



# United Nations Development Programme-Afghanistan Gender Equality Project AFG/00054320

Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.

*Mullahs Training on  
Gender Equality*



*Food Processing Co-op*

*Legal Awareness  
Training*



## Independent/External Evaluation Report

Project Period under Evaluation Jan 2009-30 Jan 2012



Empowered lives.  
Resilient nations.

**Ms. Fainula Rodriguez**

**Ms. Hangama Anwari**

## Table of Contents

<b>Acknowledgments</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>List of Acronyms</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Executive Summary</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Table 1: Overall Assessment Gender Equality Project</b> .....	<b>13</b>
<b>Table 2: Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality</b> .....	<b>19</b>
I Strategic Approach.....	20
II Target beneficiaries.....	20
III Coverage .....	20
IV Resource Mobilization and Communications .....	21
V National and International Partnerships .....	21
VI Coordination Mechanisms.....	21
Next Steps .....	21
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>22</b>
<b>Performance, Best Practice, Lessons Learned</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>National Level</b> .....	<b>23</b>
Activity 1: Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB).....	23
Activity 2: Policy development Center/ Gender Sensitive Monitoring and Evaluation .....	23
Activity 3: Capacity building of partner ministries.....	24
Activity 4: Gender Studies Institute (GSI).....	25
<b>Subnational Level</b> .....	<b>26</b>
Activity 1: Local access to Justice Initiatives .....	26
Activity 2: Sensitization of religious leaders (Mullah’s training).....	27
Activity 3: Provincial Women Development Councils.....	28

Activity 4: Women’s Economic Empowerment .....	29
Activity 5: Communities sensitized/equipped for the promotion of women’s rights. Communities and local institutions capacitated to promote women friendly local level justice system and facilitate women’s access to justice in selected provinces.....	30
Activity 6: Gender sensitive Media Centers.....	30
<b>Progress Towards MDG3, NAPWA, CPAP, ANDS, Afghanistan Compact .....</b>	<b>43</b>
<b>Gender Cluster.....</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Management, Implementation, Partnerships.....</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Annex I.....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Impact Case Studies .....</b>	<b>47</b>
<b>Annex II.....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Evaluation Team Members .....</b>	<b>50</b>
<b>Annex III.....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>References And Documents Consulted .....</b>	<b>51</b>
<b>Annex IV.....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>List of Persons Interviewed.....</b>	<b>52</b>
<b>Annex V.....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Formulation of Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality Project .....</b>	<b>53</b>
Background .....	53
Objectives of the Formulation Exercise .....	53
Participatory Planning Approach .....	53
Specific Tasks .....	53
Timing (to be confirmed) .....	54
Team Composition/Specialization .....	54
Team Composition .....	54
<b>Looking Forward.....</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Table 2 Women’s Empowerment And Gender Equality .....</b>	<b>55</b>

I Strategic Approach..... 56

II Target beneficiaries..... 56

III Coverage ..... 56

IV Resource Mobilization and Communications:..... 57

V National and International Partnerships: ..... 57

VI Coordination mechanisms ..... 57

Next Steps: ..... 57

## Acknowledgments

*The team is grateful to the many people who contributed valuable information and insights to the evaluation of this project, in Kabul and in Balkh, from 1-21 November, 2011. We were fortunate that in addition to the meetings and interviews we requested, many people came forward and suggested additional events we may attend. In particular, we wish to express our appreciation for the open and constructive spirit we encountered in all our interviews. The team would like to express its thanks for the support given by the GEP team, the Cross Practice Unit team, the Country Director, Mr. Manoj Basnyat and Deputy Country Director, David Akopyan.*

