

Monthly Progress Report

Organization Details:

Grantee Name	Human Rights Watch and Media Organization
Project name	Women Voice and Leadership-Afghanistan
Location	Behsud district and Jalalabad city of Nangarhar
Reporting period	April 01, 2021 – April 31, 2021
Date submitted	May 04, 2021

Summary

WHMO has been determined from the onset to successfully accomplish all the planned project activities with strong determination and commitment to voice women's concerns, to create and improve an enabling environment for women and youth girls to realize their dreams by realizing their basic legal rights to get education, seek employment, enjoy proper healthcare and to ensure their political participation. Moreover, WHMO is committed to eradicate gender inequalities and all sorts of violence in social and family environments and to mainstream gender in decision-making both indoor and outdoor. It is fact that there is a little bit women engagement in different sectors and political sphere, but still it is on the verge of decline if not properly supported and backed up.

The project so far has been smoothly heading and its activities are being implemented as per requirements. The 1st and 2nd Round of 1-Day Workshop on Women Rights and EAW have been magnificently conducted in district Behsud in Nangarhar Province. More than 40 participants (influential persons) from various walks of life including youth, Ullemas (religious scholars), community-based organization actors and students from schools & universities graced the workshop with their presence who showed their dedication and commitment to work for the elimination of gender inequalities and gender-based violence when their perception was positively addressed and their insight on these crucial social issues was appropriately developed.

The 1st and 2nd Street Theater Shows on Women's Rights and EAW were organized and shown in Behsud district of Nangarhar province in which more than 190 youth, students,

Women's Voice and Leadership program / The Asia Foundation

women and community leaders partook and appreciated the quality and the message it delivered.

WHMO with the coordination of partner radio {Muram FM) broadcasted the first roundtable discussion bringing together relevant experts to provide or hold in-depth discussion on the family violence from sharia and Islamic perspective which is acceptable and in accordance with the listeners and families' mindset or cultural norms and values. This radio talk-show took place with Ms. Amran Abid (Writer and Journalist) and Mr. Khalid Arzkht (Human Rights and Civil Society Activist) who provided a well-developed and well-thought-out comprehensive discussion on the women's basic/legal rights and EAW as well as family violence from sharia and Islamic point of view which our culture and tradition approve to create an exemplary society where justice rules the hearts of all men and women alike and where peace and security prevails.

Furthermore, WHMO has designed and prepared five (5) attractive, educational and promotional materials for leaflets and banners highlighting messages concerning EAW and women's rights to raise awareness and voice women's concern. Equal rights is unfortunately not a reality for many women as every walk of life is highly dominated by men throughout Afghanistan and especially in Pashtun belts.

The WVL team in Nangarhar province conducted a meeting with the Department of Youth with the purpose to share WVL project objectives with this agency and to develop their knowhow for better intervention.

The WVL Project has been officially introduced to the Department of Economy of Nangarhar province by the Ministry of Economy for better cooperation and coordination with project stakeholders in the targeted province.

Activities:

I. Activities accomplished during reporting period and results achieved, please explain whether the planned target is met or if not why?

- According to the project work plan, two training workshops have been successfully conducted in Behsud district of Nangarhar province.
 - The first training and awareness-raising workshop was organized on 17 April 2021 while the second one on 18 April 2021 by WHMO to raise awareness on women constitutional and legal rights, their rights' protection and GBV issues for influential community elders, religious scholars and youth.

Activity #1 & 2

Key results of the Workshop:

- Basic relevant knowledge, understanding and awareness of the 40 participants enhanced on how to work on tackling with the EVAW, family violence, legal rights, gender equality, different types of violence, reason of violence, solution ways and challenges. Community, CBOs and youth understood their role to work for reducing gender-based violence and women's rights in accordance with Islamic and humanitarian perspective.
- The participants showing their enthusiasm and passion for learning acknowledged that generally all sorts of trainings, awareness-raising programs and workshops do develop participants' insight, understanding and knowhow in one way or another but interest and passion for learning is required. They further stated that they rarely get such opportunities to participate in any program or training workshop as such programs and trainings are not normally organized and conducted in remote community where they reside that is why they are usually deprived of capacity and knowhow development interventions. They further commented that this workshop has proven very lucrative as it addressed the long-lasting repercussions of violence on family, children and the total environment they develop and groom in.
 - University lecturer, Mr. Hassan Zia made commitment that he would conduct an awareness-raising workshop for his students on EVAE and its deadly effects on families, children growth and their living atmosphere.
 - Islamic expert (Qazi Shoukat) showed his commitment that he would preach it on every forum he would be invited to express his views concerning any issue. He added that he would utilize the platform of mosque to positively change people perception, their attitude and behaviors regarding minimizing gender inequalities, violence against women and their due legal rights. We further motivated him to be prove himself as change-agent as in our society religious and Islamic scholars/experts and they're each and every word/talk is respected and followed with heart and soul.
 - Representatives of different youth councils also made commitment that they would reach out to the target community to share the lesson learned with youth in their families to boost up their knowhow and understanding.
- The participants expressed their satisfaction both in terms of contents and the methodology of the training. The training included many such examples of gender inequalities and family violence and were brought under discussion for better understanding the true face of Afghan society.

Activity #3 & 4

Women's Voice and Leadership program / The Asia Foundation

- During reporting period two street theatre shows were organized that took place in Behsud district on 26 to 27 April 2021 on Women Rights and EVAW.

