NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR THE WOMEN OF AFGHANISTAN ASSESSMENT REPORT


PROGRESS AND CHALLENGES AFTER 10 YEARS OF IMPLEMENTATION

This report was prepared by USAID Promote: Women in Government as a technical assistance to the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA).
CONTENTS

ACRONYMS .................................................................................................................. 5
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ............................................................................................... 8
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .............................................................................................. 9
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND ..................................................................... 11
  NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR THE WOMEN OF AFGHANISTAN (2007-2017) .... 11
  MOWA’S ROLE IN NAPWA IMPLEMENTATION ...................................................... 12
  ROLE OF OTHER MINISTRIES IN NAPWA IMPLEMENTATION ............................. 13
  ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS IN NAPWA IMPLEMENTATION ............. 13
METHODOLOGY ........................................................................................................... 15
  AIM .............................................................................................................................. 15
  SCOPE ....................................................................................................................... 15
  DESK REVIEW .......................................................................................................... 15
  SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE ...................................................................................... 15
  DATA COLLECTION .................................................................................................. 16
  LIMITATIONS ............................................................................................................ 16
OVERVIEW ..................................................................................................................... 17
  PILLAR 1: SECURITY ................................................................................................. 17
  PILLAR 2: GOVERNANCE, RULE OF LAW, AND HUMAN RIGHTS ...................... 18
  SUB-PILLAR 2.A: LEGAL PROTECTION AND HUMAN RIGHTS ............................. 18
  SUB-PILLAR 2.B: LEADERSHIP AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION ....................... 18
  PILLAR 3: ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT .......................................... 18
  SUB-PILLAR 3.A: ECONOMY, WORK, AND POVERTY .......................................... 18
  SUB-PILLAR 3.B: HEALTH ....................................................................................... 19
  SUB-PILLAR 3.C: EDUCATION ............................................................................... 19
DETAILED FINDINGS: PILLAR 1 – SECURITY ............................................................ 20
  GOAL .......................................................................................................................... 20
  KEY INDICATORS ..................................................................................................... 20
  RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT ENTITIES ................................................... 20
  PROGRESS ............................................................................................................... 21
  INDICATOR 1.1: 20% INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF WOMEN IN SECURITY SERVICE DELIVERY ................................................................................................................ 22
  INDICATOR 1.2: PROGRESSIVE ANNUAL REDUCTION IN THE INCIDENCE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPHERES .......... 24
OTHER CHALLENGES .............................................................................................................. 78
RECOMMENDATIONS ............................................................................................................. 81
REFERENCES .......................................................................................................................... 84
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ACRONYMS</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACBAR</td>
<td>Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief</td>
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<tr>
<td>AGEI</td>
<td>Afghanistan Girls’ Education Initiative</td>
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<td>AGO</td>
<td>Attorney General’s Office</td>
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<td>ALCS</td>
<td>Afghanistan Living Condition Survey</td>
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<td>AMA</td>
<td>Afghanistan Microfinance Association</td>
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<td>ANA</td>
<td>Afghan National Army</td>
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<td>ANCB</td>
<td>Afghan NGO Coordination Bureau</td>
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<td>ANDS</td>
<td>Afghanistan National Development Strategy</td>
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<td>ANP</td>
<td>Afghan National Police</td>
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<td>ANSF</td>
<td>Afghanistan National Security Force</td>
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<td>ASD</td>
<td>Afghanistan Skill Development</td>
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<td>AWCCI</td>
<td>Afghan Women chamber of Commercial Industry</td>
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<td>AWN</td>
<td>Afghan Women’s Network</td>
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<tr>
<td>BPFA</td>
<td>Beijing Platform for Action</td>
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<td>BPHS</td>
<td>Basis for the Primary Health Care System</td>
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<td>CAA</td>
<td>Creative Artists Agency</td>
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<td>CBE</td>
<td>Community Based Education</td>
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<td>CDC</td>
<td>Community Development Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>Community Development Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>CEDAW</td>
<td>Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women</td>
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<td>CLCs</td>
<td>Community Learning Centers</td>
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<td>CPR</td>
<td>Contraceptive Prevalence Rate</td>
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<td>CSO</td>
<td>Central Statistics Organization</td>
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<td>DOWA</td>
<td>Department of Women’s Affairs</td>
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<tr>
<td>DT3</td>
<td>District Teacher Training Teams</td>
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<tr>
<td>EFA</td>
<td>Education for All</td>
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<tr>
<td>ELA</td>
<td>Enhancement of Literacy in Afghanistan</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPD</td>
<td>EQUALITY for Peace and Democracy</td>
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<tr>
<td>EPHS</td>
<td>Essential Package of Hospital Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EUPOL</td>
<td>European Union Police Mission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EVAW</td>
<td>Elimination of Violence Against women</td>
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<tr>
<td>FGDs</td>
<td>Focus Group Discussions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRUs</td>
<td>Family Response Units</td>
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<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
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<td>GE</td>
<td>General Education</td>
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<td>GIROA</td>
<td>Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan</td>
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<td>GRB</td>
<td>Gender Responsive Budgeting</td>
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<tr>
<td>HPC</td>
<td>High Peace Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>IARCSC</td>
<td>Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service</td>
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<td>IDLG</td>
<td>Independent Directorate of Local Governance</td>
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<td>IDP</td>
<td>Internally Displaced People</td>
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<td>ILAB</td>
<td>Independent Legal Aid Board</td>
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<td>IMR</td>
<td>Infant Mortality Ratio</td>
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<td>JSSP</td>
<td>Justice Sector Support Program</td>
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<td>LARA</td>
<td>Land Reform in Afghanistan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acronym</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>SACA</td>
<td>Skills Assessment and Certification for Afghanistan</td>
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<td>SBA</td>
<td>Skilled Birth Attendants</td>
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<tr>
<td>SDG</td>
<td>Sustainably Development Goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>SME</td>
<td>Small Medium Enterprises</td>
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<tr>
<td>TTC</td>
<td>Teacher Training College</td>
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<tr>
<td>TVET</td>
<td>Technical Vocational Educational Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNSCR</td>
<td>UN Security Council Resolution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAW</td>
<td>Violence Against women</td>
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<tr>
<td>WEE</td>
<td>Women Economic Empowerment</td>
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<tr>
<td>WIE</td>
<td>USAID Promote: Women in Economy</td>
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<td>WIG</td>
<td>USAID Promote: Women in Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WPSO</td>
<td>Women and Peace Studies Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>WRN</td>
<td>Women’s and Regional Network</td>
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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA), as the monitoring agency for the implementation of National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA), is responsible for collecting annual progress reports from line ministries and independent government agencies that are responsible for NAPWA implementation. After analyzing all the reports, MoWA compiles a unified analytical report on NAPWA implementation and submits to the Office of Administrative Affairs and Council of Ministers Secretariat (OAAComS) for key actions.

Almost 10 years have passed since the launch of NAPWA in 2007. The Afghan government through, MoWA’s oversight on NAPWA, has achieved some remarkable milestones, even as it faced numerous challenges during the implementation. Over the course of its 10-year implementation, MoWA has produced analytical, progress and ad hoc briefings. Now it is time to critically assess the achievements as a whole.

The primary data collection tool consisted of questionnaires tailored for each government institution according to their role in implementing NAPWA. MoWA’s Monitoring and Evaluation Department was responsible for preparing the report, in coordination with the Policy and Planning Department.

Let me then take this opportunity to thank all the government institutions, ministries, members of the civil society, and Afghan women who were involved, directly and indirectly, in implementing NAPWA and who have hugely contributed to women’s advancement in Afghanistan. My greatest appreciation to all international organizations and donor agencies for their generous support in funding and aligning their programs towards NAPWA implementation. I am especially grateful to the USAID Promote: Women in Government (WIG) program for providing critical support at every juncture to complete this report. Additionally, MoWA would like to acknowledge all individuals who contributed to the research and writing of this report, in particular to the technical assistance provided by USAID Promote: Women in Government (WIG). The WIG project’s technical team played a critical role in the collection of data and subsequent development of this report.

I would like to commend MoWA Deputy Minister Spozhmay Wardak for her initiative in undertaking the NAPWA assessment. Together with her technical team, they worked hard to complete this important document.

To the readers of this report, may I enjoin you to provide suggestions and feedback, as this will feed into the development of NAPWA-II, and make the follow-on action plan a better and more responsive blueprint for improving the status of women and gender equality in Afghanistan.

Thank you.

Alhaj Delbar Nazari
Minister of Women’s Affairs
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Women comprise nearly one half of Afghanistan’s population. As such, they constitute an enormous reservoir of human resources that are needed to foster the continued development of Afghanistan. To-date, however, the situation of Afghan women has been characterized as one of the worst in the world. Nearly three and half decades of war have hampered the growth of women’s capacities and limited their access to justice, education, employment, and public life. Deeply embedded cultural attitudes exacerbate their disadvantage in many aspects of life.

In 2008, the Afghan government adopted the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) as the primary vehicle for implementing its commitments to women’s empowerment and gender equality. NAPWA is a high-level benchmark of the 2006 Afghanistan Compact and a key component of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) Gender Cross Cutting Sector Strategy. NAPWA’s implementation is anchored in the principle that the promotion of women’s advancement is a shared obligation within government and a collective responsibility of all. It identifies specific line ministries and local government units as implementers. Oversight bodies are responsible for monitoring compliance with NAPWA. Parliament is tasked with adopting gender sensitive policy and legal reforms. NAPWA envisions civil society as an important supporter and the international donor community as the source of technical and funding resources.

To measure progress toward these goals, NAPWA established 31 specific indicators across pillars and sub-pillars namely: (i) Security, (ii) Legal Protection and Human Rights, (iii) Leadership and Political Participation, (iv) Economy, Work and Poverty, (v) Health, and (vi) Education. In reviewing the progress toward achieving the goals stated in NAPWA, this report ranks each of NAPWA’s 31 indicators as “Achieved”, “Partially Achieved” and “Not Achieved/insignificant progress.” This report uses data collected directly from Afghan government sources, in addition to reliable secondary data sources, including international donors and other monitors.

Overall, NAPWA (2007-2017) can be considered as a moderate success because it has laid a solid foundation for further gender equality and empowerment efforts. Among the six pillars of NAPWA, the top four that achieved the most progress were Health, Education, Legal Protection and Human Rights, and Leadership and Political Participation. On the other side of the coin, Economy, Poverty and Work, and Security showed significantly less results. Across all 31 indicators, eight targets were rated as fully achieved. Fifteen targets were partially or moderately achieved, and eight indicator targets were not achieved or show insignificant progress. The results to-date constitute major progress for the women of Afghanistan from 2007, particularly considering the position of women in the immediate post-Taliban era. The outcomes of NAPWA implementation serve as the building blocks for all future interventions.

The table below shows the percentages of success and failure as well the definition behind the rating.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Success</th>
<th>Failure</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Achieved</td>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of NAPWA Indicators</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Success or failure</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Definition of the ratings</td>
<td>90-100% Achievement</td>
<td>50-90% Achievement</td>
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NAPWA’s implementation was limited by many factors, including design failure, lack of capacity, data, gender mainstreaming mechanisms, political will, budget, and ambiguity of roles and responsibilities. The primary factor limiting the achievement of NAPWA targets was the inadequate capacity within the assigned implementing agencies including Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA) to execute their roles. The insufficient capacity on national and subnational level government in gender sensitive planning, programming, budgeting, reporting, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) is another factor that limited the achievement of NAPWA indicators. Appropriate mechanisms for systematically incorporating and tracking NAPWA’s gender goals into the policies, plans, budgets, programs and projects had not been established within ministries and local government bodies. A misconception that MoWA alone was responsible for NAPWA implementation also persisted throughout government. There was also a lack of understanding and knowledge—and absence of successful models—on how to mainstream gender at the policy and program levels.

In addition to all these, public resistance to women’s empowerment and gender equality continues, and many of the problems encountered by ministries in implementing their programs for women (such as girls’ education and women’s leadership) are obstructed by traditional perceptions of women’s roles in society. Furthermore, political commitments to gender equality needs to be consolidated and continuously reiterated at the highest levels. This should occur through the State compliance mechanisms, including the Parliament, oversight bodies, as well as advocacy from civil society and international organizations. In this regard, macro-monitoring mechanisms should be established—engaging a multitude of stakeholders and producing analytical information that can inform strategic policies and decisions to advance NAPWA implementation.

Despite the institutional and political constraints, progress toward NAPWA targets has been very tangible in terms of returning girls and women to schools, better access to health services, increased women’s participation in public and private spheres. However, the links between these achievements by the implementing agencies and NAPWA indicators are not clear, which needs harmonization. Relationship building mechanisms should be in placed between the implementing government agencies and MoWA to pursue and sustain the implementation of NAWA pillars and bring sporadic gender-related initiatives under a unique framework. Currently these ad-hoc initiatives vary in levels of magnitude and effectiveness, yet, most of these are done in a ‘projectized,’ piecemeal, and unsustainable manner that does not create overarching, long-term and meaningful impact on the lives of women.
SECTION I
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

Since the 2001 Bonn Agreement, national policy mechanisms in Afghanistan have formally embraced and promoted gender equality. These mechanisms have included the establishment of the Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA) in 2002, approval of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) in 2008, endorsement of the National Action Plan for Women in Afghanistan (NAPWA) in 2008, and the signing of the Elimination of Violence Against Women Law (EVAW) by the President in 2009. Each of the mechanisms emphasized gender mainstreaming as a cross-cutting theme in all government activities and policies.

The declaration that women and men are equal in rights and duties in the constitution, the approval of ANDS and NAPWA, the promotion of female leadership opportunities, the protection of women against discrimination through CEDAW, recognition of women’s active engagement in the conflict resolution and peace building processes through UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325), and the signing of the EVAW law by the President are formal expressions of acceptance of women’s rights in Afghanistan by the Government. The existence of a ministry with the sole responsibility for women’s affairs, MoWA, is significant in and by itself despite its weak position in the still predominantly patriarchal system of government.

Since 2001, the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GI RoA) has established a robust policy framework on the promotion of women’s advancement and gender equality. Gender equality policies are enshrined in the Constitution, the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has been ratified, gender equality targets have been adopted under the Afghanistan Millennium Development Goals and the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) contains a Gender Equality Cross Cutting Sectoral Strategy. Also, GI RoA adopted the National Action Plan (NAP) in 2015 to contextualize and implement the UNSCR 1325. More importantly, the major gender equality commitments of the government have been put together in a coherent implementation framework, otherwise known as the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA).

NATIONAL ACTION PLAN FOR THE WOMEN OF AFGHANISTAN (2007-2017)

Legal basis. NAPWA, a 10-year (2007-2017) Afghan government action plan on the implementation of its commitments to gender equality, confirmed in the Constitution and ratified international treaties and conventions such as the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) was introduced to “ensure continuity and consistency in government efforts to project women’s rights in the Afghan society through equality and empowerment”. It serves as the Government’s primary vehicle for implementing its commitments on women’s empowerment and gender equality and it is

1 Available at:

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formally the key mechanism for the promotion of women’s advancement in Afghanistan. It is a policy document formulated under ANDS and in line with the Government’s commitment to gender equality and women’s empowerment.

**Vision.** Its vision was to “build a peaceful and progressive Afghanistan where women and men both enjoy security, equal rights and opportunities in all aspects of life.”

**Goals.** NAPWA will pursue the twin goals of women’s empowerment and gender equality. Gender equality is a condition where women and men fully enjoy their rights, equally contribute to and enjoy the benefits of development, and where neither is prevented from pursuing what is fair, good, and necessary for living a full and satisfying life. Women’s empowerment, on the other hand, is a condition where women take control and determine the direction of their lives, develop their full potential, make enlightened decisions, and exert positive influence over processes, mechanisms, and decisions that affect their well-being.

**Sectors.** The policy document focuses on six sectors perceived as critical in accelerating the improvement of women’s status in the country. These are: Security, Legal Protection and Human Rights, Leadership and Political Participation, Economy, Work and Poverty, Health, and Education.

**MOWA’S ROLE IN NAPWA IMPLEMENTATION**

MoWA’s vision is to contribute to Afghanistan’s journey toward a progressive and peaceful country where all men and women benefit from security, equal rights and opportunities in different life aspects. Its mission is to make sure all institutions in the country are held responsible to include women’s issues and gender equality concerns in the government’s function from policy development to budgeting, planning, projects, services, activities as well as hiring, orientation, promotions, privileges and opportunities and the Ministry of Women’s Affairs monitors this process.

Ministry of Women Affairs has three main purposes: 1) elimination of discrimination against women; 2) women’s human resource development; 3) women’s participation in leadership and decision making. It plays a bridge role between women and the government; from one side, MoWA is protector of women’s interests in the country and on the other side, it is responsible to empower and mobilize women civil servants (human resources) to contribute in the government programs. MoWA as a policy making ministry actively participates in drafting, developing and mainstreaming gender related policies and plans and after scrutiny by professional and expert institutions, the policies are approved and enforced. The ministry has a vital supervisory and oversight role in the implementation phase of policies. Some of the major policies that MoWA observes are:


- **International Gender policies:** Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Beijing Platform for Action (BPFA), and Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), Millennium Development Goals (MDG) and UN Security Council 1325 Resolution.
MoWA also oversees the implementation of NAPWA, and for that, it regularly advocates with all government institutions- from ministries to the local provincial administrations- to include and respect NAPWA objectives into their plans, programs, and budget process. Over the last 10 years, MoWA was able to sustain its Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) role in NAPWA implementation in public sector. More specifically, MoWA focused on the following:

- Lobbying and advocating for women’s right;
- Proposing laws, regulations, and amendments in favor of women;
- Developing policies, strategies for women empowerment, increasing women participation in governance and leadership, and considering positive discrimination in recruitment process of all public institutions;
- Collecting NAPWA related data and statistics from all government institutions’
- Developing and publishing NAPWA annual reports highlighting achievements, challenges and key recommendations and opportunities during the implementation phase of NAPWA; and
- Monitoring of all women related projects and programs implemented by government, NGOs, and donor agencies.

**ROLE OF OTHER MINISTRIES IN NAPWA IMPLEMENTATION**

NAPWA is a national commitment. It is the responsibility of all government agencies (ministries and independent agencies) to reflect, adopt, and mainstream NAPWA objectives in their plans, programs and policies. Women empowerment is the responsibility of every government agency for the sake of bringing fundamental, equitable, and sensible changes to the lives of women in the country.

Women are involved in every layer of the society encompassing every structure of the society, government, and civil institutions; therefore, any effort toward women empowerment is the responsibility of all actors in the system. Public services (health, education, security, transport, legal, and other social services like water, power, education, medical, etc.) are provided (and should be provided) to men and women equally and without any discrimination. In some cases, the characteristics of our society requires separate health and education services in hospitals and schools, but the service provider (ministries and independent agencies) must remain on parity and use the same mechanism, structures, and budget for providing those services.

**ROLE OF INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS IN NAPWA IMPLEMENTATION**

Since 2002, UN Women Afghanistan and other international partners have been supporting Afghan Government and specifically MoWA in promotion of women rights and gender equality, but with the launch and development of the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA), the support has become more focused to the implementation of NAPWA implementation. Different donors have targeted NAPWA based on international NGO (INGO) priorities and interests. Meanwhile, the GIRoA began alignment of NAPWA activities to its National Priority Program, titled NPP4: Capacity Development to Accelerate NAPWA Implementation under the Human Resource Development Cluster, which was under the Human Resource Development Cluster, which was

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*MoWA’s Main Objectives:*

- Eliminating any sign of violence against women
- Promoting women’s awareness and training them
- Reducing poverty, unemployment, and women’s mortality rate;
- Gender mainstreaming in government institutions and society
- Providing opportunities for progressing women;
- Women empowerment for management and leadership;
- Promoting women’s participation and effectiveness in providing public services;
- Promoting women’s access to employment, education, justice, information and media.

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designed specifically to accelerate the implementation of NAPWA as presented at the Tokyo Conference in 2012.

After 2012 development aid for Afghanistan was predicated on an agreement of mutual accountability. This approach enabled donors to use funding to ensure that the Afghan government meets its international obligations. Contained within this agreement are both the NAPWA and the EVAW laws; as a result, donors had a mandate to make funding conditional on the upholding of women’s rights and the prominence of gender issues.
SECTION 2

METHODOLOGY

AIM

This study was undertaken to examine and document the extent to which the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) has been implemented since coming into effect in 2007. The findings highlight key achievements in relation to NAPWA indicators. The assessment report further defines the success and failure rate of each indicator comparing baseline data (NRVA 2017/2018 and ANDS) with the ten-year reports gathered from line ministries and independent agencies on the implementation of the NAPWA. The findings of the report also assist the government (MoWA, the Second-Vice President’s Office, Chief Executive Office, the President’s office) to build up on the successes of NAPWA and prioritize areas with less progress to be reflected in the forthcoming NAPWA-II document. The report aims to assist international donors to identify how their efforts and contributions have materialized over the last 10 years.

