Let us work together to build a generation that believes in peace and justice!

بيایید با هم نسلی از کودکان باورمند به صلح و عدالت را پرورش دهیم!

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Humanitarian Assistance for the Women and Children of Afghanistan (HAWCA)

Annual Report 2014

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Executive Director’s Message

HAWCA has reached its 15th year of service to the community, particularly to women and children of Afghanistan. Despite the hard work of civil societies for the betterment of the lives of women and children in Afghanistan, the number of cases of domestic violence and self-immolation of women and girls are increasing day by day. The reasons for this increase are lack of education and awareness, defective judicial and government administration system, and impunity offered to the defendants. HAWCA has taken an oath to continue its activities to empower women and children and to defend their rights till our society accepts men and women as equal.

The next year – 2015 – and the following years are full of challenges. With the departure of coalition forces from Afghanistan, their civil aids will diminish and most of the projects will then be directed to other countries. HAWCA hopes that the donors and the new government will help us sustain our crucial projects that aim to empower women and create a peaceful generation, so we can continue to be a part of the campaign to put a stop to all forms of violence.

On behalf of HAWCA, I would like to thank all our donors who have generously helped us achieve our goals and make this country a better place for women and children to live in. Let us work together and build our heaven on earth.

Najia Karimi
Executive director
HAWCA
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About HAWCA

After the Taliban came to power in Afghanistan the life of our people got worse. There were no jobs, security, and many people migrated to Iran and Pakistan in hopes of finding work and an income to feed their families, but even in the neighboring countries they were not able to build a good life. They lived in inhuman conditions in refugee camps without food and shelter. The women and children used to beg on the streets to earn some money and not die of hunger.

Women and children were the first victims who suffered the most in those harsh conditions. It was then that a group of young men and women decided to work voluntarily to bring some changes to the lives of the people. The primary focus was put on providing free education to the children as they were the future of the country. Education was considered vital for the brighter future of Afghanistan and so primary schools were established in different parts of Peshawar. Afghan children then had easy access to schools. Food materials and stationary were also given to children on monthly bases to help them financially.

Working with women and children in Pakistan was not enough for HAWCA, so we started literacy courses all over Afghanistan. These were strictly secret, and though it was difficult and dangerous, it was essential for a better Afghanistan.

After Hamid Karzai took power, HAWCA moved its main office to Kabul and started its work here. Now that we were living in a legal environment it was time to start working in the legal fields. Afghanistan has one of the worst rates of violation of women rights in the world. To protect and defend the rights of women, HAWCA started legal aid centers for victims of violence, and also a safe house for those at risk.

Due to the hard work of the HAWCA personnel HAWCA was able to win more than fifty awards from all over the world. Some of them are mentioned below:

Isabel Ferror’s Award: awarded on March 8, 2000 for HAWCA’s work in the field of education for women;
Amnesty International Award: Amnesty International title for working on rights of children and women from Italian Section;

Medalla de Oro del Ayuntamiento de Arganda del Rey: awarded on December 6, 2001 in Arganda, Spain for its humanitarian activities;

Amotinada Mayor: awarded in Madrid, Spain on September 9, 2002. Dedicated to the women of Afghanistan and HAWCA received it for representing women in the Humanitarian Field;

Sabino Arana Foundation’s Golden Shield: awarded on January 27, 2002 in Spain to HAWCA and The New York Fire Department especially;

Award of l'hospitalet, the city of Cooperation: awarded on January 27, 2002, from the city hall of l'hospitalet in Barcelona, Spain;

Primo Donne Award: awarded on March 12, 2002, by an institution called ANRP in Italy.

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 country where men and women are treated equally in all fields of life and given equal opportunities in political and non-political activities; and where children benefit from educational services without any prejudice as to their race, ethnic background, religion or tribe.

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 improving the well-being of women and children. 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 Protection Project

Safe House for Women

Project Location: Kabul

Duration of the project: Jan 2014- Dec 2015

Donor of the Project: UN Women

Project status: Ongoing

Though many laws have been enacted in Afghanistan to prevent violence against women, but many women are still victims of violence and this trend seems to be rising. There are many reasons behind this increase, among which poor economic conditions and illiteracy are considered the main causes. HAWCA and many other civil society groups are trying to decrease the number of such cases by educating the people on the rights and laws for women and children. HAWCA also provides shelter for women and children who had suffered from violence at one point, and were then at risk of facing the same violence if they had continued living in their homes. In 2014, HAWCA provided shelter to 161 women and 45 children. Out of these cases, 142 were resolved through mediation or court proceedings and the women were reintegrated with their families. In the safe house the women are provided with all the basic necessities of life including literacy, vocational, English and computer courses.
Precious Lives

Project Locations: Kabul and Herat

Duration of project: 2014-2017

Donor of the project: COSPE

Project status: Ongoing.

