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HAWCA has reached its 14th year of service to the community in a country where women and children are treated as insignificant members of the society. It is a bitter truth that the situation for this section of the society is getting worst every day, but HAWCA will never give up its hope to make this country a better place for women and children to live. HAWCA is working hard and will continue its strive to empower women in different provinces of Afghanistan. On the other hand we are trying our best to create a peaceful environment for our project beneficiaries. On behalf of HAWCA, I thank all our donors who have generously helped us to achieve our goals and make this country a better place for women and children to live. But still we have a long way to go, and the cases of violence against women and children in 2013 are a solid fact for that.

Najia Kareemi
Executive director
HAWCA
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About HAWCA

A group of youths were active since 1992 doing volunteer work in Afghan refugee camps in Pakistan but after seven years of sporadic works they decided to get organized which resulted in foundation of a humanitarian organization. Humanitarian Assistance for the Women and Children of Afghanistan (HAWCA) was established in January 1999 by a group of youth Afghan women and men. HAWCA’s establishment was motivated by the despair and devastation suffered by Afghan women and children as victims of war and injustice in Afghanistan and as refugees in Pakistan. Living under the same conditions and experiencing the same misery as millions of Afghans in Afghanistan and in Pakistan during the civil war, the leading members of HAWCA committed to achieving their aims and objectives as volunteers, and devoted their efforts to improving the lives of Afghans under difficult circumstances, from the era of Taliban domination to today’s insecure Afghanistan.

HAWCA encourages the active participation of Afghan women and youth in the reconstruction and development processes of their country, and works in partnership with institutions and organizations that focus on just development in Afghanistan.
HAWCA received following awards since its establishment in 1999:

Isabel Ferror’s Award: On 8th of March 2000 which was given for those who work on women’s education.

Amnesty International Award: Amnesty International title for working on human rights for children and women from Italian Section.

Medalla de Oro del Ayuntamiento de Arganda del Rey: On 6th December 2001 HAWCA received the “Medalla de Oro del Ayuntamiento de Arganda del Rey” award in Arganda, Spain for its humanitarian activities.

Amotinada Mayor: “Amotinada Mayor” from Madrid of Spain, an award dedicated for the women of Afghanistan and received it as real representative of them in Humanitarian Field, on 9th of September 2002.

Sabino Arana Foundation’s Golden Shield: On 27th January-2002, Spain. The Award was given especially to HAWCA and The New York Fire Department.

Award of l’hospitalet, the city of Cooperation: On 27th January 2002, HAWCA received the “Award of l’Hospitalet”, from the city hall of l’hospitalet in Barcelona, Spain.

Primo Donne Award: On 12th March 2002, HAWCA has been honored to receive an award from Italy called “Primo Donne” from an institution called ANRP.

Emma Humphreys Memorial Prize (EHMP): HAWCA received the first ever international award of Emma Humphreys Memorial Prize (EHMP) from UK on November 27, 2009.
Mission
HAWCA is an Afghan national NGO dedicated to working for the social well-being of all people with a particular focus on women and children.

Vision
HAWCA envisions a safe and just society where all Afghans (men, women, children, elders) regardless of their race, ethnicity, tribe, language, and religion receive equal benefit from development processes and work together for a safer and better world.

Goals
HAWCA aims to encourage the active participation of women in the reconstruction and development of Afghanistan.

Mandate
HAWCA is and intends to be, mainly but not exclusively, engaged in promoting the participation of Afghan women in the development process and improve the well-being of women and children in Afghanistan. Consequently HAWCA’s mandates include:

1. Protection and Counseling
2. Education and Peace Building
3. Promoting Income-Generating and Micro-Credit Activities
4. Health and Child Care
5. Advocacy for Women and Children’s Rights at National and International Level
6. Emergency Response Operations
7. Sponsorship Program

Membership
HAWCA is member of the following networks:
• Afghan Women’s Network (AWN) – Member and Executive Board Member
• Civil Society and Human Rights Network (CSHRN) – Member and Executive Board Member
• South Asia Alliance for Grassroots NGOs (SAAGN Network) – Member
The decades of war has left many women and children without any male member to look after them in all matters of life. On the other hand the different regimes that ruled over Afghanistan have always treated the women as the inferior members of the community. They have been considering the women as a dishonor to the family and think that women should be controlled and depressed at all time. By doing so they have taken all the rights and privileges granted to them by Islam as well as the local and international laws.

