



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

Equality for Peace and Democracy (EPD) during the second quarter of 2019 endeavored to build peace, support implementing NAP 1325 and improve local governance. Along with the Salah consortium, EPD facilitated a civil society and media national conference on peace negotiations. During this event, with participation of over 400 individuals from Kabul and provinces, a statement was prepared and submitted to the President to determine redlines for the intra-Afghan peace talks.

Similar to other quarter, EPD provided technical support to the Provincial Women Networks to conduct their activities regarding Barometer research and advocacy strategies. The networks were registered with the Ministry of Justice as independent associations. In support of women entrepreneurship, EPD in Bamyan province offered skill trainings on basic and advance tailoring, hair dressing and weaving courses. After training, they will receive further support to prepare business plans in flourishing market sectors to earn income.

EPD expanded its Government and Civil society Coordination Forums (GCCF) to 17 provinces to promote a transparent accountable government through advocacies and social audit. EPD trained the new GCCFs on access to information law and provincial planning. EPD extensively raised awareness on access to information through workshops and Khatibs as well as live radio roundtable discussions. Moreover, to enhance quality of education service delivery in Paktia and Balkh, schools in 14 districts were visited to check distribution of schools textbooks. EPD's community based monitors will communicate shortcoming in this regard with the relevant authorities in the Department of Education.

The other activity covered during this period, was addressing human right deviation cases in courts in Nangarhar. EPD in this province has created a committee of local legal aid providers and supported them to check and address the cases for a better judicial system. For the details of these activities please check the stories in the following pages.

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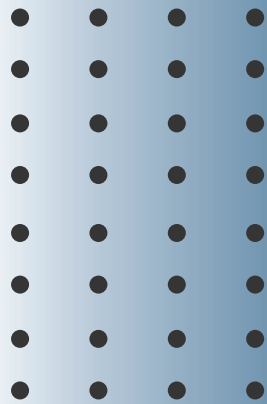


Alongside with the intra-Afghan peace talks and the upcoming consultative Peace Loy-e-Jirga, the Salah Consortium – consisted of Cooperation for Peace and Unity (CPAU), Equality for Peace and Democracy (EPD), Peace Training and Research Organization (PTRO), Sanayee Development Organization (SDO), and The Liaison Office (TLO) – organized a fruitful event entitled “Civil Society and Media National Conference on Peace”. Over 400 key representatives of Civil Society and Media were invited from all 34 provinces to exchange views, experiences and their expectation of the peace process. The conference had speeches of distinguished key speakers as Mr. Mohammad Omar Dawodzai (Secretary of HPC), Mr. Fahim Dashti (political analyst and social activist) and Ms. Palwasha Hassan (Director of

AWEC). The participants were divided into 12 working groups to determine red-lines and provide insights from the media and CSO perspective. The collected inputs were incorporated to finalize a statement emphasizing that the gains achieved during last 18 years are not lost in peace talks. Additionally, the participants advocated to policymakers for the increased and meaningful participation of different categories of citizen including women and victims of conflict in peace process.

After the event, the participants from the Center and provinces moved toward the Afghanistan Presidential Palace to share the statement and advocate for people’s expectation of peace process.

## PWN advocacy Strategy



## National Conference on Peace Negotiations



EPD has established Provincial Women Networks 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. Throughout the project the networks were supported to prepare advocacy strategies to address challenges that threaten women’s peace and security at communities. The issues for each advocacy were selected based on the Barometer research. The finding of the 2019 study enumerated different forms of VAW in almost all of the provinces as a main threat for women.

Most of the networks emphasized on rule of law for prevention and protection of

women and designed their strategies to create Anti-harassment commissions in the governmental entities under the law on elimination of violence against women and children.

The networks in Parwan, Nangarhar, Laghman and Faryab showed interest in increasing number of women in civil service, private sector and national police. Accordingly, they prepared their strategies and gained some achievements in this regard. Fortunately, the advocacy in Laghman resulted in recruiting 9 police women in police and the network in Parwan assisted in recruiting a lady in the Governor Office and introduced two other ladies to skill and capacity building programs.



## National Conference on MWPS

The Monitoring Women Peace and Security (MWPS) project was designed to support execution of Afghanistan NAP 1325 with the aim of enhancing women’s access to their rights and improving their peace and security. Under this project, EPD and Cordaid with the financial support of the Royal Netherland Embassy in Afghanistan partnered to create an enabling environment to foster women’s political participation in peace process.

On 29th June, Cordaid took the lead to organize the “National Conference on MWPS” to mark successful completion of the project. The event had honorable participation of Mr. Ernst Albert Noorman (the Ambassador of Royal Netherlands Embassy, Afghanistan), Mr. Jaap Van Hierden (Country Director at

Cordaid, Afghanistan) and Mr. Sayed Ihsan Tahiri (Representative of HPC) as key speakers and panelists.

Since 2015, EPD endeavored to create 15 Provincial Women Networks and empowered women in communities to take care of their peace and security. Throughout this project, the associations in each province were supported to carry out wide range of awareness raising, capacity building, outreach campaigns and advocacies to address challenges that women face. The MWPS included extensive activities ranging from “In her shoes” workshops to advocacies for establishing Commissions on Elimination of Violence against Women and Children in governmental divisions.

