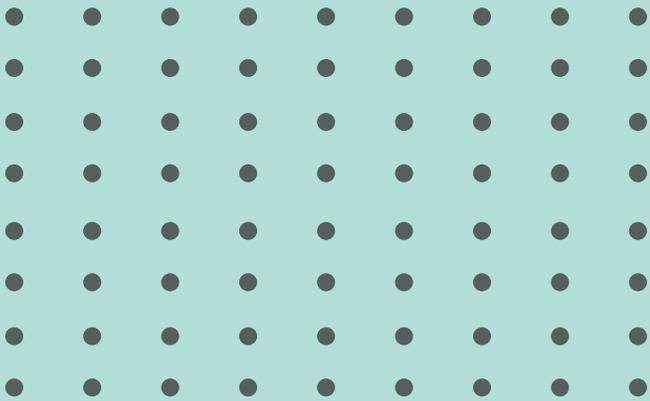
## Capacity Building Activities in Paktia & Balkh



Education is a human right and is perceived as a way to alleviate poverty. Hence for post-conflict countries such as Afghanistan, enhancing education in long term can be equal to social and economic development. Unfortunately, corruption in Education sector varies in forms and as a global concern is affecting quality of education particularly, in rural areas. Nepotism, favoritism, bribery, fraud and many other types of crime is limiting equal access to education among Afghan children. With the growing corruption and low quality education services, it is very important to initiate a monitoring mechanism within education sector. With the financial and technical support of USAID, EPD is implementing a CSO capacity assessment in terms of monitoring education sector in Paktia and Balkh.

EPD has designed a study to identify CSOs and CBOs (Community-Based Organization) engaged in oversight of the education service delivery. The assessment will also examine the capacity building needs of CSOs and CBOs working in Balkh and Paktia for oversight and measure feasible capacity development interventions for strengthening CSOs oversight role through training, coaching, mentoring and monitoring.

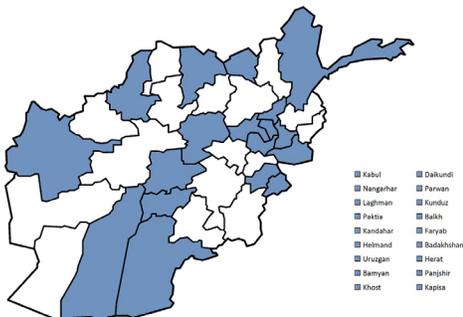
The study will cover 208 interviews and focus group discussions in each province involving representatives of Education Department/ Directorate, DDA, CDC, SMS and CSOs. The recommendations as a result of the reports later will be used for developing detailed action plans for oversight of the MoE.



## Donors and Supporters

Embassy of the Kingdom of the Netherlands	United Nation Development Program
Open Society Afghanistan	United Nations International Children's Education Fund
United States Agency for International Development	CORDAID
United State Institute of Peace	Salah Consortium

## Where we work



## 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>