We started our Safe House for women in Kabul but we soon realized that most of the women living in far and distant areas of the country could not reach us in Kabul so we established another Safe house in Herat. After the completion of Herat Project we open another Safe house in Kunar where all the women from the surrounding area come for protection and solving their violent cases.

The women protection centers that HAWCA has established in Kabul and Kunar is a means of salvation for those poor and unfortunate women and girls who want to start a new life. Many of these women and girls are being raped, kidnapped, tortured and married against their will.
or at young age. They came to us seeking protection and help to save them from the cruel world outside. They are introduced to us by Ministry of Women Affairs, Family Court, NGOs and other welfare entities.

In our Women Protection Center we provide the women a place to live, food, weaving and handicraft courses, Literacy courses, English and computer courses for the educated girls, 24 hours health care and 2 lawyers to take their cases and solve them in according to law. They stay with us until their cases are fully solved and they are reintegrated with their families. Women from all parts of the country come here to seek shelter. Sometimes we have women from Pakistan and Iran who are being kidnapped or married and left alone latter; who comes to us for shelter until their case are solved. In the year 2013 we have been able to solve 134 cases. The safe house provided shelter for 134 women and 41 children.
More than 90 percent of the Afghan people are facing financial problems and for them it is hard to maintain the family needs and they have no time and money to go to court and ask for justice.

The number of violence and gender base discrimination cases is increasing day by day. The violent behavior of the male members of the family towards the female members has left many women in terrible and in human conditions. Many girls and women are being treated like animals by their husbands and in laws but they cannot raise their voices because they have been suppressed throughout the history and most of them belong to poor families.

HAWCA has established legal aid centers in Jalalabad and Mazar to reach out those girls and women who are courageous enough to step forward and come to use to seek help. In the past many women who could not take any more beating and mistreating have committed suicide, some have burned themselves and other have jumped in the water wells etc. for them the only way to escape from their miseries was death. It was then that HAWCA realized that it is imperative to create such a center where women could come so that our defense lawyers could respond to their violent cases and help the victims to have a better life. We have 2 female defense lawyers in each legal aid center to proceed with the cases. The cases are registered and followed in the court as soon as it’s registered with the center.

In our legal aid centers we also have a psychologist who is ready to provide psychological counseling to those women who have faced a harsh time in life and who cares little about their life. The psychologist has the duty to make them ready to attend the court and give them awareness about their rights that are provided by law and Islam.

On the other hand we are also training law students in our centers. The main objective of these trainings is to create a team of women right defenders so that when the project duration is finished we could still have someone who takes the cases concerning violence against women. The students who are trained have the responsibility to share their experiences and awareness concerning EVAW law with their classmates, friends and junior students. In this way many students got awareness about EVAW law.
The participation of women in the governmental organizations is very limited. The reason behind this is very clear. Throughout history women has been consider inferior to man and have never been provided with a major responsibility.

Though the new government and the new Constitution grants a privilege to women to take active part in the government but in reality half of it is not been executed.

On the other hand most of the women have left to be uneducated and illiterate especially during the civil war and the Taliban Regime. The number of violence cases are increasing day by day, women are sold, kidnaped, raped, beaten, married against their will etc. and the government is doing little about it.

Considering the current situation of women in Afghanistan HAWCA started a new project called Women and Government working in Unison to eliminate violence against women because the government on its own cannot control the violence cases. Many warlords and local Landlords use and paraphrase the Islamic law in their favor.

HAWCA started this project with the funding of EC via Womankind Worldwide in four districts (Behsood, Khewa, Surkhrood and Jalalabad city) of Ningarhar. The main aim of this project is to empower the local women to know about their rights and to defend them in according to law and take active part in decision makings and creating of policies.

The main activates concerning this project is:

1- To train 8o Women Human Rights Defenders (WHRDS) in advocating etc. these women are able to use the local law and the Islamic law to solve the local violence cases. In most of the villages the cases are not referred to the government because the people believe that it will bring dishonor to their family name but our WHRDs who are living in these localities can visit the families in person and have a meeting with them and inform them about their mistakes and the laws that will punish them. In the past year (2013) our WHRDs have been able to solve more than 150 small and big cases in the 4 targeted districts. If they were unable to solve the case by themselves then they have referred the cases to our Legal Aid Center where our lawyers have proceeded with the cases. On the other hand their active participation in the decision makings in the locality and usage of EVAW law and continuous visits to the local police station and sub governor’s office has influenced the local authorities greatly, now they are also using the EVAW law to some extend in solving the violence cases and are more responsive to such cases.
2- Training and mobilizing school girls: the main objectivity of this activity is to make the school girls aware of their rights. Most of them believe that whatever their parents decide for them is good and they have to live with it even if it’s against their will and consent but now they know that they have rights. They know that respecting and honoring their parents are important but so is their life and future. They have learned to logic with their families about their education and marriage and now most of them have been able to convince their parents to let them study and to choose a husband.