SCOPE

The scope of this study covers three pillars of the NAPWA document to gauge the successes, failures and missed opportunities that have transpired in the past 10 years. Both quantitative and qualitative data collection methods were applied. The primary data was collected through a tailor-made questionnaire specifically focused on each NAWPA indicator. A comprehensive desk review was completed to triangulate reliable source data. Critical data was collected from 36 governmental agencies who were directly involved in implementation of NAPWA.

DESK REVIEW

The desk review was produced during the initial research phase to identify key achievements and challenges faced by MoWA and other government agencies during the implementation of NAPWA. The desk review was based on a systematic analysis of a comprehensive range of research drawn from the following three secondary sources of information:

1. National documents (law, policies, procedures, strategies and plans);
2. A review of the selected government policies, strategic plans related to gender and women;
3. A body of publications from non-government organizations, examined to learn more about general sources about women’s economic participation.

SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

A three-part survey questionnaire was designed to collect data on NAPWA implementation in governmental agencies. The first part concentrated on achievements, while the second and third part focused specifically on challenges and recommendations respectively.

NAPWA Pillars:

- **Pillar I: Security**
- **Pillar II: Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights**
  - Sub-pillar: Legal Protection and Human Rights
  - Sub-pillar: Leadership and Political Participation
- **Pillar III: Economic and Social Development**
  - Sub-pillar: Economy, work and Poverty
  - Sub-pillar: Health
  - Sub-pillar: Education
DATA COLLECTION
A team of 14 persons from USAID Promote: Women in Government and Ministry of Women’s Affairs were involved in this assessment. The team comprised 8 researchers (6 WIG and 2 MoWA employees), 4 administrators (2 WIG and 2 MOWA employees), and 2 data entry officers. After the collection phase, data were entered into Microsoft Excel spreadsheets for analysis, involving cross-checking between questions. Responses from each ministry were stored in an Excel spreadsheet database to organize and analyze data.

LIMITATIONS
Foremost to any other challenge, the team faced difficulty in terms of limited timing for preparation of this assessment report. The team was tasked to assess and analyze the ten years of NAPWA implementation and gauge successes and failures in each of the three pillars and sub-pillars in only three-week time, although the data collection took several months. Since NAPWA sets several indicators for each of the pillars and sub-pillar – six in total – and the team had to examine whether each of the responsible government agency has been successful or unsuccessful in achievement of each indicator, more time and resources were needed. Moreover, to reflect all the achievements and challenges in each section in the ten years of time, the team had to rely on broad primary and secondary data and it was problematic to analyze such a large amount of data in such limited time frame.

Along with that, the assigned research team faced immense difficulties in terms of lack of cooperation from government agencies pertinent to provision of the respective reports on NAPWA’s ten years of implementation. Several attempts were made continuously to notify government agencies through official letters by MoWA, but still collecting the data took almost seven months. Though the ministries and other responsible independent government agencies took long to provide the data, their provided reports were concise highlighting on key achievement without substantial details. Some of the government agencies had summarized ten years of NAPWA implementation in only one or two pages.

Furthermore, NAPWA lacked the Results-Based Management (RBM) and Logical Framework Analysis (LFA) for the researcher to analyze comparative data on each indicator. The indicators were broad and with no specific baseline. This has pushed the researchers toward sourcing baseline data from national documents, such as NRVA 2007/2008 and ANDS. Since the government agencies do not keep their official websites updated with new information and their Management Information Systems (MIS) are also either, the team faced difficulty in terms of finding the reliable baseline and end-line data for each of the indicators.

Despite all the aforementioned challenges, the team’s endeavors have resulted in collection of reliable primary and secondary data and precise analysis of the findings. The team has made the best effort to gauge success and failure in each indicator of each pillar and sub-pillar based on the collected primary and secondary data from reliable sources. This assessment report of ten years of NAPWA’s implementation will shed the light to the government on how NAPWA has been implemented, what the shortcomings and achievement have been and how to make the NAPWA – II a success by considering lessons learnt from implementation process of the first NAPWA.
SECTION 3

OVERVIEW

Numerous gains have been made by and for women in Afghanistan since the launch of NAPWA in 2008. The government used NAPWA as a primary vehicle for implementing its commitments on women’s empowerment and gender equality. The plan provided a formal mechanism for the promotion of women’s advancement in Afghanistan. Moreover, NAPWA was used as a tool to mainstream government’s existing and new policies and priorities for gender equality and empowerment. It also provided a clear path for development agencies to align their efforts to national priorities. It also provided a base for MoWA to track progress on key indicators set for women advancement.

However, NAPWA itself had its flaws. The indicators set for each pillar of the NAPWA were not realistic because there were discrepancies between targets, percentages, proportions in the NAPWA indicators and the targets set by NAPWA implementing agencies in their relevant strategic documents. The M&E framework is completely missing in NAPWA making it difficult for MoWA to track progress. Additionally, the absence of any budgetary mechanism or allocation of specific funding for NAPWA created an enormous hurdle. These all had impacts on the implementation of NAPWA but overall, NAPWA was a good start and a lesson learned for developing a quality gender empowerment framework for the upcoming decade.

PILLAR 1: SECURITY

The number of women in the security sector has increased since 2007, but not significantly. Both Ministry of Interior Affairs (MoIA) and Ministry of Defense (MoD) were not able to meet the 20 percent expected increase in female personnel as per the NAPWA indicator. Constant revisions in targets by Afghan government and international partners implies that the 20 percent target of increasing women in the security sector was unrealistic given the existing challenges in Afghanistan. A directive on female recruitment was issued in 2009 by MoIA and subsequently adopted by MoD that revised the target to 10 percent of the overall ANSF in ten years with initial target of 5,000. Even with revised target of 10 percent, MoIA and MoD failed to achieve the target. They increased women’s representation by just 2 percent and less than 1 percent respectively. However, looking at the target of 5,000, ANP has achieved 67 percent (3,355 out of 5,000) showing an increase from 233 women employed in 2007 to 3,355 in 2018. On the other hand, ANA has achieved 33.7 percent (1,689 out of 5,000) showing an increase from 259 to 1,689.

As far as the progressive annual reduction in the incidence of violence against women is concerned, MoWA established a Commission on the Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW Commission) to track cases of violence with MoIA, AGO and the Supreme Court. Strengthening of the legal structure of EVAW, amendment of existing laws, implementation of the EVAW law by courts and other legal and judicial institution are among the key achievements. Moreover, a demonstrable increase in referral of VAW cases to formal judicial offices and an increase in registering VAW cases with enforcement agencies is a clear indicator of awareness among people on EVAW law, shelters, family response units (FRUs) and other protective means to defend their rights.

2 NATO Presentation on gender integration at MoIA, MoD, Retrieved from: https://slideplayer.com/slide/6086187/
On women’s role in conflict prevention, management and resolution, currently 20 percent (63 out of 320) Provincial Peace Committee members are women, of which 26 percent (17 of 65) are on the High Peace Council (HPC). However, involving women in the recent peace talks will give assurance that women’s role in the peace process is no longer symbolic and only then can it be argued that women’s voices are heard, and their presence respected.

PILLAR 2: GOVERNANCE, RULE OF LAW, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

SUB-PILLAR 2.A: LEGAL PROTECTION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Advances are evident in the legal protection for women. A total of 20 legal documents (laws, regulations, and policies) have been developed since 2007, while a number of legislative documents such as family law, inheritance and property policy, Law on Reconciliation in Civil Affairs by Jirgas and Mediation Regulation are also in the pipeline for ratification. There was a clear increase in the number of female judicial personnel, whereby currently 21 percent of the Attorney General’s Office, 23 percent of the Supreme Court, and 9 percent of MoJ staff members are women. Despite this progress, these institutions are still far behind the target of 30 percent. Other improvements such as the establishment of VAW case management information system and conducting education programs for judiciary staff on different laws and regulations have also been helpful in promoting women’s access to justice and legal aid. MoE together with human rights commission has enriched the schools’ curriculum with inclusion of Human Rights-related curriculum. Looking at the high level of violence against women in Afghanistan, efforts have been made to establish shelters and transition units for the immediate protection of women. MoWA recently registered 27 women shelters across Afghanistan.

SUB-PILLAR 2.B: LEADERSHIP AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The proportion of female participation in the parliament indicates a 69 percent improvement in the lower house and 39 percent in the upper house from 2007 until 2018. In terms of women’s employment in the civil service, the findings indicate an increase from 17 percent in 2007 to 27.3 percent in 2018. On the other hand, only 10 percent of those holding government leadership positions are women. A number of affirmative action policies and quotas (parliamentary and provincial council) have been adopted to increase women in civil service. MoWA has signed 17 MoUs with different government and non-government partners to encourage meaningful partnership to increase women’s participation in public service organizations.

PILLAR 3: ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

SUB-PILLAR 3.A: ECONOMY, WORK, AND POVERTY

Women still face major obstacles regarding economic opportunities. The overall labor force participation rate is relatively low at 54 percent, with women only constituting 19.47 percent.\(^3\) The national employment-to-population ratio is 41 percent. However, efforts have been made to empower women economically. On the legal front, 11 gender sensitive legislative and legal frameworks are now in place, including inheritance and land ownership laws, but the progress between 2007 and 2017 only shows a 4 percent increase in women’s access to employment.\(^4\)

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78 percent of women’s participation in the economy has been in the form of small businesses, while 81 percent of Afghan businesswomen are unable to access credit or financing. Women represent 20.6 percent of the Union members in Afghanistan. To economically uplift female-headed families, the government needs to heavily invest in skill development programs. Luckily, 72.4 percent of people support women’s work outside home.

**SUB-PILLAR 3.B: HEALTH**

NAPWA has achieved all its indicators under the health sub-pillar. The maternal mortality ratio (MMR) has dropped dramatically by 58 percent from 1,600 deaths per 100,000 live births in 2007 to 661 in 2017. The fertility rate has lowered from 8.2 in 2003 to 4.9 in 2017. There has been a steady increase in reproductive health facilities, with an 11.1 percent increase in government hospitals, a 30 percent increase in women’s participation in health sector, a 31.6 percent increase in deliveries with Skilled Birth Attendants (SBAs) and an 18 percent increase in contraceptive prevalence rate.

**SUB-PILLAR 3.C: EDUCATION**

Similar to health, the education sub-pillar experienced remarkable achievements. Total school enrollment has increased from 5.7 million in 2007 to 9.38 million in 2017, showing a 3.68 million increase in total enrollment since 2007. Of the total enrollments, 3.74 Million (or 39.8 percent) are girls, demonstrating a 1.7 million increase in girls’ enrollment since 2007. The total number of schools has increased from 9,062 to 17,859 between 2007 and 2017. Girls’ schools have doubled (1,337 to 2,712) in ten years, while the co-education schools have also doubled showing an increase from 4,325 to 8,766. Around 30 percent of teachers are women. Additionally, women constitute 54 percent of students in teacher training. Investments in Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET) schools and enrollments demonstrate a remarkable increase in just ten-years’ time. The enrollment of women in public and private universities has reached 24.5 percent. The private university enrollments have spiked up by 60 percent. The retention rate in schools is 84% percent, meaning 4 out 5 will graduate. There is a 31.6 percent and 41.6 percent improvement in adult and youth literacy rates respectively. All together there is a 28 percent female representation among staff in MoE and 14 percent in MoHE.

Detailed findings of each pillar and sub-pillars are outlined below.

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SECTION 4
DETAILED FINDINGS: PILLAR I – SECURITY

This pillar of NAPWA stresses on protecting women in public and private spheres and increasing their participation in the security sector. The commitments stress women’s active engagement in peace processes. This pillar also reflects Afghanistan’s commitments to the UN Security Council Resolution 1325 that reiterates the important role of women in conflict prevention and peace building. This pillar stresses on equitable involvement of men and women in all efforts towards settling conflict and sustaining peace under the following four pillars:

- Participation
- Protection
- Prevention
- Relief and Recovery.

As well as, it reaffirms equal participation of women and men in the development of a culture of peace, justice and respect for human rights.7

GOAL
To build and sustain a secure environment that enables women to live a life free from intimidation, fear and violence, and which supports their participation and leadership in promoting and maintaining peace and security.8

KEY INDICATORS
1. At least a 20 percent increase in the number of women participating in security service delivery over a period of 10 years
2. Progressive annual reduction in the incidence of violence against women in the public and private spheres
3. Progressive increase in the number of women actively participating in peace processes and promoting peace, justice.9

RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT ENTITIES
Ministry of Interior Affairs (MoIA), Ministry of Defense (MoD) and National Directorate of Security (NDS) are the responsible government agencies involved in the implementation of this pillar.

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8 Ibid
9 Ibid

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PROGRESS

GiRoA recognizes that security is a prerequisite to women’s overall well-being, ability to enjoy rights as well as social and economic advancement. The NAPWA pillar on security reflects the government’s strategy in creating a secure environment for women within both the public and private spheres that is conducive to empowerment and the attainment of gender equality.

As women and girls in Afghanistan disproportionately bear the effects of overall insecurity within the country as well as domestic violence, MoWA has the responsibility to advocate with security sector authorities to tailor security policies according to the unique needs of women and girls. Through constant efforts the last 10 years, MoWA has advocated for gender equality in the ANP and ANA, which has paid dividends. Some of the key achievements are:

*Ministry of Interior Affairs* (MoIA). The Ministry of Interior (MoIA) has taken positive steps to address problems related to gender among security actors. MoIA’s code of conduct has been used to train 20,000 police officers and many Training of Trainers (ToTs) have been organized to promote the sustainability of the training efforts.\(^9\) MoIA approved a three-year Gender Strategy Implementation Plan to accelerate and respond to gender needs. To mainstream the ministry’s systems and policies, MoIA has established a General Directorate of Human Rights, Women and Children Affairs. This Directorate works toward improving the existing systems such as human resource database; collects data on exact number of female police officers, other civil staff members and provides them with counselling support in their career paths, and promotion opportunities. Moreover, the Directorate informs better policy-making and strategies that can improve the recruitment and retention of female employees within the ANP and MoIA.\(^11\) Fifteen different policy instruments (strategies, procedures and commissions) were developed/established in the last 10 years. Additionally, 50 gender units\(^12\), 96 Women Police Councils, 229 stations for resolving family problems, 34 Human Rights Units in each province and EVAW law commissions have been established across Afghanistan.

MoIA addressed issues faced by female policemen, including issuing different directives (i.e. 08, 023, and 018) on Sexual Harassment, adoption of the 2017 Anti-Harassment Law, awareness efforts on the EVAW Law, increasing in female-friendly facilities, such as female-only or locking bathrooms, separate facilities in police stations, and a helpline for policewomen.


\(^{11}\) Ibid

\(^{12}\) Ibid

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MoIA also provided opportunities for higher education to 174 female staff in Turkey and facilitated 22 other female police officers to receive TOT at Sivas Policy Academy in Turkey.

Ministry of Defense (MoD). Data from the ten years NAPWA report provided by the Ministry of Defense (MoD) show that the ministry has developed a number of policies, namely Human Rights and Gender Coherence. Furthermore, MoD has adopted the Anti-Harassment policy as planned in NAPWA. Women in police and army have long-held grievances about no access to facilities such as hostels, female toilets, kindergartens, and dressing rooms. MoD reports provisions of all facilities for its female staff members. Additionally, MoD reports conducting hundreds of seminars and workshops relevant to women’s rights and gender equality across different ranks.

This is worth mentioning that MoD has provided high level educational opportunities to almost 323 female staff in the past three years. Since last year, 75 female staff of MoD are engaged in higher education in Turkey and 20 more are in India.

Achievement on specific indicators are as follows.

**INDICATOR 1.1: 20% INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF WOMEN IN SECURITY SERVICE DELIVERY**

**Afghan National Police (ANP).** The target set under this indicator is not achieved. However, GIRoA has put several initiatives in place to increase number of women in the Afghan National Police (ANP). This has led to increase in number of women in ANP from 180 out of 53,400 in 2005,\(^\text{13}\) to 1,441 women out of 157,000 in 2013.\(^\text{14}\) MoIA’s 10-year NAPWA implementation report shows that 3,355 women work in the Afghan Police Force, whereas, there were only 233 women in 2007. But still, the process needs more expedition to reach the target of 5,000 places in the tashkeel – the target was set for the end of 2014.\(^\text{15}\) More women in ANP can be a result of several factors, one of which is the growing public acceptance towards women joining police and the easing up of rigid social norms. Structural changes to encourage and support women participation in ANP includes: establishment of female-only or locking bathrooms, separate facilities in police stations, construction of a Women Police Training Academy, four kindergartens, and 300 police houses for women within the Policy City in Kabul.

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MoIA also conducted different types of media campaigns (TV, radio, social media) and promotional outreach through distribution of MoIA-branded materials consisting of 31,100 pens, 14,596 water bottles, 14,596 women’s umbrella, 17,000 files and 10,000 brochures to encourage women to join police force.

A 2012 survey supported by the UN acknowledges that people trust police women more in terms fairness in crime resolution, besides, the European Union Police Mission (EUPOL) counts more policewomen in the ANP as a positive public perception towards the state. Nonetheless, women only represent 2.5 percent of the police force and have a prolonged, difficult battle against several societal and institutional impediments.

Afghan National Army (ANA). To increase the percentage of women’s participation in the security section as a key indicator of NAPWA under the security section, MoD has provided high level educational opportunities to almost 323 female staff during the past three years. Seventy-five female staff of MoD have started their higher education in Turkey and 20 more are in India for the same purpose since last year.

Currently, there are 1,689 women in the ANA. MoD has a target of recruiting 500 women annually. Despite these efforts, women represent less than 1%, almost 0.83% of the armed forces. It is important to highlight that in the Afghan National Army (ANA), there were 43,000 military personnel as of 8 March 2007. Of the total military personnel in 2007, only 259 (0.6%) were women, including 122 sergeants and 137 ordinary soldiers.

Counting both military and civil servants, there are 1,689 women in the ANA. Lack of exact procedures on how to increase number of women in the security and how to provide enabling environment for police and army women are the blind spots in the NAP on UNSCR 1325. The procedure could encompass recruitment, retention, promotion, capacity building and protection mechanisms in order further facilitate women’s meaningful engagement in the processes.

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ANSF has been working closely with MoWA to attract more women into the security sector. Through campaigns and awareness programs, approximately 1,000 women have been encouraged to join the security forces in recent years. MoWA has signed an MoU with MoIA to expedite the hiring of 200 women for which recruitment campaigns were launched in different provinces. MoWA was also tasked to oversee the implementation of President Order# 2902, dated 1395/9/1 regarding the promotion and security of women in security sectors. To motivate female security personnel, MoWA continuously awarded plaques and appreciation letters to recognize hardworking women of MoIA, MoD and NDS on the occasion of 25 November which is start date of 16 days activism against gender-based violence.

Looking at the challenges in the recruitment process of Afghanistan National Security Forces (ANSF) 20, there have been almost no or very little awareness raising initiatives to target communities at the district and villages on the need and role of women in security sector. 21 This has resulted in continuous negative perception of communities on the role of women in ANSF. Along with that, even competent women equipped with required expertise through scholarships are not easily appointed within ANSF because there is not adequate political will to transform the discriminative system. 22

Another circumscribing challenge for women’s participation in the security sector is that women are immensely affected by patriarchal constraints, making it difficult for them to find their way into the system. Even if women are recruited, it takes almost five years for female personnel to get promoted. On the other hand, promotions in government agencies do not come merely as a result of competence; rather, it happens through personal and political preferences and networks. That is why, women are less likely to be in leadership positions. It is perceived that women in ANSF lack technical expertise to hold any leadership position, as well as, the literacy rate among women staff of ANSF is very low. A policy brief by AWN in June 2016 found that major factor for women’s lack of expertise is that they are not always permitted by their male supervisors to have access to educational opportunities. 23

Moreover, cultural constraints are more evident in Afghan society limiting women’s participation in security sectors. Factors such as negative public opinion towards women, harassment (street and workplace), family commitment, safety and freedom of movements are key cultural challenges impacting women’s recruitment in ANSF.

**INDICATOR 1.2: PROGRESSIVE ANNUAL REDUCTION IN THE INCIDENCE OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN IN THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SPHERES**

There are reports that acknowledge achievements in terms of women’s protection but the target under this indicator is not achieved. Enforcement of the legal structure of the EVAW, amendment of existing laws, implementation of the EVAW Law by courts and other legal and judicial institution are among the key achievements. There are reports of successful cases to redress women’s psycho-social problems through legal consultations by family protection centers in Kabul and provinces. Delivery of public awareness campaigns, workshops and

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20 ANSF is referred to Afghan National Army, Afghan National Police and National Directorate of Security as a whole.
22 Ibid
23 Ibid
formation of Youth Participation Committees to Eliminate Impunity of Women’s Rights Violators are an eye-opening achievement. Awareness raising programs have been conducted to religious leaders and military personnel about harmful repercussions of violence against women.