## List of Acronyms

- AGO Attorney General's Office
- AREU Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit
- ASGP Afghanistan Sub-national Governance Project
- ANDS Afghanistan National Development Strategy
- CEDAW Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women
- CPAP Country Programme Action Plan
- CSO Central Statistics Office
- CSO Civil Society Organisation
- DoJ Department of Justice
- DoWA Department of Women's Affairs
- GoA Government of Afghanistan
- GSI Gender Studies Institute
- GRB Gender Responsive Budgeting
- KU Kabul University
- NAPWA National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan
- MDGs Millennium Development Goals
- MoA Ministry of Agriculture
- MoEc Ministry of Economy
- MoF Ministry of Finance
- MoHRA Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs
- MoJ Ministry of Justice
- MoWA Ministry of Women's Affairs
- MRRD Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Development
- SC Supreme Court
- Tashqeel Government staffing table
- UNAMA United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
- UNESCO United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation
- EVAW Law Elimination of Violence against Women

## Executive Summary

1. In November 2011, an independent mid-term evaluation of the Gender Equality Project (GEP) of UNDP was undertaken by external consultants. The main objective of the evaluation, as stated in the Terms of Reference, and re-iterated in briefings by the Senior Management of UNDP, was two-fold: a) to conduct a review of the project's interventions, assess the impact of the capacity building programs, and b) assess funding prospects and produce an overall report on future direction of support to strategic government/ non-government partners at the national and sub-national levels in pursuing gender mainstreaming. In particular, the evaluation team was asked to focus on lessons learned and best practices during the years 2009-2011 in order to distill the wisdom and experience of the UNDP experience in the gender sector in support of the development of a future project.
2. The evaluation methodology included a review of secondary materials (reports, studies of the justice sector in Afghanistan), UNDP documents and reports. The team adopted a qualitative methodology because of a dearth of quantitative data. Interviews and meetings between the evaluation team and the main stakeholders and beneficiaries provided the primary sources for the evaluation. A list of all the people interviewed is annexed. The mission also undertook a field visit to Balkh province.
3. The evaluation team's work and report were organized according to the instructions of the Senior Management team: review and extraction of lessons learned and best practice from GEP from 2009-2011 and, based on these, a presentation of the main elements of a follow up project to be formulated in January 2012.
4. GEP began in March 2007 and was intended to be completed by February 2009. It aimed to develop effective gender mainstreaming models and strengthen the capacity of government ministries and institutions. Due to both an ambitious and complex project design, and difficulties encountered in project management and constant staff turnover, the project activities were slow in taking off until 2009. During this time, relationships with the main counterpart, the Ministry of Women's Affairs appears to have been tenuous and the project on unstable grounds. This situation was reversed quite dramatically in September 2009 when, under the new management, GEP's activities began to be implemented rapidly and in earnest.
5. From 2009 on, GEP's main challenge was to stabilize the project, establish good working partnerships with its main counterparts and stakeholders, establish linkages and activities with line ministries. Though the project was intended to be closed by 2010, it was extended to December 2010, on a three monthly basis, then again for one additional year until December, 2011. As a result of chronic instability, the project suffered setbacks in its various activities, both at the central and provincial levels. These setbacks included loss of staff, loss of momentum in activities due to the stop-start pattern and affected the sustainability and their ability to create (or monitor) sustained impact. A key lesson learned from GEP has been the need to plan and implement activities on longer time horizons, with solid baselines and monitoring systems. Importantly, the GEP experience taught that even successful pilots can have a short shelf-life if not given support over sufficient time for them to be replicated.
6. In spite of these continuous challenges, GEP has consistently produced important "best practice" activities in the form of pilot projects, including the following<sup>1</sup>:

---

<sup>1</sup> For detailed descriptions, please see section III: Performance, Best Practice, Lessons learned.



