Annual Report 2005

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Acknowledgments

HAWCA’s Board would like to express warmest solidarity with all committed organizations and individual activists across the world who are struggling for human rights and tackling the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan. In particular we would like to thank HAWCA’s funding partners who with their financial assistance have made it possible for HAWCA to progress towards its goals. We are also grateful for the moral support from friends around the world whose interviews, emails, and encouraging letters kept us hopeful for a brightening and better future. We are looking forward to continuing with you all hand in hand to bring an end to all injustices and violence in the world and foster a peaceful and sustainable life for women and children. THANK YOU for your support.

Overview

Now in our sixth year since our establishment, we are very pleased to present the fifth annual report of HAWCA’s activities for the year 2005.

In general, HAWCA’s focus for this year has been women’s protection and education, and by sponsoring some individual families and women, HAWCA has also fulfilled its humanitarian commitment. Lobbying and advocacy for women’s protection has been one of HAWCA’s work priorities throughout the year and we are very pleased to report significant progress for
women’s human rights thanks to our efforts. However, such achievements need continued investment and attention given the violations of human rights and in particular women’s rights in Afghanistan at the present.

This year, Afghanistan experienced another historical milestone with the parliamentary elections held on September the 18th. Because of its apolitical nature, HAWCA did not support any particular group or individual candidate during the elections, but rather the staff of the organization raised awareness on the values of democracy, civic education, and the right of people to use their votes within all HAWCA projects throughout the electoral process. Despite the fact that the majority of people were disappointed by the election process when they noticed perpetrators of violent crime as top candidates in nearly every province, the beneficiaries of HAWCA in general promoted women’s rights and encouraged independent women candidates for the elections.

Continuing past activities such as literacy for women and girls, primary schools for children (girls and boys), the English Language Centre, Computer Centers in Kabul and in Peshawar, and the shelter for women at risk project, in this year, HAWCA started a tentative project on peace education for children. As was the case with other projects, this project was also initiated at the request of the community in a war-stricken part of Kabul city (district 9th, Qala-i-Zaman Khan). The project will help children in their studies and will also encourage civic and social activities by children.

The years of war have affected children more than any other group of people in Afghan society. Therefore, one of HAWCA’s commitments is to provide children with a safe and healthy environment where they can express themselves, talk about their problems, and have a space for exhibiting their talents.

In addition to its commitment to assist and empower women and children, HAWCA also invested heavily in mobilizing and collaborating with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), governmental sectors such as the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Public and Social Affairs, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Interior, the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission and many other institutions working in the fields in which HAWCA focuses. One of HAWCA’s primary principles is to coordinate and cooperate with other partners and concerned organizations to achieve its aims in a more efficient way, and we had some success in 2005 in joint ventures and lobbying for women’s rights. Representatives of HAWCA also attended some regional and local training programs on different subjects related to women and human rights, leading to several opportunities for organizational improvement in 2005.

**Education projects in Afghanistan**

**Literacy**

HAWCA’s 2004 literacy project continued for the year 2005. The project runs continuously with only one month off during whole the year, and in each 18 months successfully enables students to reach and graduate from the third grade. But with the new curriculum HAWCA developed (added health and human rights information), each grade will last one year. This year, HAWCA’s education team focused on organizing gatherings to coordinate the whole literacy program and to obtain feedback from teachers on the curriculum design, resulting in
further improvements and changes on the 2004 curriculum. HAWCA is registered with the Provincial Departments of Women’s Affairs as well as Department of Literacy under the Ministry of Education in order to coordinate its literacy programs with local stakeholders. All five literacy centers have been funded by the Spanish organisation, ASDHA.

Literacy Centers in Kabul

There are two literacy centers in Kabul. The Qala-e-Nazir Literacy centre has 200 trainees and 10 teachers one supervisor, two guards and one cleaner like all our literacy centers. It is located in District Five. The area is basically where households of daily laborers, shopkeepers of Kabul’s old city and government employees live. Men are involved in the above mentioned activities, while women in this area are very often at home and are predominantly involved in small home-based businesses such as embroidery, knitting beads, and carpet weaving which generate a little income for the family. A number of children in the area are working children as well. Male children often work as ‘apprentices’ to shopkeepers, mechanics, etc, while female children are largely involved with carpet weaving.

