

Sustainable Empowerment:

**The EU and Women's Capacity
Building in Afghanistan**

AFGHANISTAN



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- National Capital (2,450,000 in 2002)
- over 100,000
- over 50,000
- over 25,000
- other main city
- other city
- Capital of province



Afghanistan 2016

- The more gender equal, the more stable and peaceful societies: promotion of women's rights is both a moral and a security imperative
- Afghanistan is a fragile and conflict-affected country
- HDI 169/187; GII 150/152
- Taliban hold the most territory since 2001
- Pressure on President Ghani to form national reconciliation government with Taliban; women's rights are a bargaining chip in the negotiations
- Progress has been made but women's rights are fragile and reversible => continued active international, incl EU, support for women's rights, capacity-building, education, civil society, media, the rule of law and compliance with UNSCR 1325 will be crucial.



**“Equality between women and men is a fundamental right,
a common value of the European Union,
and a necessary condition for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth (...)
this is why the European Union strongly promotes women’s rights
and gender equality and fights discrimination against women and girls.”**

**Amb. Vygaudas Usackas, Head of EU Delegation and EU Special Representative in
Afghanistan, 8 March 2012**

Afghanistan – A Snapshot

- Population: 30.4 mill, 23% urban
- Average Life Expectancy: 59 years
- Fertility Rate: 5.1
- Maternal/Infant Mortality Rates: 460/100,000 (21st rank) and 115/1000 (1st rank)
- Literacy Rates: 28%; Male 43%, **Female 12.6%**
 - General Education: 64% male, 35% female
 - Tertiary Education: 81% male, 18% female
- 25% Members of Wolesi Jirga; 17% Civil Servants; 3 Cabinet Ministers
- Labor force participation rate : **16% for women**
- **Violence Against Women: 82%**
- Constitution guarantees equality of citizens; right to education and work
- EVAW (2009; but not ratified by Parliament)
- Harmful customs and traditions (*baad*, honor-based violence) that contradict legal frameworks; absence of rule of law; poverty, lack of security

Development Assistance to Afghanistan

- Overarching goal: a sustainable Afghan state
- ODA to Afghanistan
 - Global: **\$62.8 billion (2002-2014)**, of which US 61%, EU 15%
 - **EU: 610 mill (2011-13)**
 - 2014: US \$2,92 bill; Japan \$812 mill; Germany: \$525 mill; **EU: \$310 mill**; UK: \$433 mill
- ARTF (Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund; 2002-): 60% by EU and MS
- EU Country Strategy Paper (2007-13)
 - Rural development; governance; public health care; regional cooperation (subnational level; no gender indicators)
- Foreign Affairs Council Conclusion (2014-2016)
 - promote peace, security, regional stability, reinforce democracy; economic and human development, fostering the rule of law, and respect for human rights, **in particular the rights of women**
- Cooperation Agreement on Partnership and Development (Dec 2015)
 - first official contractual framework governing econ and pol cooperation between the EU and Afghanistan and addresses issues of common concern and hold political dialogue, incl human rights issues, **in particular the rights of women and children**

Gender and the EU's Development Policy

- Equality between women and men is a fundamental right and a common value of the European Union
- Gender equality is a cross-cutting issue in 2005 Consensus on Development
- EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development 2010
 - Three prongs: Gender mainstreaming (assessing the different implications of a policy on women and men at all levels); specific actions targeting only women; systematic integration of gender
- Equality and Women's Empowerment: Transforming the Lives of Girls and Women Through EU External Relations 2016-2020



Gender Empowerment Framework in Afghanistan

- Gender is a cross-cutting issue in Afghanistan's national development strategy (ANDS) and the basis of the current National Priority Program (NPP): horizontal and vertical; national and sub-national levels
- National Solidarity Program (NSP) emphasizes women's participation in CDCs (gender integrated *shuras*; 35% women)
- The MOWA has developed a NAPWA that expands on sectors (security, governance, rule of law, human rights and social development) where promoting gender equality becomes part of the NPP
- **UNSCR 1325** is recognized by the government as an important resolution to promote women's representation in security as well as in all stages of the reconciliation process
 - UNSCR Resolution 1325 (adopted 2000): urges all actors to increase the participation of women at decision-making levels in conflict and resolution and peace processes (pt 2) and incorporate gender perspectives in all peace negotiations, peace building, post-conflict reconstruction and security efforts.
 - High Peace Council (9/70 women delegates)
- SD Goal 5: Gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls

A Women's *shura* in Samangan



EU and Sustainable Gender Empowerment in Afghanistan

- ARTF, through the National Solidarity Program (NSP), emphasizes women's participation in CDCs (gender integrated *shuras*; 35% women)
- 2009 EU Action Plan for Afghanistan/Pakistan specifically states the importance of gender issues with a national strategy and has specifically targeted women as beneficiaries (National Vulnerability Survey; 46% of contracts have a principal gender objective)
- EU Plan of Action on Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment in Development 2010
 - Targeted programs
 - Afghan Women in Leadership Program
 - Advocacy on human rights for CEDAW and UNSCR 1325
 - Implementation of ERAW and NAPWA
 - Establish human rights dialogue
 - Improve capacity of ANP to tackle violence against women
 - All sector support programs that the EU supports include gender-sensitive indicators
 - Afghan Women's Network; CARE
- UNSCR 1325 is a guiding strategy for DFID (UK) and NL (SRL)

Objective 4: Fostering rule of law and respect for human rights, in particular the rights of women and children

Sub-Objectives	Outcomes from EU and MS engagements	Initiatives at sector level
<p>15. Human rights advanced, in particular the rights of women and children</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition by the new government of Afghanistan's international commitments in the area of human rights, including the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), UNSCR 1325 and the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child (OP CRC) on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflict, with clear plans for implementation supported. • Implementation of the recommendations of the 2014 Universal Periodical Review to Afghanistan advocated. • Implementation of EAW (Elimination of Violence Against Women) law and the National Action Plan for Women (NAPWA) actively pursued. • Annual Human Rights Dialogue between Afghanistan and the EU established. • The Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC) is functioning independently and with sufficient government funding. • Improved capacities within the Afghan National Police to tackle violations against human rights and the rights of women. • Civil society groups, in particular those focused on women's rights, supported. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with the government to live up to its international human rights commitments with clear planning for their full implementation before end 2016. (all EU partners) • Continue advocacy for the reestablishment of a moratorium on death penalty. (all EU partners) • Engage with the government to take the necessary steps to preserve the independence of the AIHRC and ensure sufficient government funding. (all EU partners) • Seek an annual Human Rights Dialogue between Afghanistan and the EU, while continuing to engage on issues of concern on an ad hoc basis. (all EU partners) • Support the elimination of violence against women and children. (BE, DE, FI, FR, IT, NL, SE, SI, UK, EU) • Support civil society organisations in their advocacy for human rights. (DE, FI, FR, SE, NL, UK, EU) • Engage with and better protect human rights defenders. (DE, FI, NL, SE, UK, EU)

UNSCR 1325

- Work has been consistent but progress is slow
 - Only 9 of 70 members of HPC are women, who are concerned of being sidelined
 - EU assists technical working group; participates in National Steering Committee at Deputy Minister Level
 - Facilitated and funded mediation training for members of the HPC
 - Funded training for Provincial Peace Council with a focus on female representatives

The High Peace Council of Afghanistan



<http://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-20322042>

A Preliminary Assessment

- Tangible success but achievements are fragile and reversible: structural and cultural
- NSP within ARTF has achieved wide spread success in bringing women into rural Afghanistan's rural decision-making structures; increase female school attendance and women in professions
- EU keeps the pressure on through its political dialogue regarding the implementation of EAW and the NAPWA
- Consistent use and collection of sex-disaggregated indicators and gender equality performance indicators to monitor and improve program effectiveness
- But: LOTFA (Administered by UNDP) has made little progress of justice reform and reducing corruption and impunity
- Continued disconnect between central government and rural areas/local governments because of security and low capacity issues
- Large reliance on UN and NGOs for service delivery: imbalance between rhetoric and realities of subcontracting limitations
- EU pushes for EAW and GBV programs but doesn't protect the women's activists who provide these services and shelters (WAW)
- Few programs for youth and men on gender awareness
- Need to include more national NGOs in consultations



Thank you!
Questions, Comments, and Suggestions!