3- Providing awareness concerning women rights, child marriage, force marriage and EVAW law is another main activity of the project. Most of the people do not know about these laws. To reduce violence cases and reduce the usage of bad customs HAWCA believes that everyone should first know about the right laws and then they can put a stop to their bad customs. In the year 2013 more than 2000 people got direct awareness about the above mentioned laws and it dramatically affected their behaviors with the female members of the family.
The Afghan children have faced much violence and fighting’s in their life time which has resulted in creating a generation who believes only in fighting and war. It is felt necessary to find a way to change their mentality otherwise Afghanistan will suffer from war for many years to come.

The new term “Peace Building” has been introduced in the teaching syllabus of the schools but due to the lack of knowledge about this subject it is not thought in any school. HAWCA on the other hand took this issue seriously and with the help of many donors like KNH and ICCO this project was started. The first time it was started in Kabul and then to Herat, Parwan and again in Kabul. The project is fully in progress in Kabul in Ahmad Shah Baba Mina. 340 children take benefit from this project. Most of these students are beggars or sell chewing gums and biscuits on the street or gather and scavenge the garbage for plastic and metallic materials. In our peace building center besides teaching regular school subjects we also teach peace Building, computer and English. We have provided a peaceful and entertaining environment for the children to study and pass their day. The Library, Home Theater and playing ground with many toys has granted the children to study and play in a peaceful environment.
Gender based violence is at its peak in Afghanistan. Many educated women and girls are not allowed to go to work. This problem is mostly seen in rural and distant provinces and districts. Usually the women who have got married are prohibited by their husbands to work in any Governmental or Non-governmental organization because they believe it will bring dishonor to their family. On other hand the people who are controlling most of the high position seats prefer to have male instead of female working in their offices to do their dirty work for them. Taking bribe and having a harsh behavior with those who do not give bribe can only be done by a man and not a woman.

The program of eliminating Gender base discrimination was started by HAWCA with the help of UNFPA in 2012 and the aim of the project was to teach and train the local people and authorities to put a stop to all forms of Gender base discrimination and utilize the Human resources properly. The trainings were given to police officers, ministry of women affair personnel, prosecutors, and bodies of ministry of public health.

In 2013 we had 14 training programs for police in Bamyan, Jalalabad and Kabul. The training were only for police officers and prosecutors introduced to us by Ministry of Interior. 7 training sessions were conducted for MoWA personnel in Kabul and a one day workshop on GBV was conducted by DoWA. In total we trained a number of 652 people out of which 252 of them were male and 400 of them were females.
Promoting Political Participation and rights protection for marginalize IDPs (Kabul)
Project Locations: Kabul,
Duration of project: January 2013 – April 2014
Donor of the project: DRC
Project status: Completed in April 2014

Many families were displaced during the war and they have returned home to find out that their homes are being completely destroyed or taken by warlords. They have no choice but to live in the refugee camps located in different parts of Kabul city. Most of these people are illiterate and knows nothing about their rights. With the help of Danish Refuge Council (DRC) HAWCA has been able to create 12 classes in 3 refugee camps located in Char RahiQamber, Nisaji Bagrami and Shahhrak police. In Each camp there are 2 classes for man and two for women and in each class 25 to 30 students come to study. HAWCA has been giving them awareness about Human rights, child rights, women rights and laws concerning the people who are being displaced.