Based on the article 79 of the Constitution, the EVAW law was endorsed by the President in 2009. To better implement the law, EVAW commissions are established. The EVAW commissions conduct regular monthly meetings under the leadership of MoWA. MoWA is the reporting channel of each commissions’ performance to the ministerial council.\(^{24}\) As per the 5th report on implementation of the EVAW Law by MoWA in 2017, the total number of registered cases by MoWA, MoIA and AGO is 6,333. Whereas there were 4,505 cases of VAW registered with the aforementioned agencies in 2013 as per the first report of MoWA on the EVAW Law implementation. Increase of VAW cases registration with responsible government agencies is a positive signal of women’s legal awareness and their trust of the state justice system.

Reports also illustrate increased activities related to vulnerable women’s economic development, existence of balanced financial resources for women in emergency cases and implementation of the policy on Internal Displaced People (IDPs). The activities also entail the delivery of educational programs on Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB).

Despite NAPWA’s reiteration on abolishment of any kind of harassment of women, at the end of the ten years of NAPWA implementation, sexual harassment still stands as a major problem for women in the security sector. Research by Women and Peace Studies Organization (WPSO) shows that more than 50 percent of the women interviewed cited experiences of daily sexual harassment and demands for sexual favors in return for promotions, permission to take leave or participation in training programs outside the country.\(^{25}\) Findings of the report by WPSO in terms of women’s harassment in security section is same with Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission’s 2017 report. Though WPSO sees challenges much more than the collected data.

In early 2019, the Attorney General’s Office (AGO) of Afghanistan announced that over the past four years, since the start of 2015, almost 7,246 cases of violence against women have been processed by the agency.

Of the above cases, sexual abuse tops the list at 920 cases, followed by 720 cases of beating, 145 cases of harassment, 320 cases of murder, and 113 cases of attempted suicide. The remaining 4,900 incidents of violence included various VAW cases, such as forced prostitution, death threats, kidnapping, abortion, forced marriage, and trafficking.


“Today the access of women to justice in afghanistan has increased, perhaps the cases of violence which are happening today are not too different from the past, but the thing which is happening today is that justice is prevailing and cases are reported and referred to legal and judicial institutions”

— AGO SPOKESMAN, JAMSHID RASULI


25 DRAFT—for discussion purposes only. Contents may not be used as reference or quoted in reports without approval from MoWA.
The report further elaborated that the number of reported VAW cases have noticeably increased in the last four years for the following reasons: increase in women's awareness of their rights, easy access to justice centers, and the responsiveness of the courts in investigating violence against women. Currently, EVAW courts are established in 22 provinces of Afghanistan. However, Women’s rights activists argue that only 19% of the VAW cases are processed by the government and that culprits are not brought to justice. With the release of the AGO report, the Afghan civil society, which has been investigating domestic violence in Afghanistan, also announced that its findings from Kabul, Balkh, Nangarhar, Bamiyan, and Herat show that family violence has structural existence which is engrained physically, socially, culturally, economically, linguistically and sexually in the social system. The agency adds that nearly 80 percent of the men in Afghanistan commit domestic violence knowingly and unknowingly against women. The agency also expressed concern that 66 percent of the violence is carried out in the presence of children.

**INDICATOR 1.3: PROGRESSIVE INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF WOMEN ACTIVELY PARTICIPATING IN PEACE PROCESSES AND PROMOTING PEACE, JUSTICE**

As the details below show, this indicator under the security pillar has been partially achieved. The UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325) on Women, Peace and Security that was adopted in the year 2000 stipulates women’s role in conflict prevention, management and resolution and stresses on protection of women in conflict and post-conflict situations. As a UN state member and as a country committed to human rights values, Afghanistan has developed and launched its own National Action Plan (NAP) for implementation of the UNSCR 1325 from 2015 to 2022. For implementation process oversight, each year, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) provides annual reports to the President and National Assembly on the implementation status of the plan.

According to the second report of NAP implementation, GIROA has made vital progress. The advances have been mostly made under the pillar of “participation.” There have been endeavors in terms of women’s recruitment in both civil and military sectors. More women are involved in decision making processes of peace making and elections. Out of the total 65 members in High Peace Council, one woman is in the leadership position, four in the executive, and 12 in the General Assembly. Out of 320, 63 women are members of Provincial Peace Committees (PPC). Advances in the implementation of the Afghanistan NAP on UNSCR 1325 are in compliance with key NAPWA indicators under the security pillar.

GIROA’s commitments to women’s protection in conflict and post-conflict situations have been elaboratively described in NAP on implementation of the UNSCR 1325. However, the

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Human Rights Watch reports sharp increase of women casualties in 2017 with 298 deaths and 709 injured, mostly as a result of recurring bombings and aerial attacks.\textsuperscript{27} Insecurity is identified a major hindrance to the NAP implementation; women’s active engagement in the process is heavily bound to availability of conducive environment to take part in relevant programs and platforms.

Since Afghanistan’s National Action Plan (NAP) for implementation and contextualization of UNSCR 1325 has less clarified and achievable indicators and lacks sufficient analysis of current situation, this document is seen as “a wish list of many dreams”.\textsuperscript{28} While a limited number of civil society representatives participated in the finalization process, many women’s organizations criticized the lack of consultation in, and resulting exclusion from the process.\textsuperscript{29}

It is worth mentioning that despite of the increase in number of women in the HPC and its provincial committees, there are certain impediments. A Policy Brief by the Women’s Regional Network (WRN) outlines the challenges such as; unequal political treatment and opportunity, lack of necessary coordination among women in the HPC, rampant gender discrimination, incomplete policy implementation of women quota in the HPC, and weak participation and partnership.\textsuperscript{30}


\textsuperscript{29} Ibid

SECTION 5
DETAILLED FINDINGS: PILLAR 2 – GOVERNANCE, RULE OF LAW, AND HUMAN RIGHTS

SUB-PILLAR 2.A: LEGAL PROTECTION AND HUMAN RIGHTS

Afghanistan’s constitution in Article 22 recognizes rights to life, liberty and human dignity and it enshrines equality and non-discrimination as two principles these provisions. Along with that, in the Article 7 it commits to the United Nations Charter, Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and other international human rights treaties.\(^{31}\)

In order to uphold women’s legal protection and attain their rights under the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) priorities, NAPWA acknowledges Legal Protection and Human rights as one of its concern areas for women. This issue has been discussed under the second pillar: Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights. NAPWA sets goals and key indicators and to achieve the goals it assigns exact policies, strategies, programs and policies in order to embody women’s equal access to justice and to abolish discriminatory legal provisions against women.

GOAL

The goal of the Afghan Government is to revise its legislative framework and judicial system to guarantee equality and non-discrimination as enshrined in the Constitution, as well as within international conventions and standards thereby enabling women and girls to exercise their rights on equal terms with men and boys.\(^{32}\)

KEY INDICATORS

1. Absence of gender discriminatory provisions and procedures in the legal framework
2. Enactment of gender specific legislation, including family law and an anti-VAW law
3. Minimum 30% increase in participation of women in the justice sector and law enforcement bodies
4. Increased number of judicial officials trained on citizen’s rights, with particular emphasis on women and children’s rights
5. Inclusion of human rights, particularly women and children’s rights in the curricula of schools and universities
6. Establishment of shelters, referral centers and transitional houses
7. Increased access to free legal aid and representation for women and girls
8. Increased availability of legal awareness programs
9. Increased reporting and prosecution of violence against women cases\(^{33}\)


\(^{32}\) Ibid

\(^{33}\) Ibid

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28 DRAFT—for discussion purposes only. Contents may not be used as reference or quoted in reports without approval from MoWA.
RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT ENTITIES
The Ministry of Justice (MoJ), the Supreme Court, and the Attorney General’s Office (AGO) are the responsible government agencies for the implementation of this sub-pillar.

PROGRESS
The pillar on Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights focuses on reforming Afghanistan’s legal and judicial systems to uphold the government’s duty to protect the constitutionally guaranteed rights of women, improving women’s access to justice, strengthening the involvement of women in governance, as well as increasing their capacity and opportunities for leadership.

MoWA as the advocate for women’s rights have been in close contact with legislative branch of the government to make sure gender discriminatory provisions and procedures are added to the legal framework of the country. The engagement on different level have resulted in the following changes in the legal framework in favor of women in Afghanistan.

INDICATOR 2.A.1: ABSENCE OF GENDER DISCRIMINATORY PROVISIONS AND PROCEDURES IN THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK
This indicator is vague and does not have a baseline data consisting of the legal framework that support or does not support gender discriminatory provisions. If this indicator is aimed to reform and amend legal framework to protect the rights of women and girls, then there is clear evidence that conformity with Afghan Constitutions and international treaties, conventions and standards have paved the way for abolition of all discriminatory laws. Several initiatives from the legal point of view have been put in place to support women. Enactment of the EVAW Law, Anti-Harassment Law, amendment of the Penal Code, adoption of several gender affirmative actions and other legal documents are among the key reforms and achievements which will qualify this indicator as achieved or partially achieved. Therefore, for now this indicator will be considered as not achieved but referring to legislative changes under indicator 2.A.2, this should be considered either as achieved or partially achieved.

INDICATOR 2.A.2: ENACTMENT OF GENDER SPECIFIC LEGISLATION, INCLUDING FAMILY LAW AND AN ANTI-VAW LAW
This indicator’s target has been achieved since there have been a number of advances since 2001 in terms of legal protection for women. The first and foremost was the constitution of Afghanistan declaring that men and women are equal, followed by the 2009 EVAW Law and the 2017 Anti-Harassment Law, both are considered to be significant achievement in term of providing legal protection for women from the prevalent violence. In addition, the Family Law is in the pipeline of the legislation process and articles 668 – 672 of the penal code acknowledge prosecutions to the harassers of women and children. Report received from MoJ on ten years of NAPWA Implementation also counts the enactment of the EVAW Law
(2009) and the Anti-Harassment Law (2017) as the greatest achievements that addresses the “enactment of gender specific legislation” indicator under this pillar.

Moreover, the establishment of EVAW Law Commission, the approval of 2011 Regulation on Women Shelters or Women Protection Centers, Anti-harassment Regulation and Law, amendment of 2018 Penal Code – that now possesses specific chapter on the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Regulation on Mediation, Law on Reconciliation in Civil Affairs by Jirgas are other legal documents approved or developed in the last ten years.

A total of 20 Law, Regulations and Policies have been developed since 2007:

**LAWS, REGULATION AND POLICIES ENACTED:**

1. EVAW Law (2009)
2. Regulation on women shelters or Women Protection Centers (2011)
3. Policy to increase girls’ enrolment in schools
4. Law on guardianship of orphaned children
5. National Economic Empowerment Program
6. Procedures for the prevention of discrimination
7. Amendments of some of the provisions in the Civil Servants Law in favor of women
9. Modification of Electoral Law with a view to gender equality
10. Adoption of regulation for the prevention of sexual harassment
12. Policy to improve female prisoner’s access to justice
14. Afghanistan is a party to seven of the nine core international human rights treaties including the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women. MOWA has established an Inter-Ministerial Committee to contribute to State reporting obligations through these mechanisms.
15. Policy on Increasing Women Participation in Civil Service
16. The 2018 Penal Code (possesses specific chapter on the elimination of violence against women)
17. Policy on Continuation of Education for Women

**LAWS IN PIPELINE:**

18. Inheritance Law
19. Family Law
20. Law on Reconciliation in Civil Affairs by Jirgas

**INDICATOR 2.A.3: MINIMUM 30% INCREASE IN PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE JUSTICE SECTOR AND LAW ENFORCEMENT BODIES**

As the details in the below paragraphs show, this indicator has been partly achieved. Findings of the NAPWA assessment show that in 2007 there were only 73 female judges and 76 attorneys in the justice system of Afghanistan, whereas the data from 2017 – 2018 show 261 female judges and 204 attorneys.
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE
Out of 2,773 Ministry of Justice (MoJ) staff, 230 (9%) of them are women. Among the 230 female employees, 55 of them work in provincial justice departments. MoJ reports recruitment of 76 women, 39 in justice sector and 14 in the Institute of Legislation in the past ten years.

SUPREME COURT
The Supreme Court of Afghanistan, as an implementing partner of the NAPWA, reports establishment of Gender Unit within the agency to ensure gender mainstreaming and implementation of the women empowerment program in the court. Currently, 23% of the Supreme Court staff are women. From a total of 553 female staff, 261 are judges, 234 are administrative staff, 38 are central service staff and 20 are Provincial Service staff. However, there is no woman serving on the nine-member High Council – the most senior organization of Afghanistan’s Supreme Court – despite the fact that many religious scholars do not see any problem having women serve on this body.

The Supreme court of Afghanistan has identified security and cultural challenges as key hindrance to women’s participation in the judicial sector. For example, the Supreme Court lacks proper residency for its female staff. To mitigate the situation, the Supreme Court has coordinated with security officials and international organizations to help dettract security threats and provide suitable hosteling for its female staff in provinces.

ATTORNEY GENERAL’S OFFICE
The Attorney General’s Office (AGO) is another implementing partner of the Legal Protection and Human Rights’ section of NAPWA. It reports development of the AGO’s Gender Policy (2014) and the Strategy of Elimination of Violence Against Women (2010). A total of 549 women have been recruited by AGO in the past five years. In an unprecedented action, the AGO appointed the first ever female Deputy Attorney General in August 2016. Currently, 21% of staff at the Attorney General’s Office are female, including females leading departments in 11 directorates. It is worth mentioning that the Gender Unit of AGO has regularly advocated to adopt the five extra points throughout the recruitment process of female staff.

Despite the breakthroughs in women’s professional participation in the justice sector of Afghanistan, female judges comprise less than 10 percentage of all judges. The reluctance in involving more women in the leadership of the justice systems is apparent in the case of Ms. Anisa Rasoli who was nominated by President Ashraf Ghani to the high council of the Supreme Court. She was first nominated in 2015 but was denied by the lower house of the parliament. In a second attempt, she was nominated again in 2018 and her confirmation is still pending.

Table 2: Women and Men as Judges, Attorneys and Lawyers 2017/18

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Provinces</th>
<th>Center</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judges</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>1,514</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attorneys</td>
<td>108</td>
<td>1,298</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: NSIA’s 2017/18 Statistical Yearbook
INDICATOR 2.A.4: INCREASED NUMBER OF JUDICIAL OFFICIALS TRAINED ON CITIZEN’S RIGHTS, WITH PARTICULAR EMPHASIS ON WOMEN AND CHILDREN’S RIGHTS

There has been good progress of this indicator in this sub-pillar and the target is partially achieved. As per the reports provided by AGO to MoWA, more women have been recruited as attorneys to 23 provinces of the country and agreements have been signed with Ministry of Education (MoE), Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE), Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) and Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) to conduct awareness raising campaigns on the EVAW Law. Furthermore, 1,424 female staff of AGO have been trained in various capacity building programs (citizen’s rights and children rights). Furthermore, the reports provided by MoJ show that Gender Unit of MoJ has conducted more than 42 awareness workshops on gender equality and its reflection in Islam to its staff and other ministries.

INDICATOR 2.A.5: INCLUSION OF HUMAN RIGHTS, PARTICULARLY WOMEN AND CHILDREN’S RIGHTS IN THE CURRICULA OF SCHOOLS AND UNIVERSITIES

The target under this indicator is considered partially achieved because the data was only available on school level curriculum. The Ministry of Education (MoE), in close collaboration with the Independent Human Rights Commission, has enriched the schools’ curriculum with basic human rights knowledge. Through this, students learn basic human rights values and ultimately, they convey the messages to their families. Moreover, teacher trainings now include information on elimination of violence against children in schools and making schools friendlier to children. School subjects for grades 4, 5, 6, 9 and 12 now include human, children and women’s rights contents. These rights are discussed from both general and Islamic points of views. Moreover, MoIA has included Human, Women and Children’s rights and actions on how to address EVAW cases in the curriculum of the National Police Academy.

INDICATOR 2.A.6: ESTABLISHMENT OF SHELTERS, REFERRAL CENTERS AND TRANSITIONAL HOUSES

This indicator has been achieved as women’s shelters in Afghanistan are providing hundreds of women and children across the country with safety and immediate shelter. The primary cause for women to seek shelter is domestic violence, but also includes being released from prison with nowhere to go, being forced into illegal work, fleeing a husband’s addiction, forced marriage, early marriage, being denied education, or being without documents.34

In 2011, the government has passed a regulation on Women Shelters or Women Protection Centers but the main funding for running these shelters was provided by different non-governmental organization and donor agencies. However, in 2017 and with the drawdown of donor assistance, these shelters were transitioned to MoWA. During the last 10 years, the number of shelters increased and expanded and approximately 27 women shelters were formally registered with MoWA across the country.35

According to MoWA, the shelters resolve 75% of the women’s concerns who are faced with violence and family problems. Despite substantial challenges like customary belief systems, the turbulent political environment, and the debate regarding the social acceptability of women’s shelters, MoWA will try to take structural measures to better protect women and advance equal rights.

**INDICATOR 2.A.7: INCREASED ACCESS TO FREE LEGAL AID AND REPRESENTATION FOR WOMEN AND GIRLS**

This indicator is partially achieved. MoJ reports creation of the Management Information System (MIS) to hold record of all familial, civic and commercial cases. This has been clearly stated by NAPWA as one of the objectives to better address the VAW cases. In addition, MoJ reports that 1,824 cases of violence against women have been addressed by legal aid in the last ten years. More details on the number of VAW cases processed by AGO is discussed under pillar 1, indicator 1.2. To facilitate women’s access to legal aid, a hotline (642) was established for legal consultations for women around the country. The National Legal Aid Policy, an effort at organizing legal aid development sustainably, has been ratified by the MoJ. Detailing legal aid efforts of the MoJ and others, the National Legal Aid Policy informed the drafting of the 2008 Advocates’ Law and the Legal Aid Regulation and set forth key roles for the MoJ and an Independent Legal Aid Board (ILAB). In 2012, the MoJ released a new Legal Aid Policy, drafted with the assistance of the Justice Sector Support Program (JSSP).

MoWA also played a key role to support women’s access to legal aid and counseling. The EVAW Law Commission was expanded to 32 provinces and specific working groups on Gender and Human Rights were established. The number of women gatherings to highlight women’s interests and support for the EVAW law have increased dramatically. Different programs were adopted to increase women’s representation in justice sectors such as appointing them as consultants, lawyers, and legal aides. MoWA also provided legal and psychological counseling to the victims of violence through the DoWA offices. The DoWA offices are safe places for women to receive initial counseling and referral to safe houses. The 34 DoWA offices are equipped with computers, printers, scanner, power saver, internet access, which were provided by The Asia Foundation.

**INDICATOR 2.A.8: INCREASED AVAILABILITY OF LEGAL AWARENESS PROGRAMS**

The non-constant rebuilding of the justice system of Afghanistan in the past ten years does not undermine all the noticeable and important progresses that have been made, which qualifies this indicator as partially achieved. Thousands of police personnel and hundreds of


37 Ibid

**DRAFT—for discussion purposes only. Contents may not be used as reference or quoted in reports without approval from MoWA.**
judges, prosecutors, prison wardens have been trained. All the responsible government agencies have reported delivery of hundreds of awareness programs, workshops and seminars to raise people’s awareness about VAW and prosecutions of the perpetrators. From the other hand, educational programs have been conducted on relevant laws such as the Constitution, Civil Code, Civil Service Law, the EVAW Law, Anti-Harassment Law and several other laws and regulation in Kabul and provinces. MoJ reports the implementation of 1,028 public awareness programs that benefited almost 27,942 women in the country. The reports lack information about conducting awareness trainings on women’ rights to religious establishments and the civil society. These two pillars are key to any reform program in the country because of their influence in communities and their access to far-flung areas of the country. It is important, therefore, that these two groups be well aware of women’s rights.

MoWA has facilitated more than 2,500 awareness campaign programs to increase women’s access to free legal services in districts and villages through the provincial DoWA offices, and with the support of the Human Rights Commission, government legal departments, Provincial Peace Councils, CSOs, and scholars. Moreover, many symposiums were conducted in different zones (South, North, East, West and Center) of the country for the empowerment of women. As a result, more than 2,000 women have gathered together to discuss problems and challenges they have faced during last two decades, highlight key achievements and properly streamline efforts for the way forward.