The project ‘Precious lives’ was started by HAWCA in late 2014. This project is active in Kabul and Herat and covers many aspects of providing protection to women. One of the most important activities of this project is to establish Legal aid centers for women who are victims of violence. By providing legal services for women, HAWCA’s defense lawyer has to make sure that if the husband or any other figure of the family is found guilty, he should be punished for the crime that he has committed. HAWCA provided legal aid service to 59 female victims of violence from August to December 2014.
The project also provides psychosocial counseling to the victims. There are many women who were beaten and abused throughout their lives and have lost all their self-confidence and morale. It is the job of the psychologist to boost her inner strength and ready her to face the accused in the court of law. In 2014 HAWCA’s psychologists provided psychosocial counseling to 36 victims of violence.

Creating Community development committees and working with them and with the ones that are already created is another important activity of this project. The committees are trained on rights and access to education, right and access to health, right and access to Religion and Sharia etc. these committees has the duty to prevent any act of violence against women and in case a violence takes place it’s their duty to solve it if possible otherwise report it to HAWCA or the local authorities. The idea of this activity is to make a sustainable mechanism that could protect women from being abused by male members of the family.

Legal Aid centers for Women Victims of Violence

Project Locations: Mazar

Duration of project: 2014-2015

Donor of the project: CISDA

Project status: Ongoing

There are many women that have no access to legal aid. Though the government provides free legal services but it is very limited and many civil societies have established legal aid centers where they provide legal services to the community. HAWCA being one of the most active human rights defender, and particularly women’s rights defenders has been working in the legal field for many years. We have provided legal aid centers in many provinces in the past. The legal aid center in Mazar is one of our centers that help women who are victims of violence. Currently HAWCA has three legal aid centers in Afghanistan. In 2014, the Mazar
legal aid center dealt with 129 Cases out of which 41 were resolved through mediation and 88 were resolved through court proceedings.

In our legal aid center in Mazar we also provide psychosocial counseling for women to help them regain their inner strength and face the accused in courts.

We also provided literacy courses to a hundred women in Dehdadi and Nahrshahi districts of Mazar.

Women and Government working in unison to eliminate violence against women

Project Locations: Jalalabad

Duration of project: 2012-2015

Donor of the project: EC via Womankind Worldwide

Project status: Ongoing

In third world countries including Afghanistan, women have very little involvement in policy-making and decision-making. The laws that were made to prevent violence against women were made without a thorough research on the situation of women in Afghanistan and the customs that prevail
in different areas. That is why even though the EVAW law was enacted in 2009, it is still not fully in force in all parts of Afghanistan.

Through this project we try to influence the local authorities to start using this law in full. For this purpose we have created groups of women who are human rights defenders in four districts of Nangarhar. Each group consists of twenty educated and active women who have the duty to monitor cases of violence in an area. Special workshops are held for them on quarterly bases to enhance their awareness on the rights of women and children. Other sessions are also held regularly to update their information. These groups have been very effective and have been able to resolve a lot of cases in their areas. As they do not have the license to follow the cases in courts, they refer them to the local authorities and civil society bodies to follow them in the court of law. The first thing they do is register the case with the local police so they can arrest the accused.

Providing training and awareness sessions for schoolgirls and local community is another part of this project. The goal is to enhance the awareness of girls and women in these areas so that they learn about their rights and how to defend them.

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Peace Building for the New Generation

Project Locations: Kabul
Duration of project: 2012-2016
Donor of the project: Kinder Not Hilfe (KNH)
Project status: Ongoing

The year 2014 was another successful year for the project Peace Building. 321 students were enrolled in our peace building center out of which 20 graduated with flying colors.

The peace building center is mainly designed to provide an educative environment for students who have to work outside due to poor financial conditions. This year, 82 boys and 15 girls were working outside (the number is not fixed as many other boys were working but they were ashamed of telling).
The peace building center provides a safe and peaceful environment for the children to come and study in. In addition to the subjects that are taught in schools, the center also provides English and computer classes for the students. The center also has a well-resourced library where the students can read the books they like. The students who have no time to do their homework at home can do it in the library. The center also has a well-equipped theater room where the students can watch cartoons and educative documentaries.
Legal Aid Centers for Women Victims of Violence

Project Locations: Jalalabad
Duration of project: 2013-2014
Donor of the project: ICCO
Project status: completed

More than 90 percent of the Afghan people face financial problems and have difficulty in maintaining the basic needs of their families. Therefore, they do not have money to go to courts and ask for justice.