The second literacy centre in Kabul is located in Qala-e-Alimardan. This project was recently moved from another location. This area is known as one of the newly built areas after the civil war, as it was almost totally demolished during the war being. It is very close the Darulaman Palace, which was bombed by the US in 2001 in its search for Al-Qaida and the Taliban. It is also a poor suburb. The majority of residents of this area are returnees from Iran, families with Tajik and Hazara ethnic backgrounds. A number of students at the centre attended literacy programs in Iran while they lived there. The literacy centre has been widely appreciated by the community and the community leaders of the area encourage girls and women to attend the centre. In terms of employment and the household source of income, men are largely involved with small business such as fruit stalls or are daily laborers or government employees, while women and girls are largely involved with carpet weaving and embroidery, chicken farming and so on.

Literacy Center in Balkh

HAWCA’s literacy center in Balkh has 200 students and the same number of staff as other literacy centers. It is located in Karte Khurasan No. 2. This is an area where most of the houses are mud houses and is a poor neighborhood where mostly IDPs (Internally Displaced People) of the civil war period are living and there are also a number of families who are original residents of Mazar-e-Sharif. The students at this centre are mostly teenagers and older, they are particularly the target in the area, as many of them are interested in continuing their education and this intensive 18 month literacy enables them to access local schools for girls where they can be accepted as 4th grade students. Presently HAWCA is implementing the new curriculum adding hygienic/health and human rights information and needs the curriculum one year for each grade. The project has been running smoothly during the year 2005.

Literacy Center in Nangarhar
In Nangarhar province, HAWCA split HAWCA’s literacy centre into two parts to respond to local needs and requirements: the Literacy Center which is located at the centre of Jalalabad city, and two home-based classes which are located in Behsood district 13 kilometres from Jalalabad city. In total the number of students in both programs is 200. The two home-based classes in Behsood benefit from community contribution as HAWCA does not pay rent for the classrooms.

In the Jalalabad literacy centre, the students are residents of the area, mostly a poor neighborhood of the city. Interestingly, the Hindu minorities in this neighborhood live very close by and thus the HAWCA team in the area has encouraged them to send their daughters to the literacy centre. It has been one of the first initiatives by an NGO in the area to integrate Hindu minorities into the projects which benefit the local community. The literacy centre staff encouraged the rest of the students to exhibit good behavior and attitudes towards the girls from Hindu minorities. Harassment of Hindus in Afghanistan’s recent years has been a grave concern. As result, approximately 30 girls at the literacy centre are Hindus.

In the Behsood district, the main source of household income is agriculture, with mostly men and boys involved with agricultural activities, while women and girls are engaged with domestic work and animal husbandry. In general the community in the area has been relatively supportive, while some girls have had to attend the classes without the permission of their fathers.

**Literacy Center in Farah**

There are 200 student direct beneficiaries of the project. It is located in the center of Farah city. The majority of students are teenage girls and older women. During the year 2005 the project ran smoothly; however, due to its distance and security problems on the roads from one hand and financial barriers on the other hand, the HAWCA board has unfortunately decided to transfer the location of this project to another province in 2006 (for instance to Kapisa). It is worth mentioning that the problems above also caused lack of information from the area and lack of accessibility to monitor and evaluate the project in an official way.

**Primary Education**

Besides literacy, one of HAWCA’s commitments is to reach mostly forgotten and remote areas of the country to help women and children (girls and boys) in accessing education. HAWCA’s two primary school projects in two provinces are the result of particular effort from HAWCA and the great support of our local team members as well as our funding partners in living up to these commitments.

**Dara-i-Titeen Primary school (Nuristan)**

Dara-e-Titeen Primary school is located in western Nuristan, which neighbours Laghman province. There are 240 girls and boys attending the school and there are 6 teachers and one supervisor, two guards and one helper. The school is located in a highly mountainous valley, where the roads are still not paved and it is a 9 hour journey by walking for the local residents to reach the external world. The houses in the valley are all built of stones and wood. As it is
a lush valley with many trees, one of the sources of income for many women and men is collecting wild fruits, nuts and wood which are then carried to external markets and sold. The women of Nuristan are known to be strong wood-pilers. Due to lack of cultivatable land, agriculture in the area is not very popular. The girls and boys who are students at HAWCA’s school are involved in daily activities with their parents, traditionally boys with their fathers and girls with their mothers. Households in this valley do not have access to health facilities or safe drinking water and live in deep poverty. The teachers at this school are part-time workers on their fields or in animal husbandry.

