



PROJECT OVERVIEW:

Project Name: Khaberi Kawen – Female MPs in Afghanistan conversing with the press, their peers, and the public

Project Region: Kabul, Afghanistan

Partner(s): Women Human Rights and Media Organization (WHMO)

Dates of Initiation and Completion: 06/01/2013 – 07/15/2014

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

The *Khaberi Kawen* (KK) Project's aim was to stimulate female members of parliament (MPs) in Afghanistan to use new media and sustainable platforms to communicate and network with the press, their peers, and the public. This was operationalized through three separate thematic categories (Assessment, Training, and Networking). Activities included three capacity building workshops, a radio program, and public events (a large press conference, and the conference titled "Afghanistan in 2014").

The activities sought to enable female MPs to develop larger networks, practice, build, and enhance their public speaking skills, gain exposure and international recognition, and foster relationships with the media, nationally and internationally. The project was completed on the 15th of July 2014. In relation to the objectives set for its core activities, *Khaberi Kawen's* work was judged to be successful, in terms of outputs, costs, and timescale, with significant overall benefit to the female MPs. Within the context of women's development, all attending and participating female MPs in the Afghan Parliament reacted very positively to the project, expressing that their use of new media and sustainable platforms to communicate and network with the press, their peers, and the public had been greatly facilitated and enhanced by the work of Gender Concerns International and the Women Human Rights and Media Organization. The various workshops and radio programs have given these female MPs an arena for their voices to be heard and have allowed them to gain expertise in how to effectively create substantial and sustainable networks.



This success is reflected in the achievement of the *Goals* and *Objectives* of the project, as well as the overall impact of the project. These were divided into three themes; Assessment Phase, Training, and Networking.

THEME 1: ASSESSMENT PHASE	
<i>Goal:</i> Assess the type of media and communication workshops that female MPs in Afghanistan would find most useful.	
<i>Objective:</i> Connect to female MPs and administer an assessment survey.	
ACTIVITY	STATUS
Draft and distribute assessment surveys to female MPs in order to determine female MPs specific needs.	Survey successfully drafted and distributed in order to identify female MPs specific needs.
Plan and host press conference to launch the project as a means of raising awareness among female MPs on the projects specific goals.	Project successfully launched and female MPs were made aware of the workshop activities and project goals.

THEME 2: TRAINING	
<i>Goal:</i> Develop and build the capabilities of female MPs media and communication skills.	
<i>Objective:</i> Train female MPs in media and communication skills through 3 workshops.	
ACTIVITY	STATUS
Host 1x3 day Online Communication Workshop with the aim of strengthen female MPs online communication skills.	15 female MPs participated in the workshop. All attending MPs successfully created Facebook and/or Twitter accounts, wrote a leadership autobiography and 1 press release, and 7 MPs created blogs.
Host 1x3 day Radio Communication Workshop Training to build female MPs radio communication skills.	15 female MPs were trained in communicating via the radio, and all MPs were given on-air radio time on the established radio program.
Host 1x3 day Public Appearance Workshop to strengthen female MPs public speaking and public appearance skills.	15 female MPs were trained in giving public appearances, speeches and interviews.

THEME 3: NETWORKING	
<i>Goals:</i> - Increase female MPs contact and network with the press; - Give female MPs increased public exposure and experience with public speaking and public appearances.	
<i>Objective:</i> Provide female MPs with a platform to engage with the public, the press, and European Parliamentarians.	
ACTIVITY	STATUS
Establish a radio program in order to create a sustainable platform for female MPs to communicate with the public.	The radio program for the female MPs was successfully established, with the MPs using the radio program on a weekly basis.
Euro-Afghan Parliamentary Committee Video Conference to strengthen the network between Afghan female MPs and European MPs.	Not able to complete this activity due to the fact that the European Parliamentary Elections were held in May 2014, resulting in all European MPs had to leave Afghanistan for Brussels by then.
Conference titled "Afghanistan in 2014-Upcoming Presidential Elections".	Due to security reasons, the Conference had to be downsized. The Conference took place within the Parliament where certificates were distributed to all female MPs by Gender Concerns International and the partner organization WHMO.