- Training of religious leaders (Mullah's training)
  - Income generation for women's economic empowerment,
  - Establishment of Provincial Women's Development councils,
  - Establishment of a Gender Studies Institute at Kabul University, with two research outputs
  - Start-up of the Women's Policy Development Center in the Ministry of Women's Affairs, and establishment of Monitoring and Evaluation Unit to monitor the implementation of NAPWA indicators in the line Ministries,
  - Successful legal help centers in Herat and Mazar e Sharif,
  - Development of a mechanism for gender responsive budgeting (GRB) within Ministry of Finance.
  - Capacity development of local journalists to promote gender sensitive media reporting in Balkh and Herat.
7. These achievements, all the more significant considering the level of financial and human resources available in the project, are in no small part due to the perseverance and dedication of the project manager and the GEP staff, in Kabul and in the provinces, and of course, the commitment of the Ministry of Women's Affairs to the project's goals and activities.
  8. A high level of support and appreciation from government partners (at national and sub-national levels) and donors alike for effort, commitment and professionalism of the GEP project manager was conveyed to the evaluation team. Most importantly the participatory project management approach and the strong pragmatic focus of GEP on the capacity development of MOWA through all the GEP activities contributed greatly to the strengthening of national ownership. MOWA and other Ministries underlined the consultative processes in decision-making taken in all activities which has facilitated the development of a genuinely nationally driven project, and the role of the project manager as the main facilitator. Donors and UN partners (Italy, UNAMA, UN-RCO, CIDA) also underscored the project manager's instrumental role in setting GEP on a sound track from 2009 onwards, and the special role of GEP in providing technical support and helping them in their own projects.
  9. GEP delivery rate stands at 73% for the last quarter, a significant achievement, considering the constraints and difficult operational environment faced by the project.
  10. National ownership has also signified a significant level of cooperation and support to MOWA's coordinating role by the line Ministries. Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Agriculture, for example, perceive and work with MOWA as the coordinator of their gender related activities, with UNDP supporting both MOWA and the sectoral ministries technically, this at both national and sub-national levels. At the same time, line Ministries such as Ministry of Economy underlined the importance of a direct technical support role for UNDP (under MOWA coordination) to line Ministries in mainstreaming gender through their own activities; in policy development; and in their priority projects. This would increase their level of ownership and participation, while bringing them closer to their broader gender mainstreaming goals. In line with this, the need to favor Afghan senior experts/specialists and fielding international ones on a short-term, technical needs basis, with emphasis on skills transfer and capacity building was underlined by government partners.

11. The training of religious leaders (Mullahs), intended to build bridges between Islam and gender with an overarching framework of Afghan religious and cultural values, has resulted in 560 Mullahs in Herat, 1320 Mullahs in Nangarhar, and 250 Mullahs in Balkh having participated in 3 different phases of training on Gender and Islam. Using a multi-pronged strategy, this component has established a working group with the Ministry of Haj and Religious Affairs, carried out training workshops, community outreach through MOHRA's own newsletter and implemented facilitated study tours to countries such as Malaysia and Turkey. Its distinctive feature is that all activities are initiated (with support from GEP) within the Ministry, without the endorsement of which, such large numbers could not have been reached. Importantly, the component is poised to carry out a second phase to include outreach into Quranic schools (Madrassahs) and participate in the proposed Justice and Human Rights pillar by building links with the Ministry of Justice to enable access to justice for women in the informal sector where Mullahs play a central role at the grassroots.
12. The Gender Studies Institute (GSI), planned to be a hub of gender related research across the country, was started with UNDP support in 2004 with a feasibility study. In the ensuing years, GSI was awarded land by KU, architectural plans drawn up, certificate and diploma courses begun and faculty mobilized in support of the Institute. In partnership with the main universities in Afghanistan, GSI produced a report on Gender based violence; a certificate course on Gender, Conflict, and Development, and mobilized its faculty in support of the development of GSI within the University.
13. Progress in this GEP activity was hampered, however, by a lack of consensus between the project partners regarding capital investment in a state of the art (and relatively costly) building and the project's own internal logic which has been characterized by a "stop/start" pattern in all its activities. Kabul University, the Ministry of Higher Education and the Parliamentary Commission for Women remain committed to the establishment and institutional development of GSI, seen also by MOWA as a valuable source of research to inform the Women's Policy Development Center. In this way, GSI and the Women's Policy Development Center could together play a critical support role to the National Policy Development Center planned with UNDP support.
14. There is need within GEP, and certainly within the follow-up project, to use a more comprehensive and integrated approach to the various activities supported by the project. These activities have been implemented on a pilot basis, with tenuous strategic links between each. While each, as a stand-alone, has had some success in achieving its short-term objectives. Importantly, at the sub-national level, future activities will need to be undertaken with underpinning principles of community (hence integrated and participatory) development to ensure impact.
15. The proposed Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality project will need to build on a key lesson learned from GEP: longer time horizons, adequate resources committed over a minimum of three years, and horizontal and vertical integration/coherence will need to be pre-requisites in achieving meaningful impact in the gender sector. Some GEP activities, such as the training of religious leaders, can be undertaken on a broader geographic scope. Others, such as income generation and justice and human right will need to be implemented in a deeper and more comprehensive manner in selected provinces where they may become models for other donors and government to emulate. The selection of provinces for both in depth and broad geographic scope will need to be determined by a variety of factors, including government priority, participation in GEP (which would qualify them for further deepening of their activities), security and related access to local level concerns (provinces contiguous to current GEP covered