In the summer of 2005, the Governor of Nuristan, Mr. Tameem Nuristani, visited the area and came across HAWCA’s school. He was very impressed by the school’s existence and excellent management, where girls and boys both equally have access to the whole facility. Mr. Nuristani who himself walked to the valley was surprised to see ‘how metal chairs, black boards were transported there across those heavy mountains?!’ The school was built and all its equipment was purchased in Kabul and sent to the area. With great support from the community, the school team managed to carry chairs and tables to the area.

The school is registered with Nuristan’s Primary Education Department.

**Donor:** Peace Association and Municipality of Rome (Italy)

**Now Bolaq Primary School (Samangan)**

The Now Bolaq school was established in the year 2002. In 2005 the new school building was put into service for girls and boys students of Now Bolaq village and five other surrounding villages. The school has progressed to teaching 6th grade. However, one of the challenges for this project is to find good teachers who are qualified enough to teach 5th and 7th grade students. There are 240 students and 6 teachers, one supervisor, two guards and helper with a supervisor and assistant supervisor and a guard for the school.

The school building is located at the entry part of the village which was strategically chosen to make it easier for residents of other villages to access the school. The school has strong support of community and there are further proposals for literacy education facilities for women as well as men in the area.

It is worth mentioning that the 6th grade girls and boys of Now Bolaq School are considered a source of great potential for future interventions related to development (particularly education) in the area. Men are largely involved with agriculture and animal husbandry. Women and children of this community are significantly involved with carpet weaving, embroidery and domestic work.

Now Bolaq School is also registered with the Ministry of Education’s Primary School Department and occasionally is also visited by the provincial education department members. The project will continue for the upcoming year.

**Donor:** Basc local government and our local partner in the Basc Foru Feminista and Generalitat De Catalunya through ASDHA Spain.
**English Language Centre**

HAWCA’s English Language centre which was previously supported by Afghan Women Leaders’ Connect (USA) continued for the year 2005 with 160 students and three trainers. The centre is located in the same building where HAWCA’s central office is located. Trainees for this project are students of two high schools in the neighborhood (District 1 in Kabul). A special class was organized for female teachers from the area who were keen to learn English, thus by their request, the HAWCA education team in collaboration with English teachers organized an intensive course for 12 months where the beneficiaries could learn two basic levels of English, each for six months. The students were all provided with English textbooks and coursework papers. The overall results of the project has been successful and 85 students were graduated from Level 3 of the Intercom English program.

**Donor:** Women for Afghan Women (USA) and individual donations to HAWCA. The project activities stopped in 2006.

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**Information Technology for Youth**

HAWCA’s Computer Center continued its work for the year 2005. It had 154 graduates and due to great interest from the community, the new admission list was completed within a short period of time. The centre is located in the north of Kabul, District 11, where the majority of residents are lower middle class and usually are busy as civil servants, laborers, small businessmen, teachers and university students. The area is a mix of different groups. Trainees learn computer hardware as well as software programs.

Parallel to this program, a special class for staff of an Afghan NGO working with people with hearing disabilities is also going on. The program has been successful in terms of enabling a number of 16 people (10 female and 6 male) with hearing disabilities to learn computer skills.

The staff and trainees of HAWCA’s computer centre organized a cultural activity and marked teachers day, Independence Day and also organized a gathering celebrating the graduation of trainees for the year 2005. HAWCA encourages such activities particularly among the young generation as a healthy and open atmosphere where youth girls and boys can have an opportunity to perform and express their ideas.

The project is funded by Fons Malorquis (not included in list of partners) through ASDHA Spain. The special program for students with disabilities was funded by Caritas Italy.

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**Education projects in Pakistan**

**Mahjoba-e-Harawee Primary School**

This school is the very first project of HAWCA and was initiated with the establishment of HAWCA. This year a total of 260 students, both boys and girls, studied in the school. A total of 18 staff worked to run this school. Besides education, the students also received a monthly...
package of food as well as support from a medical team who visited the school twice in 2004.