The number of cases of violence and gender-based discrimination are increasing day by day. The violent behavior of the male members of families towards the female members has left many women in inhuman conditions. Many girls and women are being treated like animals by their husbands but they cannot raise their voices because they have been suppressed throughout history, and also due to poor financial conditions they live in.

HAWCA has established Legal aid centers in Jalalabad to reach out to girls and women who are courageous enough to step forward and come seek help. In the past, women who could not take any more beatings and mistreatments would commit suicide. Some have burned themselves alive and others have jumped into water wells. For them, the only escape from their miseries was death. In such a situation it was imperative to create centers where women could come for help. HAWCA established centers where our defense lawyers could help these women and give them a better life. We have two female defense lawyers in each Legal aid center to deal with cases. The cases are registered and followed in courts as soon as they are registered with the center.

We also have a psychologist who provides psychological counseling to women who have faced harsh conditions in life. The psychologists’ duty is to help these women heal their broken self-esteem. This helps them confront their abusers in courts, and also gives them awareness about their rights under the law and Islam.

We also train law students in our centers. The main objective of this training is to create a team of women’s rights defenders so that when the projects end, we can still have bright lawyers to deal with cases concerning violence against women. The students who are trained have the responsibility to share their experiences and information with their classmates, friends, and junior students. This way many students learn about important laws like the EVAW law. In the final months of this project we had 97 cases which were followed in the court of law.
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 forced to flee the conflagration of war in the past decades. When these families returned their homes had been completely destroyed or taken by warlords. They had no choice but to live in refugee camps located in different parts of Kabul city. Most of these people are illiterate and know nothing about their rights. With the help of Danish Refugee Council (DRC) HAWCA has been able to establish 12 classes in 3 refugee camps located in Charrahi Qamber, Nisaji Bagrami and Shahrak police. In each camp, there are 2 classes for men and 2 for women. Each class has 25 to 30 students. HAWCA has been giving them awareness about human rights, children rights, women rights, and laws concerning internally displaced people.

In total, HAWCA have been able to provide awareness to more than 300 men and women. This has greatly helped them in understanding the rights of women and children. As a result, family members now have much better relations with one another.
Livelihood and Protection activities

Project Locations: Kabul

Duration of project: 2012-2014

Donor of the project: DRC

Project status: Completed July 2014

Afghanistan has a very high number of refugee camps. The reason behind this is the three 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 formed a joint partnership with Ashiana and Tabish and with the help and funding from DRC is trying 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 of increasing legal awareness among the tribal leaders and elders of villages. The project is active in three refugee camps located in Kochi Abad Camp, Shaharak Police and Nisaji Bagrami. We have 12 classes in 3 camps. Each class has a capacity of 4 people but usually 8 to 10 people join each class because they are interested in knowing about the different laws of the country.

In this project we have a lawyer whose duty is to visit the camps and study legal cases prevailing in that particular camp. The cases are studied and registered and then followed in courts. All the cases we have taken 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 society. For this purpose, we have to start from the poorest sections of the society.

This project also covers a program where 10 girls from different law universities are taught about national and international laws concerning children rights, women rights, with special focus on laws concerning gender-based discrimination and those that seek to eliminate violence against women.
There are many women and children who have no one to look after them and are living in very harsh conditions. To support such women and children HAWCA holds a sponsorship program through which it seeks to find individual donors to support such women and children who are in desperate need of money to survive.

HAWCA also cooperates with other educational institutions around the globe to find sponsorship for Afghan students who do not have the money to continue their higher education. The money is provided to them so that they can study further and have a brighter future.

HAWCA will start its new project called Afghan Human Rights Action and Mobilization in January 2015. It will be implemented in partnership with Civil Society Human Rights Network in all 34 provinces of Afghanistan. The goal of this project is to gather human rights defenders and activists and create a network of cooperation and coordination between them.

HAWCA also respects the important international days that mark the historic achievements of women and children and are celebrated around the world. In 2014, HAWCA celebrated 8th of March, Peace Day, Children’s Day, and Mother’s Day. The Children’s Day and Peace Day were celebrated among the students of our peace building center.

SHOP WITH HAWCA

CAGED BIRD
STORIES FROM SAFE HOUSE AND NADIA ANJUMAN'S POEMS

Dark Flowers
The Story of Self-immolation in Afghanistan