provinces would offer some advantages), and the presence of Gender Cluster projects offering immediate relevance and opportunities for collaboration/synergy.

16. The Gender Cluster, to which GEP plays a technical support function, provides a mechanism for expanding the scope of UNDP's impact nationally and to the grassroots, and through its multiple partnerships with government institutions and CSOS, a channel for "cascading" UNDP's gender mandate and goals in Afghanistan. To streamline this effort, a unique UNDP Afghanistan approach to gender and to capacity development, along with guidelines for implementing this approach through the project portfolio, and an internal tracking and monitoring system is needed to help harness the enormous outreach potential of the UNDP program in Afghanistan.
17. UNDP's GEP experience contributes significantly to future funding prospects: in spite of some doubt expressed by previous donors (Italy, Canada) regarding their participation in a future UNDP project in the gender sector, the team's perception is that a new, fresh approach which builds on UNDP's considerable experience will attract new donors. UNDP's comparative advantage undeniably remains in capacity-building at the sub-national level, where through its entire project portfolio, it has established a presence and a good name for itself. It is also noteworthy that UNDP is seen as the largest player in the gender sector, and a leader, though there appears to be a lack of concrete understanding of the project's activities and achievements among international partners.
18. The evaluation team has that the UNDP projects have often provided models of best practice to others, as witnessed by the replication of some of these models (training of religious leaders, establishment of legal help centers etc). Also important is the credibility, legitimacy and relationship of UNDP with the government in the gender sector. Because it enjoys the support of the government, this provides UNDP with a solid foundation for supporting national efforts. In section three, some steps are offered for moving the process forward in a positive direction.
19. A matrix summarizing in table format the intended the main findings and recommendations is provided in the Executive Summary. Also in a table format, the future Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality project is presented as a follow-up to GEP. Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality integrates the main themes running throughout the GEP activities, building on the good practice and enhancing them further. It consists of three concrete pillars: Policy Development and Capacity-Building, Justice and Human Rights; Economic Empowerment.
20. The fourth, a bridging pillar: Harnessing the Potential of the UNDP Gender Cluster builds on the current gender related activities within the UNDP flagship projects, expanding on unexplored possibilities, and strengthening the internal coordination, coherence and tracking of the Gender Cluster. Pillar four, thus, seeks to harness the vast potential for gender mainstreaming of the entire UNDP project portfolio, and through this, into partner institutions of government. Although not a formal component of the Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality project (because it technically sits outside of the project framework and is an institutional initiative), the Gender Cluster and its member projects represent an opportunity for collaboration between GEP and the cluster around concrete activities where GEP acts both as a technical resource and as a partner and beneficiary of the outreach and resources of cluster projects. The design of the new project will identify interfacing activities with cluster projects, in addition to providing advisory support.
21. GEP would benefit from a comprehensive communications and resource mobilization strategy. To ensure that UNDP presents "one face" to the donor community at large on all its projects, such a strategy would need to be developed within the corporate communication strategy of UNDP Afghanistan. Importantly, the strategy will need to contain guidance and the presentation