It is worth mentioning that all the students in this school are working children; they are garbage collectors, mechanic workers, and shopping bag and water sellers. We also have a significant number of students who are the breadwinners of their families: in the morning they attend school and for the rest of the day they work to earn money for their families. HAWCA also is supporting a number of the students’ families.

A tailoring course is a new activity that has been introduced in the school. A total of 30 students in two shifts are studying in this course. Each shift has 15 students and they study for one hour. The first shift starts at 03:00 pm and finishes at 04:00 pm and then the second shift starts at 04:10 pm and finishes at 05:10 pm. There are five sewing machines and three students use one sewing machine at the time. First the students practice on paper sheets to learn how to cut and then they practice on fabrics. They will study for one year and then new 30 students will be enrolled in the program.

**Donor:** ASDHA, Spain.

### Scholarship program for Afghan children in Pakistani schools

This project has been funded by an Italian NGO (AIDOS) since 2001 and this project’s main objective is to provide better education and educational environments for Afghan students, mainly girls, in Pakistan. A number of boys are also the beneficiaries of this project. The beneficiaries of this project attend the best Pakistani schools in Peshawar. They receive all kinds of materials needed for their schooling. In addition, families of the students receive an amount of money to replace the earnings that their children brought them before joining this program. Indeed, before attending the school, most of the students worked either in their home or outside home. This year HAWCA paid an amount of money to each family of the students who were returning to Afghanistan, so they help their child continue her/his studies in Afghanistan. Some of the students that were studying in higher grades have found jobs in NGOs. This year a total of 10 students were studying in this project, and HAWCA is planning to continue this project until Afghan refugees are allowed to live freely in Pakistan.

**Donor:** AIDOS (Italy).

### Higher Education in Pakistani Universities

AIDOS, an Italian NGO, has supported this project since the year 2001. HAWCA has provided free higher education opportunities for a number of female and male youths during the year 2005. The project provides all the expenses of around 4 girls and 1 boy in Pakistani universities and colleges. The expenses include monthly tuition fees, exam fees, books, stationery, transportation, one-time snacks during lunch and other trivial expenses.

HAWCA is very eager to increase the number of beneficiaries of this program if provided with required funds. HAWCA is planning to extend this project inside Afghanistan too and support the neediest girls and boys, with a particular focus on female higher educational activities.
Donor: AIDOS (Italy).

**HAWCA Computer Course in Peshawar**

This project has been funded by a Spanish NGO, Manos Unidas, since February 2004. The direct beneficiaries are young Afghan girls and boys aged from 15 to 30. The people here are too poor to pay for the education of their children in private courses which charge fees. As is clearly understood, more than two decades of war have torn apart the very bases of Afghan society inside and outside the country, in all aspects. One field which has been hit hard is the livelihoods of the people. Because of this people don’t have any stable source of income to be able to pay for all the expenses of their children, including education. The people here are mostly busy in brick kilns and work as daily labor. Others work as shopkeepers, hawkers and watchman, and a few serve as teachers or nurses in the school and clinic of the area. With the money they earn, they can hardly feed their families.

The duration for this project will be completed in the first three months of 2006, so HAWCA plans to open a new center inside Afghanistan. HAWCA already has a computer course in Kabul so we will plan to open this course in another city of Afghanistan, maybe a remote one.

Donor: Manos Unidas (Madrid-Spain)

**Peace Building**

HAWCA’s peace building project in Qala-e-Zaman Khan, district 9 of Kabul city, is a new initiative which aims to raise awareness among children about their rights; create a safe and healthy environment for children through entertainment such as plays, music etc; and provide them with further help to improve their school lessons. The project started on March 2005 and for the whole year 2005 was running smoothly. There are 200 children (70 girls and 130 boys) aged between 7 and 14 who attend primary schools that are relatively far away from their area. After school they attend peace building classes where they do different activities. The staff of these projects are trained on providing peace education, lessons on conflict resolution, and work on the Universal Deceleration of Children’s Rights. By using local material and entertaining programs, they managed to change the project into a popular centre for children in the area, who are all very enthusiastic to attend their classes.