TIMELINE OF PROJECT ACTIVITIES

JUNE – JULY 2013	
 <p><i>GCI Office in Afghanistan</i></p>	 <p><i>GCI Local and International Staff meeting with WHMO</i></p>
Project Details/Action Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 28 May 2013 the <i>Khabari Kawen</i> contract was signed and the project was launched in June 2013. The Project coordinator Klaudyna Mikolajczyk contacted WHMO. The list with the contact details of the female parliamentarians was prepared. The questionnaire assessing female MPs skills and needs was developed. The questionnaire was translated to Dari by Shukria Hassani, Gender Concerns International Liaison Officer and Lobbyist, and Wali Sherzad, WHMO Project Officer.
Travel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 4 June 2013 Sabra Bano, Director of Gender Concerns International, travelled to Afghanistan to meet Stephanie Foster, Women & Civil Society Adviser at the US Embassy. On 5 June 2013 Sabra Bano met with GCI's partner, Wali Sherzad, Project Officer of WHMO.
Partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The partnership with two local organizations, Women Human Rights and Media Organization (WHMO) and Media Support Partnership Afghanistan (MSPA) was initiated. On 15 July, Abdul Qayyum Karim informed Gender Concerns International about the dissolution of MSPA. On 21 July, Stephenie Foster met with WHMO, and discussed the development of the project. On 22 July, Klaudyna Mikolajczyk consulted with Stephenie Foster about the possibility for the involvement of only one partner for the project. On 23 July, the grant amendment to the contract was signed by Pedro Palugyai, the Grants Officer, and Sabra Bano, Director of Gender Concerns International. As decided, WHMO took over grant activities from MSPA.
Afghan Office Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> On 29 February 2012, Shukria Hassani was hired as the Liaison Officer & Lobbyist in Afghanistan. On 28 May 2013, Shukria Hassani was assigned as the Liaison Officer for the <i>Khabari Kawen</i> project.

AUGUST – OCTOBER 2013



Khaberi Kawen Launch with Sabra Bano, Director of GCI

<p>Project Details/Action Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From August-mid September 2013, surveys to assess communications skills were distributed among the female MPs. • The project was launched on the 25th of September 2013, at the Parliament Conference Hall in Kabul. Female MPs, press, and Caroline Ferrari, Communications Officer from the US Embassy in Kabul, were present. • 70 female MPs were invited, however, due to overlapping impeachments activities taking place at the same time in the main Parliament Hall, only twenty-three women were able to participate. The importance of strengthening the female MPs communication capabilities was acknowledged by all participants. • In September 2013, surveys were reviewed. Responses were used to properly design the upcoming workshops. • Workshop trainers were engaged and the workshop agendas were established.
<p>Travel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the end of September 2013, Sabra Bano and Gender Concerns International Project Coordinator Paola Mazzoli travelled to Kabul for the launching of the project to supervise and give expert support to the local partner. Also, their presence was crucial to monitor and evaluate activities. • On September 24th, Sabra Bano met with Caroline Ferrari, Communications Officer from the US Embassy in Kabul.
<p>Afghan Office Operations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Liaison Officer Shukria Hassani become fully engaged in coordinating the communication between GCI Headquarters and the local partner for an efficient implementation of the project.

JANUARY – MARCH 2014



The Online Communication Workshop

Project Activities

- All the female MPs that participated in the KK project were very engaged in preparatory electoral activities related to the Presidential elections that were held on April 5th, however during this period less activities with female MPs could be planned due to the fact that the Afghan parliament was in recess from 20 January until 6 March.
- January 11-13th was the period when the Online Communications Workshop was organized for the 18 female MPs. The workshop focused on Facebook, Twitter, blogs, press releases and autobiographies as tools for the female MPs to enhance their visibility.
- Two press releases were prepared on the topic of family violence and issued to different media sources.
- Female MPs also committed themselves to preparing a speech for the “Afghanistan in 2014” Conference.
- Trainer Ezatullah Akbsary designed all workshops to focus on gender equality and to address the skills the MPs were willing to learn (these were assessed in the surveys conducted previously).
- From September 2013 onwards, 15 radio programs were broadcasted with female MPs to train them in media skills and to give them a medium for communication and visibility. From January until March, 6 radio programs were prepared and broadcasted via Gorbat Radio Station, which has a reach of 1.000.000 listeners. These radio programs hosted the female MPs and discussed topics such as women’s roles within the upcoming Presidential elections, women’s rights, social media as a means of communication, and the effectiveness of the KK workshops.
- In February Ms. Katharina Stockli from Gender Concerns International attended a gathering of the European Parliament’s Delegation to Afghanistan. During this meeting, she spoke with