of corporate materials related to GEP, resource mobilization guidelines, and clear guidance on donor relations management/representation. This approach will help instill a standardized approach to communications and resource mobilization in a sensitized sector.

22. Since 2009, Afghanistan has faced a deteriorating security environment and chronic instability which have placed limitations on international assistance delivery generally. Furthermore, shifts are occurring in the gender sector environment in Afghanistan which may have a bearing for future UNDP involvement. First, given the current political environment, major aspects of which are the peace negotiations and the transition, there appears to be a general consensus that the Government of Afghanistan, by political necessity one would assume, is taking a more cautious stance towards gender issues. The Minister of Women's Affairs and others have shared with the evaluation team that a firm but quiet diplomacy and lobbying approach to gender issues is appropriate at this time. This may hold implications for the UNDP strategy and approach. Importantly, the transition process is expected to impact negatively on the status of women. UNDP can play an important role in the mitigation of this impact by raising attention to the potential implications of the transition for Afghan women, and through advocacy for special measures such as the establishment of a Presidential Commission on Women and awareness raising activities around the theme of Afghan Women and the Transition.
23. Transition is expected to impact significantly on the policy gains made by Afghan women in the last ten years of Afghanistan's reconstruction in at least two major dimensions. The first is the security of women as the mandate for overall security is transferred to the Afghan National Police, and the second is the potential setback to women's access to justice and the safeguarding of their human rights. At the sub-national level particularly, security, justice and human rights are a rising area of concern where there is need to support a national dialogue whose objectives would be to mitigate the potential risks through targeted measures. Supporting the capacity required to implement NAPWA and the Elimination of Violence Against Women Law, and Awareness raising activities and policy support to the National Security Council and the Ministry of Interior are potential areas for UNDP involvement under the next phase.
24. The newly established presence of UN-Women, the political and financial support which appears to accompany it from various quarters, along with its policy and advocacy mandate, may hold implications UNDP's established presence in policy development within MOWA, the Gender Studies Institute at Kabul University, and the Provincial Women's Development Councils. A memorandum of cooperation building on UNDP's capacity building experience and vast presence/capacity at the national and sub-national levels, and capitalizing on UN-Women's special mandate and access to resources will help to both safeguard GEP's important and unique gains while harnessing new resources in support of the welfare of Afghan women at this critical turning point.

**Table 1: Overall Assessment Gender Equality Project**

COMPONENTS	LESSONS LEARNED/FINDINGS	RECOMMENDATIONS
<p><b>OVERALL</b></p>	<p><b>Alignment with National Benchmarks</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ well aligned with ANDS, AC, NPP5</li> </ul> <p><b>Country Program Action Plan</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ well aligned and contributing</li> </ul> <p><b>Profile of UNDP in Gender Sector</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ High level of visibility of UNDP at central and sub-national levels</li> <li>➤ Seen as leader and largest player</li> </ul> <p><b>Donor Relationship Issues</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Issues related to.... future cooperation</li> </ul> <p><b>2012-2014 Position in the Gender Sector</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Good potential</li> </ul> <p><b>Project Management Style</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Participatory decision-making and management style has been effective</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ On track</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ On track</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ On track. Continue building on lessons learned and best practices</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Identify issues and resolve</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ PR and Communication package to support resource mobilization</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Continue building on track record as promoting high national ownership</li> </ul>
<p><i>National level : building the</i></p>		