The local community is very supportive towards this project as it was their request that HAWCA continue this initiative for children to have a safe environment to study, play and, learn many important issues related to their future.

Due to limitation on funding as well as space, the number of beneficiaries is limited to 200 only while the demand in the community is higher. By the beginning of 2006, HAWCA staff together with the local staff of Caritas Italy will evaluate the project and based on overall results, the project will continue. There is also a plan to extend this initiative to other parts of the city.

Donor: Caritas Italy since March 2005
**Protection and Counseling**

HAWCA’s Safe House for Women at Risk project was established in January 2004. It is an extremely sensitive and important project which aims to provide housing, counseling support, education and capacity building facilities to women (and their children) as well as girls who are at risk of any kind of violence. The project is going on in close collaboration with the MoWA (Ministry of Women’s Affairs), Afghanistan’s Independent Human Rights Commission, and the protection department of UNHCR Kabul. This project is a joint effort to assist women and girls at risk to find a safe and just solution to their problems. Any detail related to this project will only be available upon request to the project’s partners, due to safety and security of staff and beneficiaries of the project.

The Committee for Collaboration and Cooperation is a group initiated by organizations involved on women’s protection issues: the Ministry for Women’s Affairs’ legal department, UNHCR and UNIFEM. The members of this group have had several meetings during the year and HAWCA has had a significant role in drafting a policy paper on dealing with women at risk issues.

A HAWCA representative has also had several meetings with the United Nations Human Rights Commission’s Special Reporter on Violence Against Women and expressed deep concerns regarding the issues of women and girls at risk of violence and problems of communications with the government’s different departments. The outcome of the meetings has been a recommendation letter on human rights issues where Afghanistan’s shelter problems are also mentioned. (This paper is available from the website of the UN’s Human Rights Commission).

The HAWCA representative also attended three days of Shelters Coordination Meetings in Mazar and Herat where representatives of provincial organizations and NGOs working on Safe houses in Kabul gathered to share experiences and knowledge and seek collaboration and coordination with each other.

**Donor:** United Nation’s High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR – Afghanistan) and Right and Democracy (Canada)

**Sponsorship**

During the year 2005 HAWCA with the help of individuals and supporters managed to sponsor several girls and boys.

**Nadia**

Nadia is a young girl who has a heartbreaking story. Nadia lost her only breadwinner brother during the war and she was injured during the war. Nadia had to change her identity into a boy during the Taliban domination (and even still) in order to support her family. She has gone through a very difficult life. She is a symbol of Afghan girl’s resistance, courage, and talent. You can access to what she has gone through at the following website (http://nadiafund.blogspot.com ). HAWCA’s partner in Spain (ASDHA) has sponsored Nadia
for the last two years. The sponsoring funds have enabled her to access education and manage living expenses for herself and her family since November 2004. As result, in 2005, Nadia was promoted one year further and by the beginning of 2006, Nadia is successfully graduated from 12th Grade. She is waiting to attend exams for Kabul University where she wishes to study law.

**Qadeer**

Qadeer is a young boy who was taken by HAWCA to Spain for treatment of a medical treatment. He is being sponsored for regular medical check ups and education expenses. PAOUC from Spain is his sponsor.

**Nazaneen**

During 2005, thanks to our Italian group of supporters Women in Black, Nazaneen was accompanied by her father in travelling to Milan, Italy, for medical treatment. After certain tests and examinations, Nazaneen and her father returned back to Kabul. She is still under treatment and may travel again for possible minor surgery. Nazaneen is suffering from a skin disease which has affected her hands and she lost many fingers due to it.

**Lobbying for Women’s Human Rights**

**Women’s Protest**

On 5th May 2005, HAWCA together with other women organizations and women activists organized a protest sit-in in front of the women’s garden (Bagh-e-Zanana) in Kabul. More than 300 women gathered to protest against the honor killings of one woman in Badakhshan and three female aid workers in Baghlan. The protest has had significant coverage in national and international media and as a result the government has taken action to follow the issue and arrested some perpetrators. (See Annex for details)

**VAW meetings**

HAWCA has actively participated in Violence against Women meetings organized by UNIFEM and the Ministry of Women’s Affairs. These meetings are a place where different stakeholders from government departments and national and international NGOs as well as donor organizations gather to share information, ideas and concerns related to women’s rights issues. As HAWCA has a strong commitment and experience in the field of women’s human rights, HAWCA’s representative has always actively participated in these meeting and raised concerns related to domestic violence, reforms in judicial systems, and problems of women at risk in other provinces.