	<p>Mr. Thijs Berman and attempted to set up a Video Conference between Afghan female parliamentarians and members of the European Parliament. He reacted positively and asked GCI to get in touch. After doing so GCI learned that Mr. Thijs Berman was leaving for an EU election mission to Afghanistan and that there were no more sessions on the Delegation to Afghanistan before the Parliamentary elections. Nienke Jansen, Khaberi Kawen Coordinator, intended to approach other members from the delegation. However, because the European Parliamentary Elections were held in May, all members of the European Parliament’s Delegation already left to Brussels by then.</p>
<p>Travel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due to the fact that the parliament was in recess from 20 January to 6 March, as well as the issue of the insecure situation surrounding of upcoming elections, no delegation from Gender Concerns International was able to visit during the period covered by this progress report.
<p>Partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 10 March WHMO organized a meeting with Parliament Senators Mrs. Sediq Balki and Mrs. Teba Zahida. The meeting was organized in order to discuss the possibilities for organizing a conference regarding the 2014 Presidential elections in which female MPs would be able to put their new communication skills to practice. • On 30 March WHMO organized a meeting with Senator of Parliament Farida Koji. The possibility for organizing a conference on the 2014 Presidential Elections was again discussed. Because the parliament only recently started working again after recess, Khaberi Kawen partners were advised to organize the conference after the Presidential elections so that more female MPs would be able to attend. • WHMO was in contact with female MPs to engage them in their radio programs, workshops, and the upcoming conference on the election.
<p>Afghan Office Operations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Liaison Officer Shukria Hassani attended all <i>Khaberi Kawen</i> Workshops where she provided the participants with general information about Gender Concerns International and assisted in the execution of the workshops.

APRIL – JUNE 2014



Interview with MPs



WHMO Handing Out Certificates to Female MPs

Project Activities

- The European Parliament held its elections in May 2014. This prevented Gender Concerns International to hold a video conference, which was scheduled to take place in April 2014.
- The KK workshops hosted by WHMO offered trainings in the areas of communication and public speaking. The participating women received relevant information and sufficient tools on appropriate conduct with regards to interaction with journalists, radio and TV. Press statements were written during these workshops to help the women enhance their writing skills. Furthermore, a number of these women worked on writing speeches for conferences.
- On the 5th of April 2014, Liluma Ahmadi was interviewed on the topic of women’s role in parliament. Ms. Ahmadi is a member of the Religious Affairs, Higher Education, Education, Cultural and Scientific Researches Commission. The interview was hosted by WHMO and dealt with addressing current viewpoints on how women should put themselves forward as active actors in parliament.
- Within the same discussion, the following women were invited to conduct a radio interview:
 - Fareda Koji, 26 April 2014;
 - AnarKali Honar Yar, 3 May 2014;
 - Najiba Hussini, 25 May 2014;
 - Samkani, 7 June 2014;
 - Homira Niamati, 28 June 2014;
 - Najiba Hussuni, 5 July 2014 and;
 - Teba Zahidi, 12 July 2014.
- On the 12th of May 2014 Fozai Sadaat Samkani, the female MP, was invited to attend a hotel conference. Ms. Dawn Dowling, Special Assistant to the Counselor for Public Affairs, and M. Sadiq Haqqarast, Project Manager Assistant, both from the U.S. Embassy Kabul were also invited to join this conference.
- On the 9th of June 2014, together with female MPs, Gender Concerns International and WHMO conducted the project’s final event. Shukria

	<p>Hassani, Liaison Officer for the <i>Khabari Kawen</i> project represented Gender Concerns International during this ceremony. The female MPs showed gratitude towards Gender Concerns International and WHMO for their efforts in organizing programs for female MPs. They expressed their desire for Gender Concerns Internationals to continue its fruitful programs in the near future. Towards the end of this event, Gender Concerns International and WHMO handed certificates to all female participating MPs.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On 24 June 2014 Ms. Sabra Bano sent a letter to the Afghan Parliament. It stated that Gender Concerns International was very pleased with the activities that were carried out and expressed Gender Concerns International’s wish to further cooperate with the parliament members in the future. • In the final evaluation questionnaires filled by the female MPs, the MPs expressed their appreciation of the project. The feedback on the workshops and events highlighted that the project’s activities have played a vital role in educating female MPs. This has had a real and tangible impact on their working, and they have recommended that the project is continued in the future. Therefore, it is advisable for the project to be repeated.
<p style="text-align: center;">Travel</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the 15th to the 18th of April 2014, the Afghanistan Coordinator for Gender Concerns International Nienke Jansen, travelled to Afghanistan. The trip largely consisted of meeting local partners, especially regarding this project.
<p style="text-align: center;">Partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • On the 16th of April 2014 a meeting was held by the Project Officer of WHMO, Wali Ahmad Sherzad to discuss the activities of the KK project. The Afghanistan Coordinator for Gender Concerns International also visited Ms. Dawn Dowling from the U.S. Embassy Kabul and the Ministry of Economy on the same day. • On the 17th of April another meeting was held with the WHMO’s Project Officer Wali Ahmad Sherzad, Afghan Women Network (AWN)’s Hasina Safi and spokesperson of Agency Coordinating Body for Afghan Relief and Development (ACBAR) Justine Piquemal. • On the 8th of June 2014 a lunch was hosted by Leslie Cunningham, spouse of the U.S. Embassy Ambassador in Kabul. WHMO, Gender Concerns International and female parliamentarians were invited to the Embassy.