EPD evaluates the performance of PWN in 15 provinces biannually to assess the networks’advocaciesinresponse to the recommendations and identified issues via the Barometer research and behavioral changes towards UNSCR 1325 goals. The sixth round of PWN M&E for the first half year of 2019 was carried out for a sample of the networks spanning PWNs in Bamyan, Kunduz, Parwan, Laghman, Helmand and Paktia.

The data collection started form 1 June and lasted till 27 June to conduct 52 interviews with the key stakeholders involved in the networks’ advocacies. The interviews were recorded; transcribed and later were analyzed to assess the impact. For each network a separate

set of questionnaire was developed to compile inputs from various respondents including Provincial Governors, DoWA, AIHRC, Haj & Religious Affairs Department, Justice Sector, Police Headquarter, Provincial Council, Civil Society Organizations and participants of the awareness raising programs.

The M&E highlighted the networks efforts towards enforcing the laws on EVAW and Elimination of Violence against Women and Children, increasing women recruitment and reaching out to women with mental trauma .It also touched upon the networks’ ability to maintain it sustainability and mobilize fund opportunity for administration and activity expenses.

## PWN M&E



In spite of efforts towards gender equality, women particularly in rural areas have unequal access to economic and financial capitals compared to men. Though women profoundly contribute to labor force but their roles remain at production and process level with limited representation at management and marketing levels hence, they are usually unpaid or significantly underpaid. On the other hand according to the World Bank, factors such as low level of education and limited economic empowerment put women at greater risk of violence.

Aimed to promote women's access to market and support their entrepreneurship, EPD in Bamyan province provides skills

trainings for 220 beneficiaries. They will receive toolkits to start entrepreneurship in thriving market sectors.

During the second quarter of 2019, EPD carried out an assessment of the selected beneficiaries to create a data base of their background and analyze their interest areas and needs. Accordingly, EPD started courses on basic and advanced tailoring and beauty parlor. Meanwhile, EPD is getting prepared to launch another course on Barak weaving. Barak is a type of thick cloth resistant to cold and have a successful market during winter. EPD aims to revive this traditional industry in Bamyan and simultaneously, contribute to economic empowerment of women.

## Access to Justice



## Women economic empowerment in Bamyan



Three decades of war has affected judicial system in Afghanistan significantly. With institutional and structural weaknesses, lack of capacity and extensive corruption, access to justice is not available for citizen in most of the cases. In order to address the gap, EPD in Nangarhar is working with the justice sector to improve access to and quality of justice provision, especially for women in both formal and informal justice system.

EPD's network (consisted of CSO legal aid providers in Nangarhar) monitored case resolution process in courts of Nangarhar to support locals particularly women with volunteer legal services and report where human rights are violated. The network member regularly attended their weekly meetings to share

the list of collected cases and their monitoring findings. It was observed that most of the cases take a lot of time to get resolve due to factors such as lack of awareness, time consuming bureaucracy and corruption. Besides weekly meetings, the network organized coordination meetings with the authorities of informal and formal justice sector in Nangarhar to share problems and seek solutions.

EPD prepared three video clips on article 16, 30 and 31 of the Afghanistan constitution to raise awareness which were broadcasted through Nangarhar National TV frequently. In addition, a live TV round-table discussion was facilitated on 26th May to spread awareness and discuss important issue as access to information law, the process and follow up of cases, legal access of the people to



## Accountable Service Delivery

## Capacity Building Activities

With the financial support of UNDP, EPD created Government & Civil Society Coordination Committees (GCCF) in 10 provinces of Afghanistan during 2018. The committees received capacity building and coaching sessions to conduct oversight of the municipal activities and governmental service delivery.

The committees were supported to continue their activities independently and design interventions for a transparent and accountable service delivery. The members of the GCCF from 10 provinces submitted proposals including a wide range of activities such as awareness raising sessions, live radio discussion and social audits of projects and initiatives to control corruption in governmental entities.

In 2019, the coverage area for this initiative expanded to 7 more provinces of Kabul, Kunduz, Sare-Pul, Paktika, Uruzgan, Helmand and Nimruz. EPD created new GCCFs in these provinces and during the second quarter of 2019, provided them with trainings on the access to information law and provincial planning.

EPD also raised public awareness on vision of a good city and access to information law through workshops for locals and live radio round table discussions in seven provinces. During the radio programs audience called the panelists to ask question and share their views.

In next quarters, EPD will coach the GCCFs to conduct social audits and advocacies.

EPD in Balkh and Paktia has established two provincial CSO oversight committees and created network of 588 Community-based Education Monitors (CEM) to oversee education sector and promote transparent and accountable service delivery. The CEMs received trainings on public awareness campaign and independent school data verification to acquire sufficient oversight skills. The CEMs also cascaded the imparted information to the members of School Management Shuras, Community Development Council and District Development Assembly in their communities.

During this quarter, the CEMs in seven districts in each province collected data on school

textbook distribution in the targeted schools. In total, 81 schools in Balkh and 69 schools in Paktia were visited. The data revealed a wide gap in fulfilling students' need for textbooks; majority of schools had not received books for the current and also for the previous year. Furthermore, there were complaints of lack of store for keeping the book and errors in the content and pages of the books.

EPD facilitates meetings with the provincial and district education departments to communicate the issues with the authorities and advocate for resolving them. It will continue oversight of school activities to identify challenges and coordinate for their alleviation.