In total; HAWCA have been able to provide awareness to more than 300 men and women. This has greatly helped in their understanding of the laws concerning women and children and now the family members are having a better relationship with each other.
Livelihood and Protection activities
Project Locations: Kabul
Duration of project: 2012-2014
Donor of the project: DRC
Project status: Ongoing

Afghanistan has the most complex form of Refugee camps and the reason behind it is the 3 decades of war. Now that people are returning home from different countries they have no place to live and no means of Income. UNHCR has been trying hard to maintain these refugee camps in the past. Following the steps of UNHCR; HAWCA has Joint partnership with Ashiana and Tabish and with the help and funding of DRC is trying hard to make these refugee camps a better place to live in. While the other partners are busy in providing psychological counseling, school for children and food and supplies for families; HAWCA has taken the responsibility to increase the legal awareness among the tribal leaders and elders of the villages. The project is active in 3 Refugee camps located in Kochi Abad Camp, Shaharak Police and Nisajibagrami. We have 12 classes in 3 camps and in each class we have 4 people to come and get legal awareness but usually 8 to ten people come and join us for they are keen to know about the different laws that are prevailing in the country.

In this project we have a lawyer whose duty is to visit the camps and gather legal issues. The cases are studied and registered and followed in the court. All the cases that we are taking are concerned with violence. The main reason behind this is that we want to eliminate all kinds of violence against women and children in the community and most of the violence cases happen in the poor sectors of the society.

This project also covers a part where 10 girls from the law university are taught on different national and international laws especially concerning child rights, women rights and laws concerning gender base discrimination and eliminating violence against women.
Most Afghan girls do not have the option of choice. The moment they get mature they are married to someone regardless of their consent and will. After the marriage these women have no choice but to stay at home and become a housewife.

HAWCA with the Funding and support of US Embassy provided a chance for those women and girls who want to work in government and private sectors after graduating. The project is called Window for Change. In this project we established a center where we were able to teach human rights, child rights, women rights, civil rights, international conventions with leadership and advocacy courses. The girls were introduced to us by the local schools from grade 10 to grade 11. Beside the above mentioned courses they were also trained on how to use computer and computer software and English language so that when they graduate they have enough knowledge of computer and English to be able to work in an office. Each class was for 2 months and in each class there were 60 students. In one year time we were able to graduate 360 students from our center. The students were told to share this information with their friends and family. At the end of the year a number of 1800 women and girls got benefit from this information through peer to peer education.
HAWCA believes in equality of man and women in all fields of life. In Afghanistan men has been the policy makers of the country for years, they have neglected that reality that women represent half of the population and their participation in making rules and policies are vital for a country that wants to eliminate gender base discrimination and violence against women.

The project of promoting Women’s leadership and Gender Justice in Afghanistan is a means to reach the goal of empowering women to take part in afghan leadership and justice system. The project was started in Mazar and many trainings and workshops were held for different groups. Some of them are mentioned here under.

A total number of 24 trainings were held for 600 members of Changed agent (300 men and 300 women).

102 awareness sessions were conducted for 51 group of 25 participants each which covered 1275 people. We also conducted 2 important trainings for 100 people from Women Council and members of Government.

Regular training sessions were conducted for the local people in 3 districts (Sholgara, Nahr-shahi and Dehdadi) which provided awareness to 266 men and women.

3 trainings courses were conducted for 3 groups of mullahs and the elders of the locality about responsibilities of people in Islamic society. The program covered 84 Mullahs 3 training workshops were conducted for 78 participants who were members of civil society, and leaders of their districts.

The above mentioned trainings and workshops covered information about women and leadership and also different laws concerning Gender base discrimination and EVAW. The main goal of these trainings was to make aware the women about their rights and make the men respect these rights.
1- Precious Life “Sponsorship”: from the beginning of establishment of HAWCA, we have been carrying out this project. It started in Peshawar, Pakistan and as HAWCA moved to Afghanistan it continued its project here. Through this project we find a family or individual from other countries who are willing to sponsor a child or family in Afghanistan so that they could go to school instead of begging or scavenging the streets. In 2013, with support of Italian Journalists and newspaper, I Unita, HAWCA started a joint project called Precious life. The newspaper is publishing the stories in the news and its readers are sponsoring a specific case. In this year 27 women, children and families were supported via this project.

2- Precious Life: the Tuscany region has been funding OPAWC in establishment of literacy and other courses for women. As HAWCA is involved in legal programs, a part of the project which concerned legal practices and awareness was given to HAWCA to proceed with it. HAWCA was able to solve many cases and train many women, men, teachers and students regarding EVAW law, child rights, Child marriage etc.

3- Scholarship: HAWCA has been supporting the UniversitaCattolica del SacroCuore (UCSC) in providing scholarship for 50 girls in TangiGhori area of Kabul which lasts for one year. Through this project the girls can go to school and continue with their education...