**INDICATOR 2.A.9: INCREASED REPORTING AND PROSECUTION OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN CASES**

The target under this indicator is achieved. Since 2007, the Supreme Court of Afghanistan established Special Courts for the elimination of Violence against Women in 16 provinces (Kabul, Herat, Balkh, Kapisa, Jowzjan, Sarepul, Baghlan, Kunduz, Takhar, Ghazni, Bamyam, Ghor, Daikondi, Nangarhar, Faryab and Kandahar) and six more provinces in 2018 (Panjsher, Logar, Parwan, Badghis, Samangan, and Badakshan). According to AGO’s reports, Elimination of Violence against women prosecution units have been established in 34 provinces out of which 31 units are led by women. 108 female prosecutors have been hired and Deputy Attorney General for the EVAW is recruited. In November 2017, the office of the Deputy Attorney General reported record and track of 1,726 cases of violence against women in the previous eight months by EVAW units.

Whilst studies prove that women’s awareness pertaining their rights has improved and more cases are being filed through official channels, studies also show that most of the cases registered to the Department of Women’s Affairs (DoWA) do not end up in prosecutors’ offices or courts. Mostly, the cases are resolved through mediations. 38

As per the report of the Supreme Court to MoWA on ten years of NAPWA implementation, the mentioned body of the judicial system reports redressal of almost 5,474 cases of violence against women in the past 9 years; murders, illegal marriages, rape, forced prostitution, acid attacks, infanticide, honor killings and death threats are among the registered cases.

Despite NAPWA’s specific eye on women’s legal protection and fulfillment of their rights and provision of certain policies, programs and projects in this regard, there are many cases of violence against women in several provinces. Main causes violence against women are believed to be poverty, unemployment, low level of awareness of women’s rights. Selling women and heavy dowries are also seen as sources of increasing level of violence and even women murders and honor killings.\textsuperscript{39}

Another impediment to women’s equal access to justice is the endemic of corruption in the judicial pillar of the state; women hesitate when it comes to settling their problems through formal justice system. Often cases brought by women are unsettled, withdrawn or closed. Likewise, women are more vulnerable due to their less access to the financial resources, whilst, staff of the judiciary and police often expect money to provide the services. Along with the challenges with the system, women face threats posed by social norms in terms of referring their problems to formal judicial systems. Women who dare to go beyond the traditional structures of grievance redressal such as shuras, elders and religious references, often face societal dismissal, retaliation, and even risks as high as death threats and honor killings.\textsuperscript{40}


SUB-PILLAR 2.B: LEADERSHIP AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

The Government of Afghanistan recognizes the right of women’s leadership and participation in all spheres of life, especially in decision, policy, and law making. For the long-term sustainability of women’s empowerment, NAPWA roadmaps their leadership and political participation under the second pillar: Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights. Through the goals and key indicators set, NAPWA aims to achieve the equitable participation of women in key decision making and politics through institutional strategic framework and policies in coordination with government and private entities.

GOAL:
To attain a critical mass of women in high level decision, policy and law-making positions in key government institutions including in the sectors of judiciary, security, and service delivery. To promote an environment conducive to women’s entrepreneurship and leadership in the private sector. To attain a critical mass of women active in communities and in political life. 41

KEY INDICATORS:
1. An affirmative action policy and strategy is adopted and implemented in key government institutions, including government administration and judiciary and in selected non-State establishments and organizations
2. Strategies and programs that promote meaningful partnerships among women and men in decision, policy and law-making positions are adopted and implemented
3. Enabling mechanisms for women’s participation and leadership in public life are provided
4. There is a progressive increase in the percentage of women in Afghan institutions and in decision, policy, and law-making positions 42

RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES:
Independent Administrative Reforms and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC), National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA), Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs (MoHRA), Ministry of Information and Culture (MoIC), Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG), State Ministry for Parliamentary Affairs, Ministry of Refugees and Repatriations (MoRR), Ministry of Borders and Tribal Affairs (MoBTA) are the responsible government agencies to implement this pillar

PROGRESS:
This sub-pillar mainly has contributed towards highlighting the importance of gender, social justice and equality between men and women that has been targeted to achieve the economic and social growth in the long term.

On the other hand, women’s empowerment and mainstreaming their roles in political and economic spheres are backed up by the National Constitution of Afghanistan and several

42 ibid
government entities were designated for increasing the participation of women in the leading positions.\textsuperscript{43} Progress under this pillar is evident. In terms of female employment in the civil service, the findings indicate an increase from 17\% in 2007 to 22.6\% in 2017 and 27.33\% in 2018 showing an upward trend towards achieving the 30\% quota of women in the leadership positions till 2020.\textsuperscript{44} The table below differentiates percentage of female participation in different sectors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector</th>
<th>Female Participation</th>
<th>Male Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign Affairs and Security Sector</td>
<td>5.8</td>
<td>94.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Management, Agriculture and Rural Rehabilitation Sector</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>95.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education Sector</td>
<td>33.2</td>
<td>66.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Governance, Rule of Law &amp; Human Rights Sector</td>
<td>5.2</td>
<td>94.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion, Culture, Information and Sports Sector</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Infrastructure, Technical and Engineering Sector</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justice Sector</td>
<td>14.9</td>
<td>85.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance, Economic and Auditing Sector</td>
<td>9.7</td>
<td>90.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Protection Sector</td>
<td>44.4</td>
<td>55.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Sector</td>
<td>24.1</td>
<td>75.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Female Participation</td>
<td>27.33</td>
<td>72.67</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{Source: IARSCC, 2018/2019}

The level of female representation in the parliament is at 25.9\% in the lower house and 31.8\% in the upper house—or an average of 28.85\% in both houses. The breakdown is shown in table 4:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Female Participation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Meshrano Jirga (Upper House)</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>31.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wolesi Jirga (Lower House)</td>
<td>239</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>25.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provincial Councils</td>
<td>455</td>
<td>360</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Development Councils</td>
<td>491,707</td>
<td>301,287</td>
<td>190,420</td>
<td>38.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Members of Associations</td>
<td>505,884</td>
<td>407,648</td>
<td>98,236</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\textit{Source: Statistical Yearbook of Central Statistics Organization, 2016}


INDICATOR 2.B.1: AN AFFIRMATIVE ACTION POLICY AND STRATEGY IS ADOPTED AND IMPLEMENTED IN KEY GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS, INCLUDING GOVERNMENT ADMINISTRATION AND JUDICIARY AND IN SELECTED NON-STATE ESTABLISHMENTS AND ORGANIZATIONS

This indicator has been achieved. Although the government still does not have a unique affirmative action policy, over the last 10 years different affirmative actions were adopted by government agencies to increase women’s participation. Some key Affirmative Actions are:

1. The government has reserved Gender Quota System during election and for upper house and lower house of Parliament;
2. The government has set a target of 30% quota for women in Civil Service to be achieved by 2020;
3. IARCSC has developed a Policy on Increasing Women’s Participation in Civil Service with a 2% annual increment;
4. IARCSC has added 5 positive discrimination points for women during recruitment process;
5. MoE has considered to increase salaries of teachers through monetary incentives and hardship allowance in insecure and deprived areas;

The quota for participation of women is not only limited to parliament, but the constitution also decrees women’s existence in the Wolesi Jirga (Lower house of the National Assembly), Meshrano Jirga (Upper house of the National Assembly) and presidential candidacy runoffs.\footnote{United States Department of State • Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights and Labor. (2018). Afghanistan 2017 Human Rights Reports. Retrieved from: \url{https://www.state.gov/documents/organization/277519.pdf}}

Additionally, there are more women in senior government positions than at any other time in the history of Afghanistan. The current count includes four Ministers, 11 Deputy Ministers, five Ambassadors, two deputies on the High Peace Council, and about 22 percent women representatives in provincial peace councils. Afghan women comprise 28 percent of the Parliament’s Lower House, and 26 percent of the Upper House (Senate). 34 percent of provincial council representatives are women. 48 percent of community development councils throughout the country are women. There is 1 female governor and 2 female mayors. 122 women work in the President’s Office, and 20 percent of the Supreme Court staff are women (553 women, including 261 female judges). Afghanistan is one of the very few countries in the region with a quota for women in parliament (28 percent), which is the second highest in Asia\footnote{Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF 2016-2018)}. 48

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\footnote{Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF 2016-2018)}
Pointing out to the political achievement of women, Ms. Habiba Sarabi (March 2018), the deputy chair to High Peace Council in the United Nations Security Council, calls out the 17 years achievements of women including the time frame set for achieving the NAPWA indicators. She indicated that Afghanistan has now established Deputy Attorney General for Prohibition of violence against women, under the organizational structure of which 242 women are working in different departments, including EVAW officers and 261 females’ judges who ensure the rule of law and prevent violence against women. The other most important achievement of NAWPA’s progress is in women’s access to political and decision-making positions is their role in the civil service sector. According to the 2017-18 data of the Central Statistics Organization, out of 4,00,439 employees all over the government entities, 77.4% are males and 22.6% are females. However, in 2007, the percentage of females in civil service was only 17% of the total employees which shows 5.6% increase over a period of ten years.

Meanwhile, among the responsible ministries for this indicator, the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) and Independent Administrative Reform and Civil Service Commission (IARCSC) have been leading the drive to increase the number of female middle and senior managers since 2007. To illustrate further, IARCSC has increased the number of female employees by 47%, from 62 to 118, while IDLG has increased its female employees by 83%, from 27 to 164.51

Furthermore, for ensuring the increase in the appointments of women in jobs, the IARCSC has developed “Policy on Increasing Women’s Participation in civil services” which aims to increase 2% women participation in government till 2018 and meeting the international commitment of 30% quota till 2020. 48 Also, role of IARCSC has been vital in terms of adding the 5 additional affirmative score for women recruitment in merit-based recruitment policy.

INDICATOR 2.B.2: STRATEGIES AND PROGRAMS THAT PROMOTE MEANINGFUL PARTNERSHIPS AMONG WOMEN AND MEN IN DECISION, POLICY AND LAW-MAKING POSITIONS ARE ADOPTED AND IMPLEMENTED

The target for the indicator has been partially achieved. According to the findings, increasing the opportunities and mechanisms for women to practice the leadership roles, participate in the capacity-building programs, and promoting women’s legal and religious rights can increase

the number of women in the leadership and decision-making roles\textsuperscript{49}. In regards to this fact, the entire responsible entities for implementing this sub pillar have conducted capacity building workshops and trainings, established anti-harassment and conflict resolution committees, developed policies and guidelines and have provided several opportunities for women to enhance their qualifications. For instance, the Ministry of Information and Culture’s (MoIC) Office of the Deputy Minister for Youth signed numerous MOUs with education institutions to enroll 7,000-8,000 girls in higher education and as a result, 2,000-2,500 girls graduate from those institutions annually. MoIC also has provided volunteer and internship job opportunities, vocational training centers and language learning courses and Kankor preparations for 2,000 girls. To add more, the National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA), conducted several nationwide surveys for reporting the status of women’s role in decision making and their political participation in the government and non-governmental organizations in 2009, 2013 and 2016. The results of these surveys served as evidence for government entities and helped in tracking the progress of ongoing interventions, assess the effectiveness of the completed programs and design more interventions that contributed to the implementation of Gender Equality and women’s empowerment.\textsuperscript{50} Currently 10.7 percent of those holding government leadership positions are women. Indicator 2.B1 also revealed a number of affirmative actions that will help women to take leadership positions.

Although NAPWA paves the way for women to enjoy equal opportunities, however, the plan lacks implementation mechanisms for the proposed strategies. Additionally, the State Ministry of Parliamentary Affairs has reported “lack of reporting mechanism” as a challenge to spot out the qualitative and quantitative achievements of women’s leadership and political participation.\textsuperscript{51} Moreover, Ministry of Borders and Tribal Affairs (MOBTA) has highlighted another key challenge as the nonexistence of sustainable mechanism to encourage women’s visibility in certain government institutions which has resulted in lack of interest and enthusiasm for leadership and key decision-making positions.

**INDICATOR 2.B.3: ENABLING MECHANISMS FOR WOMEN’S PARTICIPATION AND LEADERSHIP IN PUBLIC LIFE ARE PROVIDED**

The target for the indicator is not achieved. A number of enabling mechanism for women’s participation were adopted by MoWA and other implementing partners. The Workplace Obstacle Analysis and Recommendations Report (WOAR) identifying the obstacles such as, policies, regulations, culture and infrastructure, that adversely affects the involvement of women in the civil service roles, can be counted as one of the achievements. WOAR was developed by the Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA) with technical support of United States Agency for International Development (USAID) Promote: Women in Government to support the achievements of NAWPA in terms of responding to the needs of maintaining enabling environment for women to encourage them to participate in the civil service. The WOAR assessment was initially performed in the 20 government agencies which was later expanded


to other 15 ministries and independent agencies as well. The re-assessment findings indicate improvements in terms of policies, cultural norms and infrastructure facilities for women working in the civil service.

According to data collected by MOWA, for empowering the local governance of women, the Independent Directorate of Local Governance (IDLG) has been able to appoint 9 females in leadership role as provincial deputies, 26 Gender Specialists in the provinces for the Governor Offices, and 105 females in the key decision-making positions in the central and provincial levels. IDLG has also mainstream Gender Equality in the strategic plan of 27 provinces.

The religious aspects play major role in the community awareness on rights of women and inappropriate acts against women. According to the data collected by MoWA, Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs (MoHRA) has continuously conducted public awareness sessions on women’s rights and the reduction of violence against women in areas such as the importance of Education and childcare, the prohibition of harming others in Islam such as poisoning school girls, violence and its harmful effects on health. These sessions were delivered during the prayers preaches, religious days and in workshops. In addition, MoHRA has been also involved in the printing and publishing articles on Women’s Rights from the Islamic point of view. The 239 volumes of their publication named as “The healthy family of the happy society” were disseminated during Friday Prayers.

**INDICATOR 2.B.4: THERE IS A PROGRESSIVE INCREASE IN THE PERCENTAGE OF WOMEN IN AFGHAN INSTITUTIONS AND IN DECISION, POLICY, AND LAW-MAKING POSITIONS**

This indicator has been partially achieved. The government has a target of increasing women participation to 30% by 2020. The increase is likely to happen at all levels including decision, policy and law-making positions. However, the current status of 27.33% indicates that the government is lagging behind by 2.67%\(^2\). Looking at IARCSC’s latest report, there is a 5.6% increase between 2006-2018. Looking at the progression rate, it is likely that the target will be met by 2020. However, the IARCSC has recently issued a policy on increasing women’s participation through which it has asked all ministries and independent agencies to bring a 2% increase in women’s recruitment annually. If the policy is properly implemented, the government will be able to achieve the 30% target by 2020.

On the other hand, Figure 4 shows the goals set for women’s participation in leadership position during the years 2009, 2013, 2016 were 8.2%, 16.1% and 22.1% respectively, while the achievements show 8.2%, 9.9% and 10.7%.

\(^2\) ANPDF 2016-2018
Although targets are not met since 2016, but the facts indicate a 2% increase every year which shows a slow but productive increase over the years.\textsuperscript{53}

\textsuperscript{53} ibid
DETAILED FINDINGS: PILLAR 3 – ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

SUB-PILLAR 3.A: ECONOMY, WORK, AND POVERTY

Economy, work and poverty is the chapter related to the pillar on Economic and Social Development that presents the government’s strategy for advancing Afghan women’s ability to fulfill their duties and enjoy their rights in the social and economic fields.54

GOALS:
To create and enabling economic and social environment that is conducive to the full development and realization of women’s economic potential.

KEY INDICATORS:
1. A gender sensitive legislative and regulatory framework, including inheritance, property and labor laws
2. Equitable access of women to skills development programs and vocational training
3. Progressive increase in the access of women to gainful employment
4. Progressive increase in the access of women to micro-finance and business services

RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES:
Ministry of Economy (MoEc), Ministry of Commerce and Industries (MoCI), Ministry of Labor, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled (MoLSAMD), Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development (MRRD), Ministry of Finance (MoF), Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA), Ministry of Transportation (MoT), Ministry of Urban Development and Housing (MUDH), Ministry of Mines and Petroleum (MoMP), Ministry of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) and Afghanistan Civil Aviation Authority (ACAA) are the responsible government agencies for implementation of this sub-pillar.

PROGRESS
The Afghan women are among the worst off in the world, based on the gender equality index, Afghanistan is ranked 153 out 160 countries. Their situation is particularly poor in the areas of health, protection against violence, economic productivity, education and literacy, and public participation. Based on MoWA’s baseline data (Women and Men in Afghanistan; baseline statistic on gender) one of the main challenges is poverty which has a negative impact on the development and welfare of women and girls. Women in rural Afghanistan contribute most of their labor time in unpaid reproductive family activities such as cooking, cleaning and child care. However, they are also engaged in productive work in agriculture, horticulture, livestock raising, fuel wood collection, carpet weaving, embroidery, tailoring,

The Afghan government to respond to the situation has prepared NAPWA as a policy framework to ensure continuity and consistency of Government’s efforts to protect women citizenship rights in Afghan society. In the last 10 years, there has been good progress in the development of gender sensitive legislative and regulatory framework, including inheritance and property law, access of women to skills development programs and vocational trainings, increase in women’s employment and access to micro-finance. Details on each of these opportunities are outlined below:

**INDICATOR 3.A.1: A GENDER SENSITIVE LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK, INCLUDING INHERITANCE, PROPERTY AND LABOR LAWS**

The target for this indicator is achieved. A key focus for women’s empowerment and gender equality is to create economic opportunities for women. Between 2007 and 2017, there are some tangible achievements, be it the gender analysis of macroeconomic policies for the government support for women entrepreneurs. Key opportunities are now created for Afghan women to take advantages of through Civil Code and Inheritance Law. The Civil Code consists of many detailed provisions with respect to property rights. It supports women in several topics, such as legal guidance on the handling of contracts, mortgages, rights of possession, severance of joint rights; inheritance, marriage rights and procedures for leasing, purchase, renting and sale of property. However, women still face a lot of challenges in this field. Additionally, during the launch of the National Action Plan of EVAW Strategy, the Second Vice-President emphasized that women’s property rights should be recognized. This statement itself shows that the political will among the high rank authorities for empowering women to use their inheritance is now more evident than ever before. Previously, none of the authorities were even ready to speak up about the women’s inheritance rights. Therefore, achievements as such should be highlighted.

Furthermore, to reform the women’s property rights in Afghanistan USAID designed the Land Reform in Afghanistan (LARA) project. The initiative established a Women’s Land Rights Task Force comprised of active men, women and civil society representatives to advise project leaders on land rights affecting Afghan women. The project proposed strategies to support

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56 8am Newspaper. Women Property Rights. Retrieved from: [https://8am.af/x8am/1395/09/16/womens-property-sarwar-danish-afghanistan](https://8am.af/x8am/1395/09/16/womens-property-sarwar-danish-afghanistan)
women’s land rights, however, there is no reliable data to show how much women’s access to their land has changed since the launch of project in (2011-2014).\textsuperscript{57} Based on the data of Afghanistan Demographic and Health Survey only 17 percent of women independently own a house but again there is no more data on other type of property owned by women.\textsuperscript{58}

Ministries under this indicator reported that they have developed the following gender sensitive legislative and regulatory framework to facilitate women’s access to the economic rights:

1. Export guideline for women entrepreneurs
2. Guideline on licensing procedures
3. “Made by Afghan Women” trade mark is launched to introduce women production at the international market
4. HR strategy in CAA to further develop women’s skills
5. Women Economic Empowerment – National Priority Program (WEE-NPP) to support economic participation to increase women’s agency in development
6. Policy on inheritance and property rights of women
7. Establishment of the Afghan Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry
8. Standard Operating Procedures on Registration and Process of Certificate, investment, social groups, permission of economic and trade
9. Policy on startups and SMEs
10. Strategy for handicraft (Jewelry and Precious Stones)
11. Afghan Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry (AWCCI) signed MoU with MoCI for organizing joint bazar for women businesses

Additionally, AWCCI reported that they have reviewed the procurement, public private partnership and income tax laws. Based on a preliminary finding, these laws are very general and do not contain specific provisions for women. From a gender perspective these laws are gender biased toward women’s entrepreneurship as the criteria they have set for business activities do not consider the size and situation of women businesses in Afghanistan.\textsuperscript{59}

Despite the so many progresses in this indicator the laws itself is a challenge for women. Based on the report of the AWCCI after the review of Public Private Partnership Law, Procurement Law and Income Tax Law they found that these laws are not gender sensitive. For example, the Public Private Partnership Law sets the minimum investment of $5 million to be considered for a PPP contract which is a huge amount for women owned businesses. Procurement Law’s procedure contain a preference clause for local products and the products are usually rice, agriculture and livestock products in such a large amount that women-owned business may not be able to become a vendor. Income Tax law and the procedures and reporting requirements are so complicated that women have been in great concern in the past 12 years and have incurred a lot of penalty not reporting on time or not fulfilling the requirements.\textsuperscript{60}


\textsuperscript{60} Ibid
INDICATOR 3.A.2: EQUITABLE ACCESS OF WOMEN TO SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND VOCATIONAL TRAINING

The target for this indicator was not achieved although there have been several projects designed for the skill development programs and vocational trainings. The main important ones are National Skill Development Program (NSDP), Strengthening Skills Assessment and Certification for Afghanistan (SACA 2014-2017), The Afghanistan Skills Development Project (ASD 2008), and the Second Afghanistan Development Project (2013). These projects were funded by the World Bank and implemented by the Ministry of Education and Ministry of Labor Social Affairs Martyrs and Disabled. The most tangible outcomes of these projects were: the establishment of a National Institute of Management and Administration (NIMA), the launch of strategy for the National Technical and Vocational Education and Training in 2013 for both genders. There is no specific gender sensitization data to show that how many women received equitable access to skill development and vocational trainings. MoE reports that as part of the ASDP project, a total of 1,510 students have graduated from NIMA’s first cohort, of which 1,058 students obtained a Diploma from the University of Jyvyskala, Finland and 30% of the graduates were women. Additionally through the Afghanistan Workforce Development Program number of mid-level technical and business managers received trainings in skill management and market demand. This program has exceeded its goal of 25 percent female participation – by training more than 11,000 women.