Key results of the Street Theatre Shows:

- More than 190 participants' mindset, attitude and behavior positively altered regarding gender inequalities and family violence.
- There were youths, community leaders, women, teachers, and students who became aware of the noxious impact of violence on family, its structure and children development.
- Their knowhow was developed that how women can realize their legal rights and can find a solution and way out from violent environment to a peaceful environment based on Islamic perspective.

Activity # 5

- One Radio panel discussion was conducted and broadcast bringing together two key local figures on 27 April 2021 in the target community.

Key results of the Round Table Show:

- One roundtable was conducted focusing on violence against women and girls and women legal issues with special attention paid to the particular circumstances and factors driving family violence in each Afghan community.
- Community became aware of women's basic rights, reasons for family violence and its negative ramifications over family and children overall growth.
- The participants from the target community expressed their commitment to play their roles as change-agents to create and improve an enabling environment for women and youth girls which is based on justice, equal distribution of rights and free from violence.

Activity # 6

- A Compliance Consultant, Muhammad Tariq was hired through a transparent screening process and a joint interview mechanism. He has been engaged working since 1st May, 2021 at WHMO main office.

II. Activities planned but delayed during the reporting period:

- During the reporting period, the work of publishing two news articles has been suspended thanks to the following reasons.
- The first reason is that the culture of print media and publishing newspapers and magazines is on the brink of waning in Nangarhar province as people taste for reading newspapers changed to social media as a result of the rapid growth of social media. Now people reach out to social media for any sort of news updates etc. Now there is

only magazine named "Mina Magazine" in Nangarhar which charge 100 USD for publishing a single article which is the highest cost they are charging.

- WHMO team in quest of print media ran into with one named "Hewad Palana" which has stopped its operation as a result of people changing mindset and behaviour. Its owner Naqeebullah Jahani who himself is a journalist showed the same grievance. He added it was hard to meet the operation's expenses so as a result it was brought standstill. He further added that there was a little bit reading culture left after the restoration of the current government, but when social media was introduced it multiplied everything with zero.
- WHMO is still in quest and if it is in vain it proposes to utilize the acclaimed amount or fund in TV Talk-shows as these also cost high and even more than we claimed for.

III. Activities Planned for next reporting period:

- One radio roundtable is planned to be broadcasted on EAW and women's rights.
- One TV talk-show will be conducted on EAW and women rights.
- Two street theatres will be displayed.
- three advocacies of EAW & Women Rights through Billboards.
- One workshop on EAW and women rights will be conducted
- Promotional material (leaflets) will be developed and produced.
- Completing of a documentary.

IV. Challenges & Lessons Learned

Challenge	Lessons learned / solutions
Approval and permission from Ministry of Economy	As the concerned officials assured us for complete cooperation and support, they approved the project execution this time while MoU has not been signed so far. Still everything in the project is running efficiently.
Non-involvement of the relevant & key stakeholders in project activities.	WHMO is always in favour of the key stakeholders' positive involvement to take ownership of the project activities in one way or another, directly or indirectly when it comes to selection of the project beneficiaries or participants/invitees for TV and radio talk-shows. WHMO wrote official letters to Department of Women's Affairs, Department of Culture & Information, Human Rights Commissions to introduce them with the project goals, objectives and activities to attract their attention and full support for the project successful execution.
Charging high cost by the Media companies for shooting, broadcasting TV and radio talk-shows as well as street theatre.	There is no doubt that WHMO has more than one-decade rich experience in relevant field and has a developed network across the country, still we face double standards in media companies in terms of shooting, producing and broadcasting TV and radio talk-shows. When we negotiate prior to bid award, they behave differently but by the time they come to know about the bid approval they wear different face and behave differently. Anyhow this has not yet affected our operations and everything is heading smoothly forward.

Insecurity & Anxiety	WHMO team is quite committed to pursuing the planned activities as per requirements. The other day while going for street theatre they heard a blast, but they were determined saying that these are routine happenings in Afghanistan. WHMO has already trained its staff on safety how to tackle with any such mishaps keeping in view the security and unpredictable situation in view.
----------------------	--

V. During this reporting period we required assistance from the WVL Project team related to the following:

We were assisted on the formation and development of promotional materials for leaflets, banners and billboards as well as on project report development.

VI. The WVL Project team provided the following guidance/directions/advice or

The WVL Project team is always at hand in case required to properly guide and instruct the IPs to make the assignment productive and prolific. Normally, during the orientation session they guide IP how to successfully accomplish the project planned activities as per the agreed schedule. These instructions would prove helpful when situation gets worse such as avoiding placing Asia Foundation logo etc on different promotional materials, billboards and banners etc for security measures especially in provinces. We really appreciate it that donor in true sense values the protection of the implementing partner during project execution.

VII. The WVL Project team's response is still pending

There is no any response on the part of WVL project team pending rather they are very cooperative and supportive whenever and wherever required to turn the project successful and beneficial.

VIII. Program Pictures



Picture 1: First Workshop



Picture 2: Theatre Show



Picture 3: Second Workshop



Picture 4: Radio Talk Show



Picture 5: Theatre Show



Picture 6: Participants

Designing Pictures for Advocacy Materials and Billboards





Women's Voice and Leadership program / The Asia Foundation

IX. Work Plan Tracker: (Please copy your approved work plan for Year one in format below and update the status for the reporting month with any conditions/changes anticipated (e.g., not started, in progress, completed, pending, cancelled, On-board (for staff only))