**HAWCA Training**

*Workshop on Women’s Economic Skills Promotion in South Asia (New Delhi-India)*
This workshop was organized by Dr. Huma Ahmed Gosh who is the head of Women Studies’ at Santiago University (USA) and the local Indian organization Guild of Services. Ms. Orzala Ashraf, the founder and Director of HAWCA, Mrs. Hamada Karimi and Ms. Susan Faquiri formed the delegation from HAWCA that attended the workshop. There were also representatives from two other NGO’s: Relief International (RI) and Afghan Women’s Council (AWC). HAWCA’s delegation had an active presence in the discussions and sharing of experiences with counterparts from India and Pakistan. Orzala Ashraf also contributed in facilitation and translation of the whole program to Afghan participants.

Participation in a Pedagogic training in Spain

A delegation from HAWCA participated in a training session for different institutions arranged by ASDHA from 20 November to 4 December. The trip was arranged to provide a training of literacy trainers on teaching methods and systems of education and human rights. The HAWCA delegation included two staff from HAWCA’s literacy program in Kabul and Nangarhar and one representative from the main office of HAWCA.

Annex

Afghans Decry Violence Against Women

Los Angeles Times, 05/06/2005, By Halima Kazem

After recent slayings, female protesters in Kabul call on Karzai’s government to protect their safety and their constitutional rights.

KABUL — More than 300 women took to the streets of Kabul on Thursday to protest growing violence against them and demand that the Karzai government take action against those responsible for the recent deaths of five women.

"Why is the government so quiet about the death of our sisters in the last two weeks? Women are dying on the streets of Afghanistan these days and no one is saying a word," said Jamila Afghani, an activist who organized the demonstration.

On Monday, the bodies of three women were found in Baghlan province, about 75 miles north of Kabul.

Provincial officials said the women had been raped, strangled and dumped on a road, with letters condemning them for working for international nongovernmental organizations.

On April 28, Afghan military forces fatally shot a woman during a brawl that erupted at a parade in the western city of Herat.

And a woman in the northern province of Badakhshan was publicly slain by her family and local mullahs April 20 after being accused of adultery.

"Kabul is somewhat different. We have some freedoms, but in the provinces, Afghan women live as they did under the Taliban. They are prisoners of this repressive culture," said one demonstrator as she stood behind a large white banner denouncing government inaction.
Women from more than 26 organizations, including human rights groups and political parties, participated in the protest. Afraid of being singled out, many of them huddled in tight groups, tugging on their scarves and shirttails.

"We want the government to implement the laws and rights given to us. So far everything has been on paper. I haven't heard President Karzai or any other government official truly stand up for us," said Farah, a demonstrator clad in a burka who did not want to give her full name.

Hours after the protest, President Hamid Karzai's office said it had not heard about the event. However, in recent days the government has launched investigations into the deaths of the three women in Baghlan and the 22-year-old woman named Amina who was killed in Badakhshan.

Amina was beaten to death by her family after a local council led by the village mullah accused her of adultery.

"Twelve people are in police custody, including Mullah Yusouf, who is actually an armed local commander in the area. He is the one who issued the fatwa to kill Amina," said Ahmad Nader Nadery, a spokesman for the Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission.

The commission said a local commander and three area religious leaders declared Amina guilty without a proper trial and sentenced her to death.

Although the constitution of Afghanistan, signed in late 2003, gives women equal rights, including the right to vote and to a fair trial, most of the country operates on customary laws based on traditions and interpretations of Islam.

Warlords still control large swaths of the country, and the family court system is practically nonexistent. The problem is compounded by a tradition of families taking matters into their own hands out of fear of public embarrassment.

"There needs to be a proper system to record marriages and divorces in Afghanistan, where women have proof of such events. Then they can protect themselves," said Orzala Ashraf, director of a nongovernmental group called Humanitarian Assistance for Women and Children of Afghanistan.