For the Equitable access of women to skills development programs and vocational training indicator, the responsible ministries has designed and implemented some programs, events and projects which can be concluded as; conducting several trainings with providing assets to the female by the MRRD, MoLSAMD, CAA, MoAIL, MUDH, MoEc, MoT, providing higher education opportunities for the female staff by the MoF, MUDH assigned specific places for the women such as parks, swimming pools, gyms, shops etc. which contributed to the women economic empowerment.

Another achievement in this field is the National Priority Program for the Economic Empowerment of Women which was launched on March 8, 2017. Through the national priority programs (NPP), including the citizens’ charter and women’s economic empowerment, thousands of poor, women, and youth will be served. Over 90,000 women have been supported through agriculture activities, including kitchen gardens (35,530 constructed), livestock and greenhouses (35,000); including training for 12,100 women. 2,485 female contracted teachers were recruited in 2017.

According to MoWA, in the last 10 years, more than 6,000 program (in varying scales) to empower women economically were implemented in the different provinces of Afghanistan. More than 102,070 women and 17,955 men have benefited from skill development programs such as sewing, carpentry, gardening, carpet weaving, candle and flower making, embroidery and crafts. India’s SIVA project has trained 3,000 girls and women in in Bagram, Estalef district

of Kabul province, Balkh and Herat provinces in food processing, sewing, embroidery, designing, jewelry making.

Along the above-mentioned achievements there are some challenges that needs to be addressed. One of the key challenges is that there are no concrete long-term effective programs for the women. The World Bank research also pointed this and shows that many WEE programs structure goals around short-term outputs (such as the number of women trained, number of women receiving agricultural inputs, etc.) rather than longer-term outcomes that can demonstrate economic empowerment. Longer-term outcomes are always challenging to measure. Nonetheless, when programs do not monitor results beyond immediate outputs, nothing can be learned about the ways an intervention has or has not effectively promoted WEE. This is not to say that all programs should or could aim to work all at once on the range of enabling actions and productive activities that WEE encompasses. However, the lack of recognition that different categories of activities come together to foster WEE creates difficulty for monitoring and measuring WEE and improving WEE indicators. This then limits both the evidence for and scalability of effective WEE programs.

Furthermore, the literacy and numeracy education are still a barrier for women in economic field. Although younger Afghan women have achieved higher levels of education compared to their historical counterparts, female illiteracy in Afghanistan is still the norm. On average 19.9 percent of Afghan women above the age of 15 are literate. Yet many capacity-building interventions take basic literacy skills for granted when aiming to transmit skill-specific training. This is also the case for soft-skills to which women, particularly those from poor, remote areas, have limited or no exposure. And according to the study of World Bank again and again, capacity building efforts do not achieve their intended skill-specific goals, because participants lack appropriate foundational knowledge.

INDICATOR 3.A.3: PROGRESSIVE INCREASE IN THE ACCESS OF WOMEN TO GAINFUL EMPLOYMENT

The target for this indicator is partially achieved. According to data from the Afghanistan Investment Support Agency (AISA) AISA, a total of 1,600 women-owned business have been registered in Afghanistan since 2003, of which 1,144 are active. A report from Women’s Chamber of Commerce and Industry stated that women-owned businesses have created 47,861 employment for both men and women (87% women and 13% men). Over 480 of 1,144 businesses have participated in trainings, conferences, and exhibitions. More than 50 of the women’s businesses operating across 34 provinces have websites. The total investment by women is worth US$ 77.5 million. Women’s


Figure 5: Breakdown of women-owned businesses
employment has spiked by 27% since 2007. However, half of the women led-businesses are in handicraft and traditional businesses but less than 10 are selling their products in the regional or global markets on a regular basis. The handicrafts include carpet, embroidery, woodcarving, jewelry making, cotton and silk shawls and leather products.65

According to Equality for Peace and Democracy’s (EPD) report on Afghanistan Gender and Equality Report Card: Evaluating the Government of Afghanistan’s Commitments to Women and Gender Equality, there is improvement in terms of women’s participation in the labor force. Of the 131,001 members of National Employees Unions in 2013-14, there were 40,447 female members (31%). There were 512,393 union members in Afghanistan of which 155,983 were women, including members of the Journalists Council, Craftsmen Union, Youth Union, Afghanistan Women Union, Afghan Women Social and Cultural Services Union, and Doctors and Health Staff Union 66. Based on the 2017 data form the Central Statistic Organization of Afghanistan of the 566,700 Union members in Afghanistan of which 117,042 are women. However, there is an increased number of females at the ministries and departments. Of the 276,255 total employees in 2004, there were 51,231 females while the 2017-18 data shows a total 400,439 of which 90,394 are women.67

According to the Asia Foundation survey, there is some positive changes among Afghans in perceptions surrounding women's rights, including rights to economic and sociopolitical opportunities. Majority of Afghans (72.4%) support women working outside the home (compparable to last year’s 74.0%). This Survey also reveals a link between respondents’ support for women working outside the home and their level of education. While 66.2% of those with a primary education (one to six years of formal schooling) support women working outside the home, this figure rises to 77.5% among those who have attended university. When asked if female members contribute to their household income, one-fifth of respondents (20.1%) say a woman contributes to their household income, a significant increase from 13.6% in 2009, when the question was first introduced.68

Besides the progressive increase in the access of women to gainful employment still women’s second most problem is unemployment. According to the report of the Asia foundation the second most commonly problem women are facing is unemployment. As expected, women are significantly less likely to report being engaged in income-generating activities (10.9%) than are men (79.2%). However, women living in urban areas are more likely to generate income (12.4%) than women in rural areas (10.5%). The relationship is opposite for men, where 83.6% of men living in rural areas report involvement in income-generating activities, compared to

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67.5% of men living in urban areas. Among women who report earning income, teaching in a school is the most commonly cited income-generating activity. Carpet weaving, sewing, and embroidery are examples of skilled labor by women in rural Afghanistan. In urban areas, the most common income-generating activities, especially for men, are informal sales/business (20.8%), skilled worker/artisan (14.7%), and small-business ownership (13.6%). The gender disparity of the labor market is also visible in the distribution of the status in employment. If we compare 2017 with the 2007 it shows a decrease. The below chart is about the labor force participation rate of the year 2017.

Women’s participation in labor largely remains invisible, restricted mainly to the informal economy. The high unemployment rates and slowing economy resulted in not providing enough space for women to enter to the labor market. In a situation where men are also deprived of livelihoods, women find it further difficult to find the space in labor market.

INDICATOR 3. A4: PROGRESSIVE INCREASE IN THE ACCESS OF WOMEN TO MICRO-FINANCE AND BUSINESS SERVICES

The target for this indicator is not achieved. Although there is some progress in this area. Based on World Bank study report (2006) on microfinance and gender roles in Afghanistan; some 75% of microfinance savings and credit services went to women. Additionally, Afghan women have little control over the resources they come to possess through microloans. Women’s involvement in microfinance-supported economic activities were limited to traditional crafts such as (especially) tailoring and carpet making that can be done in the house. There was little innovation in the choice of activity.

However, the recent data on microfinance shows a progress in this field without specification that certain number of women got access to the micro-finance and business services. According to Microfinance Investment Support Facility for Afghanistan’s (MISFA) 2017 annual report, MISFA’s partner institutions collectively disbursed more than 118,000 loans with an aggregate total of AFN 10 billion (US$ 150 million) for the fiscal year ending 31 December

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69 Ibid
2016. This indicates an increase in loan disbursement compared to 127,266 loans worth AFN 9.2 billion (US$ 136.9 million) disbursed in 2015.71

The AWCCI research paper “Internal Factors Affecting Growth of Women-Owned Businesses in Afghanistan” mentioned that in 2016, AISA, GiRoA’s business licensing authority (later merged with the Afghanistan Central Business Registry), had registered a total of 44,838 domestic and 3,307 international companies, of which only around 3% were owned by women. By and large, women’s participation in the economy has been in the form of small and medium enterprises (1-10 employees). From the total 1,144 women-owned businesses, 1,064 have started their businesses from their own savings (self-funded), 47 through loans from relatives, 33 through bank loans, and the rest have used grants from women’s economic empowerment projects to start their businesses.72

Another considerable achievement to improve women access to finance for women owned businesses is increasing the number of women in banking and microfinance sector. This was achieved through conducting different skill development programs. Recently 75 young Afghan women graduated from USAID Promote: Women in the Economy (WIE)’s Microfinance Institute Training (MFI) Program. Implemented by the Afghanistan Microfinance Association (AMA), the nine-month apprenticeship program equips young women with the technical and managerial skills needed to secure jobs in banking and microfinance by increasing enrollment of women in training programs the MFIs already give to their new employees. Women in Economics’ Private Sector Development program is currently assisting more than 125 women-owned companies or those that employ women through a variety of innovative programming designed to improve access to finance and new markets, develop business capacity, and increase growth and profitability.73

Besides the mentioned challenges for the businesswomen is credit or financing. For the investment women need more funds, but banks and microfinance institutes offer loans based on availability of a range of documents that rely on property and land. According to the EPD report, 81% of Afghan businesswomen were unable to access any credit or financing. 47% do business with the international community and 40% with the domestic market, but only 13% had found business opportunities with the Afghan government. Nearly 90% did not have partnerships with other businesses or institutions and 75% did not belong to a business association. Women’s access to finance is one of key challenges, with banks and microfinance institutions often offering loans that rely on property or land ownership, which is limited for Afghan women. Additionally, banking institutions often provide loans at high interest rates, between 15% and 17%, which can be prohibitive for entrepreneurs. The Ministry of and Chamber of Commerce have also been criticized by women for not providing real assistance for women, and a lack of premises for specifically female-run enterprises in industrial parks.74


In addition, women using loans for the first time require capacity/confidence building interventions to use credit effectively and to address social empowerment issues in the communities. Facilitating poor women's access to loans and savings for effective credit utilization therefore needs to be supported in parallel with complementary non-credit interventions such as: financial literacy, training in basic business skills, and accessing markets. Furthermore, soft-skills training that has proven beneficial includes confidence building for the women participating and awareness-raising for their family members, particularly spouses. Developing and sustaining women-centered credit provision will require targeted identification of the constraints facing each female borrower and should include the necessary mitigation measures as part of the credit provision.  

**SUB-PILLAR 3.B: HEALTH**

The Government of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (GI RoA) has the commitment to ensure women’s emotional, social and physical wellbeing and their reproductive rights in the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA). The commitments are also enshrined in the Constitution, internal laws and regulations and GI RoA’s international commitments. The Beijing Platform for Action (BPAF) recognizes inequality in women’s access to standard health service as one of the barriers to women’s overall wellbeing and pushes member governments to take the necessary measures to dismantle the hinderances. Furthermore, GI RoA reaffirmed its support to the Global Strategy for Women’s, Children’s and Adolescents’ Health (2016 – 2030). It is believed to be a global platform of support for improvement of health and wellbeing of women, children and adolescents.  

The Afghanistan National Health Strategy (2016 – 2020) has explicit and precise commitment towards women’s equal access to health services and their appointment in positions with the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH).

**GOAL:**
The Government aims to ensure women’s emotional, social, and physical wellbeing and to protect their reproductive rights.

**KEY INDICATORS:**
- Reduction from 1,600 to 400 maternal deaths per 100,000 births by 2015
- Increased reproductive health services in country health facilities
- 30% increase in participation of women in the health sector

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At least 90% of women have access to the Basic Package of Health Services.  

**RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES:**

Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MoCN), National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA) are responsible to implement this sub-pillars’ priorities.

**PROGRESS:**

Since the overturn of Taliban regime and revival of state systems in Afghanistan, immense efforts have been put in place to rebuild the health care system with close collaboration of the GIRoA and the international community. This has resulted in increasing the life expectancy of Afghans from 42 years in 2002 to 59 years in 2007 and up to 64 years in 2016. By 2017, Afghans’ access to health services within an hour distance has reached to 90%. Status of health status of the Afghan health sector has improved soundly in terms of coverage, access and quality. Cases of infant and maternal mortality has decreased eye-catchingly as a result. Authorities in the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) have acknowledged their awareness of NAPWA’s importance as a policy document for gender mainstreaming and for improving women’s access to healthcare in Afghanistan. They have affirmed that while many women-centered programs at the ministry were initiated before NAPWA, NAPWA has been as a pushing force for achievement of their targets of gender mainstreaming.

The data from the National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA) show that before adoption of NAPWA in 2007 only 21.8% of Afghan women gave birth by skilled health personnel. Whilst in 2017, the percent has increased up to 53.4% that is almost 31.6% increase. Both urban and rural women’s access has improved as the data show 23% increase in births by skilled health personnel in urban areas and 32% increase in rural areas. As per the comparative data of NSIA from 2007 to 2017, only 14% of rural women gave birth by skilled health personnel in 2007, while in 2017, the percentage increased up to 46%.

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79 Ibid  
84 Ibid
In addition, emotional and psychological support are generally covered under mental health services and Afghanistan integrated mental health services into the Basic Package of Health Service (BPHS) in 2009. Though mental health is one of the priorities of the BPHS, there are little or no mental health service in access of the Afghan women. From the other hand, the Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MoCN) reported establishment of 13 drug addicted women treatment centers with capacity of 460 patients in one time that treats 3700 female addicts annually.

In collaboration with its international partners, MoWA has actively supported MoPH in different awareness campaigns including family planning, MMR, IMR and drug rehabilitation. A program called “Healthy Family, Happy Society” was launched in 12 provinces of the country, including Badakhshan, Bamiyan, Herat, Daykondi, Lugar, Baghlan, Faryab, Jawzjan, Balkh, Kapisa, Parwan and Kabul. Discussed from Islamic point of view, the program targetted different groups such as community influencers, academic and religious scholars, and Community Development Council workers. The program effectively delivered its core messages through awareness campaigns and through promotions items (500 clocks, 500 books on health during pregnancy, 2,500 posters, 20,000 brochures) distributed in target provinces with the cooperation of religious scholars. Moreover, a four-month campaign on drug use by mothers was conducted in almost all provinces of Afghanistan, where about 70% of women and families were covered. In total, between 2002 and 2018, MoPH conducted 270 health workshops and 260 awareness campaigns in 34 provinces of Afghanistan, and trainings for 7,500 women in partnership with UNFPA, WHO, IMC, AFGA, Health Net and TPO. In addition, UNODC, CNTF, AIL, MSH, EPSO and ASMO conducted training workshop on HIV, family planning, drug abuse and capacity building workshop for almost 855,000 people in Kabul and provinces. MoPH also supported MoE to incorporate sexual reproductive rights in their curriculum.

INDICATOR 3.B.1: REDUCTION FROM 1,600 TO 400 MATERNAL DEATHS PER 100,000 BIRTHS BY 2015

This indicator has been achieved. Afghanistan’s health sector has made significant progress over the last decade that has resulted in dramatic decline in Mother Mortality Ratio (MMR) falling from 1,600 to 661 per 100,000 live births showing a 58% reduction. The Infant Mortality Ratio (IMR) has also declined from 66 in 2005 to 45 deaths per 1,000 live births; during the same period, neonatal mortality has dropped from 31 to 22 and under-five mortality from 87 to 55 per 1,000 live births.

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live births. However, abovementioned rates remain high in Afghanistan compared to other countries in the region. Due to myriads of challenges, though women in other countries live longer than men, in Afghanistan life expectancy of women is shorter than men.

**INDICATOR 3.B.2: INCREASED REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH SERVICES IN COUNTRY HEALTH FACILITIES**

This indicator has been partially achieved. In 2012 GIROA launched the National Reproductive Health Policy (2012 – 2016) that aims to improve the reproductive health status of families in Afghanistan through the provision of integrated reproductive health services in partnership with communities, development partners and the private sector. As per the Afghanistan’s commitment to Family Planning 2020, GIROA will detract the unmet need for family planning by 10% and will increase the modern contraceptive prevalence rate to 30% by 2020.

Furthermore, there has been a significant increase in the coverage of key maternal and child health services - antenatal coverage increased from 16 to 59 percent, the contraceptive prevalence rate rose from 10 to 23 percent, institutional deliveries from under 15 to 48 percent, and DPT3/Penta 3 coverage for children ages 0–23 months increased from 30 to 58 percent. The Family Planning Comprehensive Needs Assessment reports increase in Contraceptive Prevalence Rate (CPR) in Afghanistan – almost 20% in 2010. As per the Demographic Health Survey (2015), 23% of currently married women use a method of family planning, with 20% using a modern method.

From the other hand, the Family Planning Comprehensive Needs Assessment in 2016 shows that child marriages rate is high in Afghanistan and a third of girls bear children by the age of 19. Findings of the FGDs for this report shows that young people have limited knowledge about contraceptive and limiting cultural norms pose negative attitude towards provision of contraceptives to the young people.

Access to printed materials on family planning and usage of contraceptives is very limited and it is more difficult due to low literacy rate among the Afghan women. Family planning campaigns are also limited through television and radio. Though radio and television are identified as good sources of information on family planning, mass media’s impact in this issue has not been evaluated yet.

87 Ibid
http://cso.gov.af/Content/files/%D9%88%D8%B6%D8%B9%D8%8C%D8%AA%20%D8%B2%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86%20%D9%88%20%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86.pdf
91 Ibid
93 Ibid
INDICATOR 3.B.3: A 30% INCREASE IN PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN THE HEALTH SECTOR

This indicator has been achieved. The Ministry of Public Health (MoPH) ensures gender mainstreaming in all of its planning, budgeting, evaluation and monitoring processes and adoption of a rights-based approach. The National Health Strategy (2016 – 2020) emphasizes on developed institutional capacity for addressing gender-based violence. MoPH sets equitable and sustainable access to quality health services in a gender sensitive manner is a priority. As per the reports provided by MoPH to MoWA on ten years of NAPWA implementation, women’s participation in the public health has increased up to 30% in past ten years. The number of female doctors has increased from 601 in 2007 to 1,718 in 2018. This is a success in achieving what NAPWA has targeted under this indicator. As per the 2017-2018 statistics provided by the National Statistics and Information (NSIA) there are 32 female employees in Ministry of Counter Narcotics (MoCN) out of 507 in total, 3,419 female employees in MoPH out of 13,397 and 65 female employees out of 766 total employees in the National Environmental Protection Agency (NEPA).

Despite all the achievements sector, still there are less female health personnel compared to the number of people – especially women - in need of health services. This has failed MoPH’s efforts to reduce maternal child mortality cases, in particular in rural areas. Most of the female health personnel are concentrated in big cities while in rural areas less or no female health personnel exist.

