



Elimination of Violence Against Women in Afghanistan

Fact sheet: January 2015

Overview

Afghanistan has been one of the worst countries in the world to be born female. It ranks near the bottom of the UNDP's 2013 Gender Inequality Index (147 out of 148). Violence against women is endemic, girls attend school for less than half the number of years of Afghan boys, and one in every thirty-two women die from pregnancy-related causes (Save the Children World's Mothers Report 2013). However, significant changes have occurred to the lives of Afghan women. The country has experienced an extensive increase in the number of girls attending school and is one of the few countries in the region to achieve a critical mass of women in parliament. Regardless, Afghan women continue to experience poor health, limited economic opportunities, lack of education, an absence in participation in public life and all forms of violence.

Australia is working with the Afghan Government to support activities that protect, promote and empower Afghan women and girls to build on gains already made, including the implementation of Afghanistan's Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW) law and the National Action Plan on Women. Australia began a \$22.7 million four-year EVAW Program in Afghanistan in June 2013 to support national efforts to improve provision of services for survivors of violence and to help prevent violence against women and girls.

Objectives

Australia's Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW) Program builds on Afghan efforts to:

- › improve the provision of shelter services, including legal aid and counselling, for women and girls that have been affected by violence
- › improve access to justice for survivors of violence, through training and support for justice sector stakeholders on the implementation of Afghanistan's EVAW Law
- › prevent violence, through working with organisations to help change community attitudes toward violence and to advocate for the protection of women's rights.



Civil society activists demanding protection against sexual harassment at a rally in Kabul. Photo courtesy UNWomen

Phase one

Phase one included three initiatives which began implementation in June 2013:

- › 1: UNWomen *Afghan Women's Protection Program* (approx. \$6.3M / 3 yrs): Australia funds UNWomen to support four Afghan NGOs to manage up to 10 women's protection centres (shelters) and one family guidance centre across nine provinces. Funding also supports the delivery of protection, legal, health and rehabilitation services in those centres. In addition, support is provided to the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MoWA) to strengthen the functioning of its Shelter Directorate.
- › 2: The Asia Foundation's *Strengthened Access to Justice for Women Affected by Violence through Proven Culturally Sensitive Approaches* program (\$4M / 3 yrs) aims to strengthen access to justice for women in up to 12 provinces through: training of formal and community-based justice sector workers on the EAW Law, women's rights within Islam and actions to prevent violence against women (VAW); building the capacity of community justice mechanisms including Special VAW Units in Attorney General's offices, Family Resolution Centres and police Family Response Units; and awareness raising activities targeting men (traditional and religious leaders), educators and women.
- › 3: UNFPA *Strengthening the capacity of Afghanistan's National Police Force and other legal actors towards combatting VAW* (\$1.6M / 2yrs): supports improved application of the EAW Law. This is achieved through better reporting, registration and investigation of VAW incidents. It also supports the establishment of a comprehensive referral mechanism for victims of violence, through training of police at the national level and police and other key legal actors (judges prosecutors/lawyers) in 10 provinces.

Phase two

Further investment development, sector activity mapping, and a rapid management review of Phase one informed investment decisions for Phase two. The following activities were implemented in the first half of 2014:

- › 1. DFID/DFAT Delegated Cooperation Arrangement. In March 2014, DFAT signed a Delegated Cooperation Arrangement with the UK Department of International Development (DFID) to receive \$5,490,860 to enable the geographic expansion from six to 12 provinces of the *Strengthened Access to Justice for Women Affected by Violence* activity implemented by The Asia Foundation.
- › 2. Afghan Women's Network (AWN) *Steps Towards AWN's Institutional Development and Stability* (approx. \$3.3m / 3yrs). In June 2014, DFAT entered into a partnership arrangement to support AWN and its member organisations to: strengthen their national and international advocacy and leadership efforts on priority women's EAW, peace and security issues; pilot a Young Women's Leadership Program to help build a cohort of new, young women leaders in Afghanistan; and expand and strengthen women's networks across the country to increase the opportunities for Afghan women in both rural and urban areas to influence and contribute to decision-making.