WOMEN HUMAN RIGHTS AND MEDIA ORGANIZATION

(WHMO)

BAYAN PROJECT FINAL NARRATIVE REPORT

BAYAN, meaning to 'express oneself' in the official languages of Afghanistan, Dari and Pashtu, is a programme designed to link national influencing and awareness raising to the important issue areas of inclusive security and political participation of women.

1. Project Introduction and Summary

Project Title	Bayan (Project no: A-02877-02-506600)
Project Goal	As part of the Dutch NAP-2 1325, this one-year pilot project established a dedicated, indigenous social media platform - Bayan and built effective partnerships between Dutch NGOs and Afghan Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) in order to promote enhanced public support for human rights, peace building, and women's leadership, with a specific focus on facilitating greater engagement of Afghan youth. 1. Within the first three months, through a consultative project design process, project partners jointly agree on specific project activities to be undertaken in the first phase of the project. 2. Within the first three months, Bayan - the dedicated SMS based social network - is designed, tested and implemented in Afghanistan for the use of project participants and their wider civil society networks. 3. Within the first year, participating civil society organizations\ strengthen capacity to effectively use the Bayan social media platform to promote engagement, discussion and advocacy around the issues of human rights, peace building and women's participation and leadership, particularly with Afghan youth. 4. By the end of the one-year pilot period, participating partner organisations jointly reflect on their use of the Bayan platform, assess its effectiveness as a tool for social change and identify key lessons to inform the development of a 2-year project extension.
Target Area	Afghan youth (female youth)
Project Duration	Year 2013 (June – November)
Reporting Duration	Year 2013 (June – November)
Donor Agency	Oxfam Novib Gender Concerns International (GCI) Cordaid
Project Budget	€ 18 280,00

2. Executive Summary

Bayan has addressed social and women's issues in Afghan Society. Through the development of a media platform in which social and women's issues are discussed, Bayan has raised awareness of women's human rights in Afghanistan. Women Human rights and Media Organisation has been active in promoting Bayan through the meida networks in 34 provinces of Afghanistan. Bayan has been promoted through different platforms, such as journalist networks and social media. Although technical problems appeared during the implementation of the project, both partner organisations were able to implement all project components that were scheduled for the first six months. There are various suggestions for ways in which Bayan could be expanded. For now, a solution needs to be found on how users can be engaged in more discussion on the topics that are presented through Bayan.

3. Planned Objectives

Bayan was designed to create a discussion platform for Afghan Youth. By making young people aware about social issues and human rights issues, and by making them engaged in discussion on these topics, young people are able to understand the issues better. It is hoped that a better understanding and greater presence of women's rights and social topics in public discussions will also integrate them into politics and policy-making processes. If women's rights and social topics are integrated into Afghan social life, this can create a more stable and peaceful society. The objectives for the first six months of Bayan were the following: designing action plans, creating budgets, arranging staff, putting the system in place, developing campaigns, and launching/testing the SMS platform.

Women Human Rights and Media Organization (WHMO)

The Women Human Rights and Media Organization (WHMO) is an Afghanistan-based NGO, which specializes in the coordination and development of projects for civil society trainings, human rights, health, hygiene, sanitation and social services through local media (radio & TV) and direct campaign (door-to-door visits, educational materials), and workshops. Bayan created various discussion platforms, such as social media, SMS messages, and radio promotions. WHMO developed SMS and Facebook messages, 40 radio dramas and talk shows on family violence , four rounds of workshops on women's rights, and actively established contacts with the Journalists' Union, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Women Affairs to gain their support for the promotion of Bayan. WHMO endorsed the principle that Bayan raises awareness of civil, political, cultural and economic rights among Afghan people.

4. Challenges and problems of WHMO

Bayan started considerably later than planned and had shorter time to implement all the activities originally scheduled. Both organisations experienced technical issues with the Bayan website and the mobile network for SMS. For example, SMS messages could only be sent in an English font, which made sending messages in local language difficult. User demand appeared larger than expected. For this reason, technical difficulties needed to be solved. There was also a lack of discussion among users, and the registration process on the website turned out to be too complex for some potential users. Publicity and visibility of Bayan did not have much space in project implementation.

5. Recommendations

We recommend that messages start to discuss wider social issues, not only women's rights. We expect that when other social issues are also discussed, users will be more interested in Bayan, and use it more. Bayan could also be expanded into a news forum on women's rights. Bayan could also see the possibility of making public advertisements on women's rights for radio and TV. Another possibility is to make a short movie on women's issues and broadcast it via Bayan on Youtube, Facebook, Twitter and other media platforms. Lastly, there should be more involvement of women's organisations and for more visibility for Gender Concerns and its partners through communication planning during the next phase of Bayan.

6. Lessons learnt

Technical problems should have been expected due to the fact that Bayan was new and the nature of the electronic/media use. This caused delays in implementing program components. In the end, however, both partner organisations were able to implement all components of the program and were reasonably successful in registering users. Now that users are registered, the problem of a lack of discussion can be addressed. New ways must be invented to encourage people to interact more deeply in discussions about social issues that are presented through Bayan media platforms. Also, women's organisations must be approached to learn from Bayan lobby methodology.

Bayan Project Pictures

Picture 1: Parwan provice youth workshop on family violence

Picture 2: Kabul youth workshop

Picture 3: Nangarhar Youth workshop

Picture 4: Parwan province Religious event

Picture 5: Bayan radio drama actore