INDICATOR 3.B.4: AT LEAST 90% OF WOMEN HAVE ACCESS TO THE BASIC PACKAGE OF HEALTH SERVICES

This indicator has been partially achieved. Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS) and Essential Package of Health Service (EPHS) are believed to be two great achievements of MoPH over the last decade. BPHS has been cornerstone of the health services in Afghanistan since 2003. According to a thesis study the BPHS healthcare services, improved in the recent decade in Afghanistan, 60% women receive at least one Antenatal Care Service (ANC) visit during pregnancy. One-third of women received Skilled Birth Attendants (SBA) services nationwide in 2010. However, percentage of deliveries with SBAs increased up to 53.4 % in

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94 Ibid

55 DRAFT—for discussion purposes only. Contents may not be used as reference or quoted in reports without approval from MoWA.
2017. An assessment by USAID and Counterpart International on family planning in 2016 shows that 91.2 % of the population had access to health post and 86.9 % to public clinics within two hours. Women are also included in these figures, however, no gender-based data has been found to gauge success or failure in the NAPWA’s this health sub-pillar indicator.97

Though NAPWA has a specific eye on the reproductive health, Afghan women’s sexual and reproductive health is still the lowest globally. Afghan women’s mental and reproductive health are poorly affected by the prevalent gender-based violence and due to limitation in women’s mobility, they have less access to health services and awareness raising program pertinent to their health and wellbeing. There are several factors that has resulted prevailing gender inequality in the health sector; transportation problems and restricting socio-cultural norms that circumscribe women’s mobility outside the private sphere are among the biggest challenges. In terms of provision of mental health service to Afghan women, there are small group of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that provide mental health service to women in Afghanistan with professional psychological counseling services that are in no way sufficient considering the high number of vulnerable women. “In some areas of the country, people with mental illness are taken to shrines where they are chained for days in an attempt to cure their sickness.”98 Though mental health has been considered as one of the key concern areas of the National Health Strategy (2016 – 2020) and NAPWA, mental health is still widely ignored and no specific and considerable measure has been taken for the Afghan women.

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**SUB-PILLAR 3.C: EDUCATION**

The two main goals of NAPWA which are gender equality and women empowerment are set to be pursued through three-pronged strategy as stated in the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS). Key to improving women’s education is enrolling girls and women and promoting retention of female students. Elimination of discrimination against women, development of women’s human capital and promotion of women’s leadership are the three wings of the strategy and the education sub-piller as described in NAPWA is key to all the three mentioned strategy areas.

**GOAL:**
To increase the enrolment and retention rates of girls and women at all levels of education, including vocational and non-formal education, and to create an enabling environment where girls and women have equal access to all levels of education, equal treatment in the classroom and equal opportunity to complete the highest possible level and quality of education within the appropriate time period.  

**KEY INDICATORS:**
- 50% increase in girls’ enrollment share in primary, secondary and tertiary schools
- At least 70% net enrollment in primary schools for girls
- 50% female net enrollment in universities
- 50% increase in retention rate of females in education
- 50% reduction in female illiteracy
- Minimum of 150,000 women trained in marketable skills through public and private means and approximately 40% of them utilizing the skills acquired
- 50% representation of women in teaching and non-teaching positions including policy and decision-making

**RESPONSIBLE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES:**
Ministry of Education (MoE) and Ministry of Higher Education (MoHE) are the responsible for implementation in this sub-pillar.

**PROGRESS:**
The future of Afghanistan depends on its people. It depends on the capacity of its people to improve their own lives, the well-being of their communities, and the development of the nation. Human Resource development is thus the cornerstone of national development plans. Education is not only a pre-requisite for economic development but also an essential building block in national efforts of Reconciliation and peace-building. Afghanistan has suffered too long and none more so than its children: an effective education service can really build a better future.

The demand for education has continuously exceeded expectations and the capacity of supply, leading to increased donor dependence. Looking at NAPWA indicators, one can simply understand that the targets set for MoE and MoHE are very ambitious.

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100 Ibid
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION:
MoE has put in place several endeavors to meet the objectives in NAPWA under the education sector. These involve but are not limited to the infrastructure improvements (renovation and construction) of school facilities and classrooms, adequate and timely distribution of school textbooks, and increased number of qualified teachers have also contributed to the successes in the education sector.

As per the reports provided by MoE on NAPWA’s ten years of implementation, the ministry has also conducted numerous awareness raising programs and have issued publications regarding women’s rights and para-legal trainings as relevant to NAPWA. Moreover, public awareness activities included seminars, posters, and the media to encourage girls’ education. A communication strategy on girls’ education has been developed as part of the Afghanistan Girls’ Education Initiative (AGEI). Furthermore, 128 school subjects from first to twelve grades has been reviewed and synthesized with gender equality and women’s rights related issues. The content of the curriculum is relevant to the student’s learning needs and efforts are underway to update the curriculum based on labor market needs. The new textbooks are of better quality. Science and mathematics teachers have been trained on how to use laboratories and other educational materials. More than 2,000 lab teachers have been recruited and provided with lab training. More than 271 Teacher Training College (TTC) now operates in different part of Afghanistan to cater for low number of teachers in education sector. A series of programs on professional development of teachers and school administers were conducted to train MoE teaching and non-teaching staff on subject knowledge and pedagogy and on-the-job training through in-service program provided by District Teacher Training Teams (DT3). DT3 is implemented by NGOs on district levels. Additionally, financial incentives were considered for teachers willing to go to provinces where there is a dire need for professional teachers’ educators. Education management capacity (administrative reforms and development, human resource development, financial management, infrastructure development and education management information system)

1. 38.5% girls’ enrollement
2. 1.7 Million increase in girls’ enrollment since 2007
3. 1,375 new schools built for girls
4. 24.5% female enrolments in public and private universities.
5. 60% increase in enrollments in Pvt universities
6. (84%) 4 our of 5 survival rate in schools
7. 31.6% improvement in adult literacy rate
8. 41.6 improvement in youth literacy rate
9. 28% female employees in MoE
10. 14% female employees in MoHE


have remarkably improved bringing efficiency to the system and increasing women’s representation to 34.73%.\(^\text{103}\)

MoWA has been working closely with MoE to increase girl’s enrollment in school. These interventions were injected on both policy and advocacy levels. On the policy level, MoWA developed policies on increasing enrollment of girl in schools and continuation of girl’s education in universities, and signed an MoU with Afghan Sisters Association, Afghan Sport Center, and Office of Deputy Minister Education for Literacy, and other private educational institutions to introduce sporting events into the education sector.

On advocacy, MoWA conducted numerous campaigns on increasing enrollment of women in school and continuation of education in universities. Main activities included working with government and private sector partners to absorb school graduates to universities, professional and technical vocational institutes, and private universities with fee discounts. MoWA was involved in the development, printing and distribution of posters and brochures and airing of TV spots in commercial stations. Around 10,000 posters on increasing enrollment of girls in schools and 15,000 posters on the continuation of their education at universities were produced with the support and cooperation of UNDP, UNWOMAN, UNISCO, and The Asia Foundation. Distribution of publicity calendars, TV and Radio PSAs were also conducted to increase girls’ enrollment.

MoWA helped train and average of 6,000 women annually in vocational, literacy, English language and computers training course through Women Gardens in all provinces. The gardens also facilitated other capacity building and awareness training workshops on gender, women’s participation, legal and health programs with support from Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs), PBGF, DACAAR, IOM, USAID, NRC, AWEC, UNICEF, War Child, CBI, ASIA Foundation, US Embassy, MC, WFP, UN Habitat, RAMPAP, HEUDA, IRD, UNESCO and other donor agencies.

**MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION:**
Over the last 10 years, MoHE have had some remarkable improvements in its academic, management, governance, infrastructure, access to information, curriculum and higher education student support to students. Specific to gender and women, the following have been achieved:

- 6,850 reallocated seats for the females volunteered for the university entrance exam.
- Developing a comprehensive plan for women’s leadership in universities.
- Building kindergartens for the children in seven provincial universities.
- An increase in the number of female instructors and employers in ministries and other provincial offices.
- Increasing the recruitment of female students, reaching 24% of all students in public higher education institutions and 25% of all students in private higher education institutions.
- Arrange the programs for increasing the access of women in higher education system.
- Increasing the recruitment of female professors and staff at the Center for Higher Education.
- Designing a policy to prevent sexual harassment at universities and gender strategies.

\(^{103}\) IARCSC 2018 Progress Report.
• Investigate the status of gender units in state and private higher education institutions.

Additionally, MoWA has been working with MoHE to oversee the implementation of policy on continuation of girls’ education in universities and streamline higher education curriculum with gender supportive contents. The curriculum of Sharia Law, and Literature of Kabul University are now gender inclusive. Moreover, sports gymnasiums for women were inaugurated in Women’s Gardens in which more than 200 women participate in different sports activities such taekwondo and fitness programs.

ENROLLMENT:
Now, there are almost 9 million children enrolled in school (over 38.5% girls), compared to a little more than one million in 2001. The increase is in all type of education (General Education, Islamic Education, Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET), Teacher Training Colleagues, Literacy School Students). Ministry of Education (MoE) is also investing on Community Based Education and Cross-border Education. Figure-9 shows all students by grades.

SCHOOLS:
Total number of schools have also increased from 9,062 to 17,859 (16,364 Public and 1,495 Private) between 2007 and 2017 showing an additional 8,797 schools building either rehabilitated or newly constructed. Girls’ schools have doubled in size (1,337 to 2,712) in ten years, while the co-education schools have also doubled in size showing an increased from 4,325 to 8,766. Around 30% of teachers are women, and they also make up 60% (25,887/43,299) of the total students in teacher training colleges.

There have been heavy investments on TVET schools and enrollments, the 2016/2017 MOE MIS data shows that there are 39,419 students studying in TVET schools of which 11.17% are women. There are approximately 289 state level TVET schools (190 TVET institutes and 99 schools) all over Afghanistan and the government is trying to increase the number in coming years.

INDICATOR 3.C.1: 50% INCREASE IN GIRLS’ ENROLLMENT SHARE IN PRIMARY, SECONDARY AND TERTIARY SCHOOLS
This indicator has been achieved. The total primary school enrollment has increased from 5.7 million (2007/8) to 8.93 million (2017/8) showing a 3.6 million increase in total enrollment since 2007. Of the total enrollments, 3.44 Million (38.5%) are girls. There is a 1.7 Million increase in girls’ enrollment since 2007. However, if we compare 2001 to 2017, there is a nine-fold increase in school enrollments. Figure-11 shows a big increase in enrollment between 2001 and 2017 and a steady increase during NAPWA-I implementation years.

To look at the percentage increase in girl’s enrollment share in primary, secondary and tertiary schools, the table below taken from MoE’s recent MIS data shows that female students make 39.7%, 36.4% and 34.9% of primary, secondary and tertiary level respectively. Although the target of 50% is not met, the average accomplishments rate of 38.5% is substantial progress.

![Figure 11: Primary School Enrollments](https://www.refworld.org/pdfid/4a7959272.pdf)
primary education have reached to 6,144,134 of which 2,441,341 (39.7%) of them are female students. Comparing the recent data to baseline, the primary enrollments shows a 3.8% increase. However, to compare whether the net enrollments in primary schools are at rise or not, the researchers have compared the recent data from year 2015 and 2016. As per the NSIA 2015/16 report “Women and Men in Afghanistan” shows that the percentage of girls in primary education has reduced. In 2015, the percentage of girls in the primary school was 41.9 percent, in the secondary school 36.6 percent and in high school 34.5, while in 2016, the percentage of girls in the primary school was 40.4%, in the secondary school 36.9% and in the high school was 36.9 percent. The total number of students in 2016 compared to 2015 was decreased by 33 thousand. From the figure-12 we can understand that although MoE confirms that demand for education remains high but different security, political, economic, and cultural problems influence the enrollment rate negatively, which might spike up again if big challenges such as security comes back to normal.

INDICATOR 3.C.3: 50% FEMALE NET ENROLMENT IN UNIVERSITIES

This indicator is considered to be achieved because MoHE’s 25% net enrollment target set for 2020 is already achieved, but since the NAPWA indicator lacks baseline data making the target unrealistic, therefore, the indicator qualifies to be achieved based on implementing agency targets. Equal access to all vocational, technical, higher education institutions/universities by Afghan men and women is a sustainable development goal that the Afghan government is committed to achieve by 2030. Governments prioritizes women’s success to higher education because they see this as a pathway to women’s empowerment and their participation at decision-making in the economic, social and political arenas.

In 2001, only 1 percent (1,746) of university-age students were enrolled in higher education, among the lowest percentage in the world. Currently more than 300,000 students are enrolled in public and private universities of which 100,000 are women. Women enrollment stands at 24.5% in the higher education institutions (24% in public and 25% in private universities). More than 150 universities/higher education institutions operate in Afghanistan.

Private universities enrollments have increased remarkably in the last 10 years—from 80,134 students (male and female) to 128,735 in 2016/2017- which shows a 60% increase in enrollments. When the universities were reopened in 2002, only 1,746 women were able to enroll. The percentage of women grew 156% in 2003 and 86% the following year, bringing the total number of women to almost 8,300 by 2004.

![Figure 13: Number of Female University Students](https://www.coursehero.com/file/14520750/Number-of-Female-University-Students/)

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The overall demand for places by both men and women was high at that time with total enrolments jumping 191% in 2002. Total enrolment of women in public higher education plateaued at an average of 19% from 2005 to 2014, largely because of a shortage of dormitory places for women since 80% of the existing hostels were for men. Families would not send daughters to universities without safe supervised housing. The Ministry of Higher Education launched a major campaign for more women’s dorms in 2012. As a result, five women’s dormitories were built during 2013-16 by government and donors, and several others were under construction. The total number of women grew to more than 45,000 in 2016, being 22.8% of total student numbers – a major success given the obstacles. As of 2018, several dormitories have been built in 16 provinces of the country. This has further increased female university enrollments to 100,000. MoHE’s goal is 25% women students by 2020 is almost reached. Between 2007 and 2017 the net enrollment has spiked up from 9,002 to 100,000 showing a 10-fold increase.

Other facilities that have played a key role in increasing female enrollments establishment of kindergartens in the state universities like Bamyan, Kabul and Takhar. Further investment on Infrastructure will contribute toward increasing women’s participation in the education as students, teachers or regular staff and that is why NAPWA was developed to pursue such goals. MoEH’s reports also states that the ministry was able to conduct awareness programs on EVAW law in and anti-harassment issues for approximately 11,000 students in Kabul. Moreover, first ever master’s degree program on Gender and Women’s Studies was also launched at the Kabul University. The program will graduate two cohorts by 2018.

Despite all the progress, insecurity remains one of the key constraints to education in Afghanistan. This challenge is more prevalent for female students and along with that restricting social norms also hinder girl’s education, in particular in rural areas. The socio-cultural barriers are more tangible when girls want to pursue higher education.

This is important to mention that at the moment Technical and Vocational Schools, despite high demand, can only accommodate less than 5% of grade 9 graduates. Similarly, there is a huge imbalance between the secondary and higher education sub-sectors, e.g., 79,000 students graduated from grade 12 in 2008; however, only one fourth were absorbed in higher education institutions. With current pace there will be around 900,000 twelfth grade graduates in 2020 who will need either higher education or employment opportunities.107

**INDICATOR 3.C.4: 50% INCREASE IN RETENTION RATE OF FEMALES IN EDUCATION**

This indicator has been partially achieved. One of the most important findings of the Afghanistan Living Condition Survey (ALCS) 2017-18 is that “the main problem of Afghanistan’s education system is not so much retention and drop out, but first and foremost making a start at school”.

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The ALCS\textsuperscript{108} further reveals that the number of new children reaching grade six is only 56.6% of the population with the age belonging to grade six. For girls with a completion rate of 42% in urban areas, 33.7% in rural populations. However, MoE through National Education Strategic Plan (NESP) confirms that the primary school completion rate is currently 31%, that for girls’ (21%) about half that for boys (40%) and even lower in rural areas. The Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (MICS) conducted by MoE in 2013 reveals that all children who enter grade 1 of primary school, 4 out of 5 (84%) will eventually graduate (a survival rate). Encouragingly, boys and girls, rural and urban children perform comparably on this measure.

Given the facts above and according to NESP-III (2017-2021), more than 3.5 million children are still out of school (OOS). In addition, 1,681,250 students were permanently absent but still registered as enrolled and the reasons could be anything like internal displacement or drop outs due economic problems, child labor or other poverty factors. Although MoE confirms that demand for education remains high and most students who currently begin primary school will eventually complete it, however the challenge lies in raising attendance rates beyond current levels, and in ensuring a greater proportion of primary graduates go on to start and complete secondary or, more importantly, acquire sufficient skills during their education to enter the job market when they graduate.

**Primary level.** According to NESP-III, out of 42% of children aged 5-14 attending school, more than half of them (51%) are also involved in child labor activities. Of the 25% of children involved in child labor, less than one third of them are also attending school (31%). Of children involved in child labor who are attending school, there are significant differentials by gender, residence, region, mother’s education level and household socio-economic status. All these factors effect Out of School (OOS) children and they in the risk of dropping out which will affect their retention rate.

**Secondary level.** Secondary school attendance is 32% (girls 21%, boys 43%), but only half this rate in rural areas. At secondary level the gender gap widens considerably and the reasons for non-attendance are economic, cultural, security and health with economic considerations, mainly opportunity costs, and distance between school and home figuring importantly as the main 12 reason for no longer attending school. The insufficient number of female teachers (for girls) and poor quality and relevance are also cited as major factors. There is a steady increase in the number of students completing secondary education, with growing demand for higher education.

To address the issues of increase in enrollments and the retention of existing students, MoE is adopting Community Based Education (CBE), an approach that has addressed key challenges in promoting access, retention and improved learning for primary school children in remote communities. CBE is a MoE General Education (GE) strategy for extending public schooling to remote, rural areas. The provision of education near to children’s homes, through CBE is critical for improving equitable access, retention and learning achievement in remote villages.

INDICATOR 3.C.5: 50% REDUCTION IN FEMALE ILLITERACY

This indicator has not been achieved because the reduction in female illiteracy is not tangible. Continued war and conflict has collapsed the entire education system of Afghanistan leaving several generations of Afghans as illiterate. Afghanistan has one of the lowest literacy rates in the world, currently estimated as 34.8% of the adult population (over 15 years of age). Female literacy levels are on average 19.9%, with high variation, indicating a strong geographical and gender divide. The highest female literacy rate, for instance is 34.7%, found in the capital, while the lowest is 1.6% in the southern provinces of the country. Male literacy rates average about 45%, again with highest variation. According to Asia Foundation Report “Survey of the Afghan People 2018”, currently 66% of adults and 47% of youth (15-24) are illiterate.109

The adult literacy rate – referring to the population 15 years of age and older – has increased, from 23.6 percent in NRVA 2005 to 31.4 percent in NRVA 2011-12 and is now recorded at 34.8 percent (Figure13). This implies a 31.6% improvement to baseline data for adult literacy rate in 11 years’ time. However, no statistically significant improvement can be seen for women. Compared to the adult literacy rate, the youth literacy rate shows a more rapid improvement. Between NRVA 2005 (31.3 percent) to ALCS 2016-17 (53.6 percent) there is 41.6 increase in adult literacy rate (Figure-14).

MoE reports providing more than 1,54000 literacy courses provided for 3.6 million Afghans adults of which 60% are women. New curricula developed for basic literacy, complementary literacy and two major programs called Literacy for Community Empowerment (LCEP) combing literacy, skill development, and business training funded by USAID and National Skills Development Program (NSDP) funded by World Bank and owned by MoLSAMD have also been

implemented. Moreover, Literacy for soldiers and Policemen with a target of 100,000 per year was also undertaken by USAID and German government.

Moreover, MoWA facilitated the establishment of a literacy course in 34 provinces for 52,425 illiterate women through NGOs and DoWA offices.

INDICATOR 3.C.6: MINIMUM OF 150,000 WOMEN TRAINED IN MARKETABLE SKILLS THROUGH PUBLIC AND PRIVATE MEANS AND APPROXIMATELY 40% OF THEM UTILIZING THE SKILLS ACQUIRED

This indicator is considered to be not achieved because it lacks baseline and end line data. The researchers were provided with very limited data on this indicator and there was no gender segregated data to see if 150,000 women were trained in marketable skills. However, the secondary research has revealed that the government has adopted some market-based skills development programs as part of literacy program at national level covering 10% of literacy learners. Literacy was also integrated in all skill development programs which are implemented by different organizations. Outreach programs to reach out illiterate people in 412 districts of Afghanistan were also implemented by MoE with at least 12 courses offered per year. Literacy courses through Mosque for young adults living in insecure areas and where schools were closed/not functioning were also introduced. Moreover, skill development and literacy education through Community Learning Centers (CLCs) have also been implemented. UNESCO has funded Enhancement of Literacy in Afghanistan (ELA) program to train 600,000 learners during NAPWA implementation years. The status of this indicator might change if primary data on marketable skills development is properly analyzed.

INDICATOR 3.C.7: 50% REPRESENTATION OF WOMEN IN TEACHING AND NON-TEACHING POSITIONS INCLUDING POLICY AND DECISION-MAKING

This indicator is considered to be partially achieved because it has not achieved the NAPWA’s ambitious goals under this indicator, but it shows great progress on the implementing agencies (MoE, MoHE) level to reach 30% target by year 2020.

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

MoE has 228,904 staff members (188,252 teaching and 40,622 non-teaching staff. 31.3% of the teaching position are held by female, while only 9.4% are in non-teaching positions. Figure-16 and table-6 provides breakdown on percentage and numbers.

MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION

MoHE has 29,588 staff members (17,515 teaching and 12,073 non-teaching). 13.6% of all the teaching position are held by female, while only 14.4% are in non-teaching positions.
Table 6: Comparison of Teaching and Non-teaching Staff (MoE and MoHE)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ministry</th>
<th>MoHE</th>
<th>MoE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Staff</td>
<td>Non-teaching</td>
<td>Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>Male</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sub-total</td>
<td>1,737</td>
<td>10,336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>29,588</td>
<td>228,904</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Percentage</td>
<td>14.4</td>
<td>85.6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following table presents data on increase in teaching position over the last 10 years.

Table 7: Increase in Teaching Staff since 2007

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Ministry</th>
<th>2006</th>
<th>2017-2018</th>
<th>Increase</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>MoE</td>
<td>37,861</td>
<td>188,252</td>
<td>150,391</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>MoHE</td>
<td>565</td>
<td>1,737</td>
<td>16,950</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Still, girls are more subjected to deprivation of their education rights due to the early or child marriages, this has also resulted in lack of female teachers specifically in far-flung areas of Afghanistan. The situation seems to be even harsh in insecure provinces such as Paktika, Paktia, Khost and Uruzgan with less than 5% female teacher. While 90% of qualified female teachers are located in the nine major urban centers (Kabul, Herat, Nangrahar, Mazar, Badakhshan, Takhar, Baghlan, Jozjan and Faryab). On the other hand, teachers’ lack of expertise in vital subjects such as math and physics is another circumscribing issue. This challenge is more prevalent in case of female teacher as well. From the other hand, teachers’ lack of expertise in vital subjects such as math and physics is another circumscribing issue. This challenge is more prevalent in case of female teacher as well.
SECTION 7

DONOR CONTRIBUTION

The support of donor organizations to the implementation of NAPWA in the last 10 years was commendable. NAPWA’s biggest weakness was lack of budget—this gap was filled by various international donors through on and off budget mechanism.

Majority of the contribution was in the form of donor funded projects and programs. UN Women provides multi-faceted technical assistance on EVAW Law implementation to the MoWA, which leads the High Commission for Prevention of Violence Against Women. The International Development Law Organization (IDLO) established the Special Violence against Women Unit at the Attorney General’s Office (AGO) and provided training, administrative assistance and mentoring. IDLO also trained prosecutors in Herat and judges from Helmand, Kabul, Kandahar, Kunar, Logar, Nangarhar, Uruzgan and Zabul provinces. The US Afghanistan Justice Sector Support Program (JSSP) \(^{110}\) has sponsored seminars on basic criminal investigation and EVAW law violations for police and prosecutors in Kabul.

DynCorp, \(^{111}\) a United States-based government services contractor, has trained and mentored the ANP’s Family Response Unit, which is an important component in EVAW law implementation. The European Police Mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL) developed and conducted basic criminal investigation training on violence against women for the Family Response Unit and the Special Violence Against Women Unit. UNAMA/OHCHR has undertaken numerous activities—from in depth monitoring of violence against women throughout the country to publishing the report Harmful Traditional Practices and Implementation of the Law on Elimination of Violence Against Women in Afghanistan to awareness-raising activities and trainings in 23 provinces. UNAMA/OHCHR also provided technical support and guidance to DoWA offices on the formation and function of the Commissions.

UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM (UNDP)

UNDP has been providing gender technical support to the Government of Afghanistan through MoWA since 2002. The biggest projects are highlighted below:

GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT PROJECT (GEP)

In 2007 UNDP signed its project on Institutional Capacity Building for Gender Equality (GEP) to strengthen capacity of selected state institutions for the advancement of gender equity and women’s empowerment in Afghanistan. During the project’s duration it developed effective gender mainstreaming models and strengthened the capacity of government ministries and institutions at national and sub-national levels. UNDP further developed a new project which builds on the piloting initiatives of the previous project and focuses on NAPWA priorities. The intervention focused on two key objectives: 1) 

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\(^{110}\) Supported by the US Department of State Bureau of International Narcotics Control and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL).

\(^{111}\) Under a contract with the U.S. Army, DynCorp provided training and mentoring services for the Afghanistan Ministry of Interior and Afghan National Police (ANP).
Enhancing policy development capacity of MOWA through the establishment of Women Policy Development Centre (WPDC) to ensure other line ministries that have an impact on improving women’s quality of life develop and implement gender-sensitive policies and strategies, and 2) strengthening the capacity of provincial government and traditional institutions for the political and socio-economic empowerment of women through the establishment of support institutions such as the Provincial Women’s Development Council (PWDC).

**GENDER EQUALITY AND WOMEN EMPOWERMENT PROJECT II (GEP II)**

GEP II was a three-year project implemented by UNDF between 2013 - 2015. The project focused on improving policies and legal documents, boosting economic empowerment and ensuring access to justice and human rights. GEP II continued to support MoWA’s advocacy efforts on women’s empowerment and gender equality. The project provided logistical and financial support, along with training to Women Assistance Centers in five provinces. These centers offered mediation services in cases of violence against women, as well as property and inheritance disputes, or refer cases to the appropriate authority.

**ENHANCING GENDER EQUALITY AND MAINSTREAMING IN AFGHANISTAN (EGEMA)**

EGEMA project was launched by UNDP in line with NAPWA and operated under three pillars: 1) Institutional capacity strengthening of MoWA, which aims to turn the ministry into an efficient body to coordinate and oversee national and international commitments impacting women; 2) Women’s livelihoods strengthening, to enable improved access to sustainable incomes and livelihoods strategies for women; 3) Gender transformative approaches, to support behavioral and socio-cultural changes at the grassroots levels.

**UNWOMEN**

UN Women has been working in Afghanistan since 2002 (as UNIFEM until 2010). Its current programs are closely aligned with national priorities, focusing in particular on violence against women – both in terms of protection and prevention – leadership and economic empowerment. UN Women provides financial and technical support to help strengthen national women’s machineries and works with local partners to promote lasting institutional, attitudinal and behavioral change at all levels.

- **VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN – PROTECTION AND PREVENTION:** Through its Ending Violence against Women Special Fund, UN Women funds 11 Women’s Protection Centers and five Family Guidance Centers across nine provinces. These centers give women survivors of violence, and their children, a safe space to shelter plus legal support, health checks, psychosocial support and vocational training to help
them rebuild their lives. UN Women launched the HeForShe campaign in Afghanistan in June 2015, working to change the attitudes and behaviors – especially those displayed by men and boys – that perpetuate and encourage violence against women and girls. As part of an MoU with MoWA and the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development, UN Women is working through existing Community Development Councils to raise awareness within communities across the country of the causes and consequences of violence against women and girls.

- **NORMATIVE SUPPORT**: UN Women works to promote institutional accountability for legal frameworks and international obligations on women’s empowerment, including reporting against the international treaties that Afghanistan is party to. This includes collaborating with government to mainstream the National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan and implement the National Action Plan for UN Security Council Resolution 1325 on women, peace and security, as well as providing technical support around gender-responsive legislation and policy in compliance with the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women. UN Women helps coordinate this work through chairing the Technical Gender Working Group, which involves CSOs and government, as well as participation in the Criminal Law Reform Working Group, which is led by Ministry of Justice. UN Women also supports national legal reforms processes, including the Ending Violence against Women Law and Family Law. In partnership with the Ministry of Higher Education, UN Women is working with six government ministries on the implementation of the Anti-Harassment Regulation.

- **WOMEN’S ECONOMIC EMPowerment**: UN Women works with senior civil servants, high school and university graduates to build their capacity through developing their leadership, management, English language, and ICT skills, as well as offering scholarship and internship opportunities. UN Women also supports women entrepreneurs in gaining better access to markets, and rural women to undertake livelihood development activities. Leadership and political participation. Through its Resource Centre for Women Parliamentarians (RCWP) in the Afghanistan Parliament, UN Women supports MPs – both women and men – in bringing gender perspectives into legislative debates and outputs, as well as developing their capacity as decision-makers. UN Women also supports training for elected women political leaders, including those on Provincial Councils, to help strengthen their leadership and communication skills, as well as build robust constituency relations.

- **GENDER-RESPONSIVE BUDGETING**: UN Women is one of the key actors in this area, working in partnership with the Ministry of Finance to support six ministries in undertaking a detailed assessment of their budgets, followed by capacity building to make the ministries’ budgets more gendered.
• **COORDINATION:** UN Women provides leadership and technical guidance through a number of mechanisms designed to bring together a wide variety of stakeholders in order to support more gender-responsive programming. In Afghanistan this includes: chairing the Gender Working Group, which focuses on the UN system; chairing the Gender Donor Coordination Group, with donors and UN agencies; co-chairing the Gender in Humanitarian Action Taskforce alongside the Norwegian Refugee Council; and acting at the permanent secretariat for the Women Peace and Security Working Group, including CSOs, government, donors and UN agencies.

• **SURVIVORS EMPOWERMENT JOURNEY PROGRAM APPROACH:** This program takes a holistic approach to empowering women survivors of violence through employing survivor-centric protection services and economic empowerment, while also fostering an enabling environment for community-level prevention and legal reform. As such it brings together threads from each of UN Women’s programmatic areas in Afghanistan, in order help survivors escape the violence, rebuild their lives and access justice. The program is being implemented in partnership with the Government of Afghanistan.

**UNITED NATIONS POPULATION FUND AFGHANISTAN (UNFPA)**

UNFPA has been supporting MoWA since the beginning and have facilitated the implementation of NAPWA through many projects. In 2010, UNFPA MoWA have signed the Annual Work Plan on Gender as they renewed their commitment to reduce gender-based violence and empower women in Afghanistan.

In 2012, UNFPA conducted an assessment of services provided to GBV-survivors by state and non-state agencies in pilot areas of three provinces. The assessment showed that most service providers did not have units responsible for addressing the needs of GBV-survivors, that they lacked necessary policies, standard operating procedures and ethical safety guidelines and that the staff lacked specialized knowledge and skills to respond to GBV survivors. Especially the lack of female professionals had a negative effect on the GBV response of public agencies (health care, police and prosecutor). The services provided were not promoted among target population and no easy and fast access was provided to relevant services. The Assessment also found that healthcare facilities in rural and urban areas were often the only chance for GBV victims to seek assistance, although their ability to respond was seriously undermined by the staff’s vulnerability to pressure from family members and local communities. Secondary and tertiary health facilities showed to be less affected by these societal pressures. In all locations healthcare facilities, MoWA offices and AIHRC offices served as entry points for GBV survivors, while police departments served as entry points in some locations. The assessment also showed weak communication and coordination between the agencies, resulting in problems in the referral system.

As a commitment under the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in January 2013 by UNFPA, UN Women and WHO, the Gender-Based Violence Treatment Protocol For
Primary Health Care in Afghanistan was developed in order for the UN system to provide coordinated support to the Government of Afghanistan, including all relevant national ministries (the MoPH, MoWA, MoI and MoJ) and departments, to strengthen the overall capacity for the delivery of a multi-sectorial response to GBV in Afghanistan, particularly with regard to the prevention, response and management of GBV cases. UNFPA still continues its support to MoWA in different fields.

UNITED STATES AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT (USAID)

The U.S. government has considered the investment in Afghan women to be a top priority of foreign assistance goals for the past 18 years. A focus on opportunities for women has been mainstreamed across the extensive USAID portfolio in Afghanistan. Activities in health, education, economic growth, agriculture and democracy and governance have always addressed women and continue to do so. As a result of the U.S. partnership with the Government of Afghanistan, the women of Afghanistan have made remarkable gains:

- More than 3 million girls are enrolled in primary and secondary schools
- Women’s life expectancy has been increased from early 40s to 64 years
- Increased access to the Basic Package of Health Services (BPHS), defined as the percentage of the population living within one hour’s walk to a health facility, from 57 percent (2008) to over 95 percent.
- Over 62,000 women are enrolled in public universities

It is precisely because of these development successes that the U.S. government identified a gap in women’s programming...the newfound ability of women to access education and participate in society has resulted in thousands of young women graduating from high schools and universities every year.

The following projects are some biggest (out of many) women empowerment projects supporting MoWA in implementing NAPWA both financially and technically to achieve its goals:

USAID’S MINISTRY OF WOMEN’S AFFAIRS RESTRUCTURING AND EMPOWERMENT (MORE)

USAID’s Ministry of Women's Affairs Restructuring and Empowerment (MORE) project was introduced with the aim to strengthen the capacity of MoWA in advocating for public policies that support and empower women in Afghanistan. MORE was a follow on to USAID’s MoWA Initiative to Strengthen Policy and Advocacy (MISPA) project that ended in 2011. The project supported two key components of MoWA’s National Priority Program: Component 1, which focuses on institutional reform and capacity building, and Component 5, which deals with public awareness and education, outreach and media relations. At the central level, the project supported implementation of a comprehensive capacity development plan for the newly-established MoWA Provincial Relations Department, which was responsible for coordinating with and supporting the DoWA, and, depending on

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security, for strategic capacity building in all or most of the 34-provincial level DoWAs. The activities included the following:

- **Policy Leadership Development:** MORE focused on capacity development and connectivity of MoWA and DoWAs.
- **Technical Advising and Monitoring:** A Provincial Profiling System has been developed to enable MoWA to aggregate and disseminate information on the status of women geographically, politically, health, education, etc.
- **Public Outreach:** MoWA has conducted a nationwide campaign seeking to eliminate violence against women as part of their policy function in the government of Afghanistan, with USAID support.
- **MoWA-DoWA Relations:** The Women’s Support Services System allows MoWA to provide information and referrals to women who have been victims of gender-based violence. With USAID support, this system has been strengthened.

### AFGHANISTAN JUSTICE SECTOR SUPPORT PROGRAM (JSSP)

JSSP was launched to support organizational capacity building, legislative drafting, and case management development for Afghan justice institutions. JSSP supported Afghan ministries and institutions on a variety of projects involving women's rights, penal code reform, judicial case management, and budget management to provide Afghan citizens access to a fair and effective justice system.

With JSSP’s assistance, MoWA hosted four Gender Representative Working Group (GRWG) meetings for Afghanistan Ministries and government organizations. The meetings identify challenges women face in the workplace and solutions to decrease discrimination or harassment of women. The GRWG gives a voice to women by insisting on mainstreaming gender throughout the Afghan government.

### USAID PROMOTE (2015-2020):

The USAID Promote initiative is a joint commitment by the United States and Afghan governments that will empower 75,000 women between the ages of 18 and 30 and to ensure these women are included among a new generation of Afghan political, business, and civil society leaders. The Program aims to empower women to become leaders alongside their male counterparts and ensure they have the skills, experience, knowledge, and networks to succeed.

As part of this Program, USAID intends to work with ministries across the Afghan government and with implementing partners to achieve the goals of Promote. There are four (4) component projects of Promote, with the primary target group comprising Afghan women between the ages of 18 and 30 who possess at least a high school diploma. The four components are:

- **PROMOTE: WOMEN’S LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT (WLD).** The primary target group of the WLD project will be provided with opportunities to develop management and leadership (M&L) skills through a curriculum called “Jawana” (meaning “a growing sapling”) that will facilitate entry and advancement in decision-making positions in social, political, and economic sectors at national, provincial, and district levels in Afghanistan. The secondary target group (comprising young, literate Afghan women between the ages of 15 and 24 who have at least completed primary school but not secondary school) will be given opportunities to acquire life and work skills (L&WS)
through a curriculum called “Royesh” (meaning “sprout”) that will enhance social and economic development and leadership at the community level.

- **PROMOTE: WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT (WIG).** The objective of the WIG activity is to establish an internship program for female high school and university graduates who are interested in working in the Afghan government. Through its efforts, the WIG project intends to support women’s entry into decision-making roles within the Afghan government, encourage policy reform with the government of Afghanistan at both the national and regional levels, and increase support for women in government.

- **PROMOTE: WOMEN IN THE ECONOMY (WIE).** As the economic and business component of Promote, the Afghan Women in the Economy project is key to achieving the objectives of Afghanistan’s Transformation Decade by empowering educated Afghan women from across the country to gain the skills, voices, and resources to contribute to economic growth, to reduce poverty levels, and to influence workplace policies in response to the needs of women in the economy.

- **PROMOTE: MUSHARIKAT.** The Musharikat project will support USAID/Afghanistan’s investments in women’s rights groups and activists. Musharikat—which means “partnership” or “participation” in Dari and Pashto—aims to build constituencies, strengthen advocacy, and increase awareness and support for women’s equality and empowerment in all of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces.

**CANADA RELIEF INTERNATIONAL**

**THE WOMEN’S ENTERPRISE, ADVOCACY AND TRAINING PROGRAM (WEAT)**

WEAT is a five-year, Global Affairs Canada funded program, aimed at empowering women and girls in seven districts of Ghazni, Kapisa and Nangarhar. The program will achieve this through a combination of direct interventions and advocacy support. WEAT program implementation commenced on 1 April 2017. WEAT is working to achieve the ultimate outcome of women and girls are better empowered to participate in decision making in Afghan society. The program pursues this outcome through a combination of direct interventions in communities and advocacy support to promote an enabling environment for gender equality, structured along four work streams:

- GBV Support Services
- Support for women’s economic empowerment
- Advocacy for women’s economic empowerment
- Advocacy for women’s rights.

The program is structured to address three complementary aspects of promotion of empowerment: access, agency and enabling environment. The program increases access to necessary information and assets, whilst working closely with women to build confidence and support their decision-making agency.

**THE ASIA FOUNDATION**
The Asia Foundation (TAF) has been a leading and pioneer advocate for women’s empowerment in Afghanistan and its generous contribution has been mostly focused on women’s access to justice, access to education and policy and institutional support.

TAF, through Women’s Empowerment Program, supports initiatives as follow:
- Educating both women and men about violence – free environment for women and girls;
- Promoting women’s constitutional rights among state and non-state justice actors and institutions;
- Upholding women’s access to higher education and paving the path for more economic opportunities which will allow them to have active role in private and public spheres;
- Supporting government agencies to apply policy reforms and initiatives that address most tangible needs of women and girls.

In result, TAF has been able to conduct a five-year project called Strengthening Education in Afghanistan with support of USAID. This project has supported education of women and girls across six provinces which consists literacy classes. Along with that, TAF has been successfully supporting several high-level discussions on women entrepreneurs, for instance, it supported MoCI to conduct Women’s Achievements in Business Conference in 2015. The foundation through the Legal Aid through Legal Education (LALE) project which is also supported by USAID has increased availability of legal aid. TAF has placed 100 legal aid fellows in 29 provinces of Afghanistan from which 40 are women.

OTHER DONORS AND INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS

MoWA sends its sincere thanks and appreciations to all international organizations and donor agencies who remained great partners for a decade for their generous support in funding and aligning their programs toward NAPWA implementation. The donor contribution section of the report was added to highlight a few out of many great partners for the NAPWA implementation.
SECTION 8

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Afghanistan has suffered three decades of war and during this period there was no justice for all, especially for women who were ignored in all spheres and walks of life. Suppressing regimes like Taliban have totally ignored women from their universal rights such as education, health, political participation and other rights. Patriarchy has rule for hundred years which has developed a culture of supremacy among men which is totally against the cultural and religious values of Afghanistan. Looking at the history of Afghanistan, women have played a key role in the commerce, trade, development, peace and security of the country and this has also been noticed among women in other countries as well. Women make up around 50% of the Afghan society and their participation in the rehabilitation of Afghanistan is of utmost importance but unfortunately, they are among the worst off in the world. Prior to 2002, their situation was particularly poor in the areas of health, education, protection against violence, economic productivity, literacy and public participation. Afghanistan needed a comprehensive plan to quickly respond to all the above, therefore the Afghan government has developed NAPWA to support women in all aspects. NAPWA is a national commitment, which made all the government agencies (ministries and independent agencies) responsible to set strategies, mechanisms and programs in support of women. The NAPWA was designed for ten years to be implemented between 2007-2017, however it was officially approved and launched in 2008, therefore a one-year extension up to 31 December 2018 was provided to allow NAPWA to complete its 10 full years’ duration.

After 10 years of implementation, women are still vulnerable to sexual violence, including rape, sexual harassment, trafficking, forced prostitution, and forced marriages. In remote areas, women lack access to justice, and as a result of the armed conflict and the marginalization of women in society at large, women lack proper access to healthcare services, education, and employment opportunities. Moreover, illiteracy and unemployment rates are highest among women, and Afghanistan suffers from a significant maternal mortality rate. Internally displaced women and women living in conflict-affected communities are particularly vulnerable to insecurity. Gender equality and women empowerment are not carried in a balanced manner in Afghanistan. Central based approaches and initiatives must be experienced in provinces and districts to increase visibility of women. National and sub national level engagement of women in politics, peace process, rule of law, access to justice, education, health, and security must be meaningful and inclusive.

However, it is now time to work on a follow-on to the first NAPWA to address areas that need further attention. For this, it was necessary to conduct a comprehensive assessment of the implementation of NAPWA in the last 10 years in order to find out the success, failure, and challenges of the plan. The assessment will inform the situation analysis of the second NAPWA and will provide clear direction to the research team on how to respond and address the weaknesses of the first NAPWA.

Despite the limitations explained in the methodology of the report, NAPWA has created traction towards gender equality and women empowerment. However, the progress would
have been even better if during the design stage of NAPWA, a coherent mechanism for implementation, monitoring and evaluation, reporting, coordination, budget allocation, fundraising and political support would have been considered.

Some of the major challenges, if addressed in the beginning of the implementation of NAPWA, would have guaranteed higher success rate.

**NAPWA CHALLENGES**

**DESIGN FAILURE:**
To systematically plan, implement, monitor and evaluate programs and pillars within NAPWA, there was a need for RBM and LFA framework which NAPWA unfortunately didn’t have. Moreover, no baseline data was considered for each indicator based on which they should been measured. The indicators were unrealistic and taken directly from ANDS without consulting line ministries and their strategic plans. This made the researcher’s job difficult to do a comparative analysis of results between 2007 baseline and 2017 end line.

**LACK OF CAPACITY:**
Inadequate capacity, both of MOWA and the implementing agencies to execute their roles. The structure of MOWA, the skills and leadership of its staff, and the limited capacities of ministries and local governments on gender sensitive planning, programming, budgeting, reporting, monitoring and evaluation, are not enough to effectively move NAPWA’s implementation forward.

**AMBIGUITY OF ROLES BETWEEN MOWA AND OTHER STAKEHOLDERS:**
A misconception that MOWA alone is responsible for NAPWA implementation also persists throughout government. There was a misunderstanding among different stakeholders that since MoWA was given the responsibility to own and monitor NAPWA, the implementation also belongs to them which is not true as women empowerment and gender equality is the integral responsibility of all Ministries, departments and social institutions.

**LACK OF INFORMATION ABOUT NAPWA:**
Not many departments within ministries in the capital are aware of the content or the purpose of NAPWA and its role in gender mainstreaming. This lack of awareness is even more apparent at the provincial level and in the line ministries. Lack of a coordination mechanism has also granted freedom to the implementers (line ministries) not to cooperate with MoWA while monitoring, gathering data and reporting progress. This has delayed MOWA to provide timely reports to the president’s office. Only five analytical reports were completed in the last 5 years of the NAPWA implementation.

**LACK OF APPROPRIATE MECHANISM FOR GENDER MAINSTREAMING:**
Appropriate mechanisms for systematically incorporating and tracking NAPWA’s gender goals into the policies, plans, budgets, programs and projects have not been established within ministries and local government bodies. Being a new concept in the country, there is also a dearth of knowledge on how to do gender mainstreaming at the policy and program levels, necessitating the development of successful models that will demonstrate how gender could be effectively mainstreamed in policies and programs. Likewise, there is a need to consolidate knowledge on gender mainstreaming and undertake Studies that will promote evidence-based decision making, capacity development and advocacy.
LACK OF POLITICAL COMMITMENT:
Furthermore, political commitments to gender equality need to be consolidated and continuously reiterated at the highest levels, through the State compliance mechanisms including the Parliament, oversight bodies, as well as advocacies by civil society and international organizations. In this regard, macro monitoring mechanisms have to be established engaging a multitude of stakeholders and producing analytical information that could inform strategic policies and decisions to advance NAPWA implementation.

LACK OF BUDGET:
There was no budget allocated to NAPWA implementation. In absence of a proper budget, the implementing agencies paid little attention to do gender budging in their annual budgeting during budget hearing process, while on the other hand MoWA couldn’t justify securing budget directly because MoWA was only a monitoring body for the implementation of the plan. This financial gap left NAPWA to be heavily dependent on the donor’s assistance. Although the government in 2014 tried to align donor’s support to NAPWA deliverables through a National Priority Program called “Accelerate NAPWA Implementation”, but this step was taken very late because mostly donor spent budget through off-budget mechanism and in their own interest areas. Moreover, none of the ministries under NAPWA had a women-centered budgeting, despite having gender policies and gender units. It appears that in practice formal policies and structures were not adhere through the provision of the adequate and earmarked financial resources to support these policies and structures.

PUBLIC RESISTANCE:
In addition to all these, public resistance to women’s empowerment and gender equality continues, and many of the problems encountered by ministries in implementing their programs for women (such as girls’ education and women’s leadership) are obstructed by traditional perceptions of women’s roles in society.

OTHER CHALLENGES

- During the assessment one of the initial challenges the team encountered was lack of a coherent reporting mechanism from relevant government agencies to MoWA. Respective ministries have either provided insufficient data or have taken too long to submit the data to MoWA. Moreover, the reports provided from relevant ministries show that some major programs and projects stipulated in NAPWA have not been achieved, such as inclusion of peace education in school curriculum or working with media for the promotion of a culture of peace.
- None of the responsible government agencies provided reports of implementation on establishment of close linkage with institutions dealing with women’s rights, health, rule of law, and sectoral ministries to identify areas of cooperation, synergy, and support.
- Men, women and girls in rural areas still face significant discrimination in access to productive resources and economic opportunities in agriculture and other areas. This aspect undermines rural women and girls’ potential and prevents them to be economically empowered.
- Due to the continues security challenges in Afghanistan, women’s access to opportunities is limited. Women presence in the private sector special and the economic field is still at the lowest level.
MoPH has raised its concerns about nearly one million women drug addicts in Afghanistan. Whilst there are at least 20 drug rehabilitation centers across the country that treat women and children, they are not enough considering the number of addicted women and children in the country. The rehabilitation centers are able to treat only a small percentage of addicted women and children.

Women’s physical and psychological wellbeing is immensely bound to the overall security situation and status of domestic violence. The deteriorating security situation has limited women’s access to health care centers and facilities in particular to areas directly affected by the conflict. The domestic violence results in physical, sexual and psychological harm and suffering to women. Increasing cases of violence against women can be concluded as more women in need of healthcare support, whilst the system cannot provide adequately.

Alongside having numerous achievements, women in Afghanistan is still being discriminated due to traditional, socio-religious or tribal factors. The existing challenges has affected implementation of NAPWA in terms of women’s access to leadership roles and their political participation in different spheres of the government.

The other main challenge has been the availability of baseline and consecutive statistics on the NAPWA from the 2007 – 2017, which has caused limitations in comparative analysis of the overall achievements. The factors which has led to limitation of data are insufficient commitment, ownership and accountability. To illustrate more, the role MoWA is misrepresented as the only responsible entity for women empowerment and thus, tracking the NAPWA implementation and its indicators have been assigned to Gender departments in each Ministry, however, women empowerment and gender equality is the integral responsibility of all Ministries, departments and social institutions. Moreover, certain Gender Units are not capable enough for fulfilling this responsibility and as a result, they have tended to avoid providing facts and figures regarding implementation of NAPWA.

Accordingly, lack of gender responsive budgeting and insufficient financial resources has added more to the severity of the challenges. Gender responsive budgeting is an approach to integrating or mainstreaming gender issues into all stages of the budgeting process for development plans and programs, but this limitation has weakened the efforts of government to towards its international commitments on Gender Equality and this points out the fact that there are lacking in certain skills of Ministries’ Leadership for mainstreaming Gender into the budgets such as planning, policy establishing and programing skills. The only perception of Gender equality in the majority of the government organizations is to remark certain events such as women’s day, and mother’s days, and there is no specific budget allocation for NAPWA implementation neither in Gender units nor in other departments.

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116 CSO Gender Policy, 2012 – 2016 Annual analytical report of NAPWA implementation
• In conclusion, NAPWA’s implementation has directly and adversely affected the activities of MoWA as the key agency to oversee NAPWA. MoWA has faced lack of access to adequate resources to lead the implementation of NAPWA.117 
• The relevance of NAPWA as a policy document and its impact on these efforts and developments are not clear. The officials of MoJ admitted that they were not very familiar with the content of NAPWA.118 Efforts were said to have been made in raising legal awareness by the Legal Aid Department of MoJ, for example, but according to them this process was not guided by NAPWA. According to MoJ’s Department of Legal Aid, their tasks and works are guided by MoJ’s own awareness policy and strategy, which is compatible with NAPWA.119 MoJ reports to MoWA in every four to six months about NAPWA implementation and officials from both sides meet four times in two years which is proven ineffective because coordination for such a broad issue need more communication and closer collaboration. In addition, since NAPWA’s implementation has not gone beyond the government agencies in Kabul and provincial administrations are not well-aware of content of NAPWA, its ultimate effectiveness and impact is undermined and considered limited.120
• According the analytical reports of MoWA on the NAPWA implementation, reporting government agencies have the wrong perception as if MoWA is the mere implementer of NAPWA. Less budget has been allocated to implementation of NAPWA and high officials of the ministries do not take any responsibility in this regard, often gender units of the entities are assigned to implement NAPWA which is insufficient in terms of authority and access to financial resources. Reports also show that assigned authorities show reluctance in providing on the time and good quality reports. Reporting for this assessment has lasted almost more than seven months, despite of several reminders from MoWA

119 Ibid
120 Ibid
RECOMMENDATIONS

DEVELOP NAPWA-II:
Whatever so far achieved in practice has been the direct and indirect contribution of NAPWA, hence concluding that NAPWA had the utility and influence to streamline gender empowerment efforts into line ministries in the last 10 years. Therefore, the Afghan government, international community, civil society should not stop here, continue and build up on the gains that has been achieved in the last two decades, specifically during NAPWA implementation years. There are a lot of positive things that have been gained from NAPWA since 2007 and now the important thing is to link the significant, albeit ad hoc, gains made for NAPWA and use them to place legitimate demands on government and its international donors to adequately allocation human and financial resource for ensuring basic and sustainable rights for women. Sustainability of the NAPWA gains matters a lot which will lead the country toward institutionalization of gender efforts. Therefore, it is highly recommended that MoWA take lead on the development of NAPWA-II. USAID Promote: Women in Government project has already committed to technically support the development of second NAPWA. A compressive plan has been presented to MoWA on how best to approach the development of NAPWA-II.

OUTCOME OF THE 10 YEARS ASSESSMENT REPORT:
This ten-year assessment report highlights lessons learned, challenges, recommendations and way forward to put in place a strong NAPWA-II for the coming ten-years. It is recommended that the NAPWA-II development team study and use this assessment report as basic guiding tool toward addressing key issues that have not been addressed under NAPWA. Challenges and recommendations are also provided under each pillar of NAPWA to show relevance to that specific section.

DEVELOP IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGY:
A comprehensive implementation strategy with proper measuring tools (M&E framework), coordination mechanism, clarity in role and responsibilities, realistic indicators, budget should be developed to hold government ministries accountable for implementing gender concerns under their respective areas of operation while strategically partnering with NGOs, academia, media, religious groups, business and the international community. It is recommended that two strategies of 5 years each should be developed for a 10-year NAPWA-II. The strategy needs to be updated on timely basis to respond to the changing political agendas. Annual reviews should be conducted to align and adjust NAPWA priorities to ministries changing targets.

COOPERATION WITH LINE MINISTRIES:
Ministries should be mandated to incorporate NAPWA into their annual plan and it is the duty of each ministry to ensure that it has the capacity to do so. They should also be encouraged to spend no less than thirty percent of their development and operations budget for policies, programs and activities that will promote the advancement of women based on NAPWA and ensure that women are mainstreamed across ministry activities and Each ministry/government agency should designate the Planning Department as overseer and coordinator of all processes related to the implementation of NAPWA.

BUILD CAPACITY WITH MOWA AND IMPLEMENTING AGENCIES:
After implementing NAPWA, there is no shortage of policies, laws, regulation, and physical structure in Afghanistan to attend to women’s many fundamentals issues. Ministry of Women’s
Affairs is fully functional with provincial line minister in most provinces. Moreover, all key ministries have gender policy, gender unit, and a gender focal point. There is a plethora of conventions and laws to establish and protect women’s rights. Now, the key issue has been weak capacity within MoWA and line ministries to implement those legal provisions. The following is recommended for building the capacity:

- **Establish a strong NAPWA team:** A strong team should be embedded into MoWA structure to specifically look at NAPWA-II. The team should have researchers, administrators, technical and generalists to do proper analysis of NAPWA implementation. This team will be a bridge between MoWA and line ministries and track down progress, develop reports, maintain donor coordination, promote gender mainstreaming and facilitate gender responsive budgeting. The team will also participate in budget hearing process at Ministry of Finance to advocate for budget. The NAPWA team will also facilitate capacity building for government officials in different spheres.

- **Identify NAPWA focal points in Line Ministries:** NAPWA team should assign focal points in all the ministries preferably in the Policy and Planning directorates to maintain contacts with them on timely basis. Capacity building programs should be conducted for line ministry to include the following: (a) gender planning; (b) gender statistics collection, analysis and dissemination; (c) training of gender trainers, and (d) gender policy analysis which will target planners, policy makers, budget officers, statisticians and trainers.

**ADOPT A HOLISTIC APPROACH:**
NAPWA was mostly Kabul centric. It needs to go beyond Kabul and the all those provinces should also be target which were either insecure or little attention has been given to them in the last ten-years. Through DOWAs priority support should be given to those provinces where women’s situation is most difficult. Their capacity to meaningfully influence and support the development processes at the local levels should be strengthened.

**INSTITUTIONALIZE GENDER MAINSTREAMING CAPACITY:**
Gender mainstreaming is one of the main strategies for implementing the government’s gender equality commitments. The ANDS acknowledges that “empowering women and realizing the Constitutional guarantee of equality in rights requires deliberate and carefully considered interventions that must be embedded into the processes and contents of need analysis, policy and program design, allocation of resources, implementation and monitoring of all ANDS measures.” It is recommended that Ministries should therefore be tasked to undertake a gender analysis of their principal policies and programs, especially those that have large budgets, widespread client outreach and long-time frame. Knowledge and skills in gender analysis will be a core competence that will be required of senior planning and policy officials of ministries.

A mechanism should be created to make gender analysis training accessible to civil servants should be created, including the setting up of a Gender Studies Institute (GSIs) in Kabul University. Gender analysis tools for different sectors should be made available to ministries through a gender mainstreaming information center that should be established through MOWA. A gender mainstreaming strategy should be developed to identify the major policies and programs to be reviewed for gender mainstreaming, the milestone activities (negotiation, briefings, trainings, tool development, follow up, resource intermediation, etc.) to be pursued,
partners to be engaged, timelines, locus of responsibilities and allocation of component budgets. Moreover, Gender Responsive Budgeting capacity should be strengthened with ministries to response to the process.

ESTABLISH A POLICY AND RESEARCH DEVELOPMENT CAPACITY WITHIN MoWA:
Gender sensitive researches are important in producing accurate knowledge about the situation of women and men in various contexts. This knowledge is vital in enabling policy and decision makers to design and focus development interventions to marginalized sectors and, consequently, promote social justice. Gender sensitive researches are particularly important in a country like Afghanistan where the status of women is extremely low and gender disparities are generally accepted as a societal norm. Such situation calls for information that ‘shocks’ and stimulate mindsets, especially of those who have pivotal roles in improving the lives of the people. Advocacies, awareness raising, capacity building, policy making and program development are greatly accelerated and improved when premised upon intelligent analysis that are based on empirical evidences. It is highly recommended to pursue the following major steps to create a policy and research capacity within MoWA:

- Inventory and scoping of major research organizations
- Partnership building and engagement
- Development of mechanism for resource allocation
- Gender research networking and advocacy
- Knowledge product development and dissemination

ACCELERATE PUBLIC EDUCATION AND AWARENESS RAISING:
Although a lot has been done in this regard but to accelerate public education and awareness raising on the content of the NAPWA it is necessary to build capacity of MoWA and DoWA personnel, establish a consultative mechanism on how to outreach to different categories of people, development and dissemination of public education messages on NAPWA Themes, and establish a system to monitor change in public knowledge and attitudes.

To overcome the above-mentioned obstacles and challenges and to prevent it not repeat at NAPWA II, MoWA should consider the below recommendations;
REFERENCES


Afghanistan National Peace and Development Framework (ANPDF 2016-2018)


National Statistics and Information Authority. (2015). Women and Men in Afghanistan. Retrieved from: http://cso.gov.af/Content/files/%D9%88%D8%B6%D8%B9,DB%8C%D8%AA%20%D8%B2%D9%86%D8%A7%D9%86%20%D9%88%20%D9%85%D8%B1%D8%AF%D8%A7%D9%86.pdf


## ANNEX A: INDICATOR RATINGS

**NAPWA Indicator Rating**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/N</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Achieved/Not Achieved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pillar 1: SECURITY</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>At least a 20 percent increase in the number of women participating in security service delivery over a period of 10 years</td>
<td>Not Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Progressive annual reduction in the incidence of violence against women in the public and private spheres</td>
<td>Not Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Progressive increase in the number of women actively participating in peace processes and promoting peace, justice.</td>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pillar 2: GOVERNANCE, RULE OF LAW AND HUMAN RIGHTS</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Absence of gender discriminatory provisions and procedures in the legal framework</td>
<td>Not Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Enactment of gender specific legislation, including family law and an anti-VAW law</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Minimum 30% increase in participation of women in the justice sector and law enforcement bodies</td>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Increased number of judicial officials trained on citizen’s rights, with particular emphasis on women and children’s rights</td>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Inclusion of human rights, particularly women and children’s rights in the curricula of schools and universities</td>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Establishment of shelters, referral centres and transitional houses</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Increased access to free legal aid and representation for women and girls</td>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Increased availability of legal awareness programs,</td>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>Increased reporting and prosecution of violence against women cases</td>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-pillar 2.1: LEADERSHIP AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>An affirmative action policy and strategy is adopted and implemented in key government institutions, including government administration and judiciary and in selected non-State establishments and organizations</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>Strategies and programs that promote meaningful partnerships among women and men in decision, policy and law-making positions are adopted and implemented</td>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Enabling mechanisms for women’s participation and leadership in public life are provided</td>
<td>Not Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>There is a progressive increase in the percentage of women in Afghan institutions and in decision, policy, and law-making positions</td>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Pillar 3: ECONOMIC, POVERTY AND WORK</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>A gender sensitive legislative and regulatory framework, including inheritance, property and labour laws</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>obliged access of women to skills development programs and vocational training</td>
<td>No Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Progressive increase in the access of women to gainful employment</td>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Progressive increase in the access of women to micro-finance and business services</td>
<td>Not Achieved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sub-pillar 3.1: HEALTH**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Reduction from 1,600 to 400 maternal deaths per 100,000 births by 2015</th>
<th>Achieved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Increased reproductive health services in country health facilities</td>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>30% increase in participation of women in the health sector</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
<td>At least 90% of women have access to the Basic Package of Health Services</td>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sub-pillar 3.2: EDUCATION**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>50% increase in girls’ enrolment share in primary, secondary and tertiary schools</th>
<th>Achieved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
<td>At least 70% net enrolment in primary schools for girls</td>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27</td>
<td>50% female net enrolment in universities</td>
<td>Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>50% increase in retention rate of females in education</td>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>50% reduction in female illiteracy</td>
<td>Not Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>Minimum of 150,000 women trained in marketable skills through public and private means and approximately 40% of them utilizing the skills acquired</td>
<td>Not Achieved</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31</td>
<td>50% representation of women in teaching and non-teaching positions including policy and decision-making</td>
<td>Partially Achieved</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**ANNEX B. QUESTIONNAIRE**

*Questionnaire on NAPWA Indicators:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goals</th>
<th>Key Indicators</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Define key Policies and Strategies</th>
<th>Programs, Projects and Activities</th>
<th>Implemen ting partners</th>
<th>Current status</th>
<th>Next Steps</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Does your organization consider the positive discrimination policy in the gender awareness events including trainings?</td>
<td>Does your organization, have a database that provides data on the number of women received trainings?</td>
<td>What are the key challenges that prevent women participation in public sector?</td>
<td>Are there any M&amp;E mechanisms to measure how many women are benefited from the policies?</td>
<td>Are there legal barriers for women’s property and inheritance rights?</td>
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<tr>
<td>What policy is drafted in your organization to support gender equality and women empowerment?</td>
<td>What kind of facilities are considered in your organization for women?</td>
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<td>Question</td>
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<td>Is there any coordination mechanism to coordinate activities with other stakeholders?</td>
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<td>What are the key programs that your organization supported women participation in the business, health, education?</td>
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<td>Are there activities for the participation of women in non-traditional economic areas?</td>
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<td>What is your organization’s future plans for the women empowerment?</td>
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