<p><b>capacity of State in improving national level gender sensitive mechanisms</b></p> <p><b>1. Gender Responsive Budgets</b></p> <p><b>2. Policy development Center/ Gender Sensitive Monitoring and Evaluation</b></p> <p><b>4. Capacity building of partner ministries</b></p> <p><b>4. Gender Studies Institute – GSI</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Successful at developing a gender responsive budget mechanism in Min of F</li> <li>➤ New initiative, basic steps under preparation</li> <li>➤ M&amp;E unit established and some foundational work completed</li> <li>➤ Work in progress, good results, improved sense of ownership</li> <li>➤ Some stop/start problems, but substantive work has progressed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Downstream gender responsive budgets through line Ministries budget preparation processes</li> <li>✓ Substantive concept, which requires an organizational development plan</li> <li>✓ Important activity to continue under new phase with emphasis on NAPWA and EAW Law</li> <li>✓ Deepen and extend to more ministries</li> <li>✓ KU and MOWA keen on moving forward, as is Women’s Commission of Parliament</li> <li>✓ Important source of research for future MOWA policy development Center</li> </ul>
<p><b>Subnational Level: Promoting local mechanisms to enhance gender equality and women’s empowerment</b></p> <p><b>1. Local access to Justice Initiatives</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Successful through legal help centers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ A central part of future project using a more comprehensive approach to community development and legal empowerment for</li> </ul>

<p><b>2.Sensitization of religious leaders (Mullah’s training)</b></p> <p><b>3.Provincial Women Development Councils</b></p> <p><b>4.Economic Empowerment</b></p> <p><b>5.Gender sensitive Media Centers</b></p> <p><b>4.Communities sensitized/equipped for the promotion of women’s rights Communities and local institutions capacitated to promote women friendly local level justice system and facilitate women’s access to justice in selected provinces</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Highlighted as best practice, extremely successful</li> <li>➤ New initiative, to be rolled out</li> <li>➤ Good results and many lessons learned/ demand is high</li> <li>➤ Groundwork done in Balkh</li> <li>➤ Some achievements through legal help centers</li> </ul>	<p>women</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Continue, expand to include judiciary, and roll out to provinces, however need to use a comprehensive training package and approach</li> <li>✓ Central component in new project</li> <li>✓ Need a more comprehensive support package with links through MRRD-NSP/NABPD-DDA</li> <li>✓ Will be needed to support public outreach in the future</li> <li>✓ Needs to be done more systematically and deepened</li> <li>✓ A central part of future project using a more comprehensive using community development and legal empowerment approach</li> </ul>
<b>OVERALL</b>		
<p><b>Gender Mainstreaming In Government</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Need to mobilize gender focal points in ministries more actively (energies, skills, capacities) to support mainstreaming, through MOWA and through gender activities/components of UNDP projects.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ UNDP also to promote mainstreaming gender through sectoral policies (agriculture,economy, labour,education,culture, finance, Justice and Interior)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Gender focal points in ministries and sectoral gender mainstreaming requires technical support from UNDP to produce products like economic empowerment of women strategy.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Provision of technical support to sectoral ministries, in cooperation with MOWA</li> </ul>
<p><b>Project Management &amp; Implementation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Achievements very significant vs level of resources, financial and human/technical</li> <li>➤ Institutional memory undermined because of too many changes/staffing</li> <li>➤ Stop/start patterns in project implementation, disruptive, staff loss/turnover, confidence and trust of govt until 2009</li> <li>➤ 2009-2010 confidence restored</li> <li>➤ National ownership and capacity transfer approach very successful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Much greater levels of human, financial and technical resources required for sustained impact- with longer time horizons</li> <li>✓ Mitigating measures needed</li> <li>✓ Mitigating measures needed and longer terms recruitment processes.</li> <li>✓ Continue, expand scope of GEP for three additional years to assure stability (should include a plan to secure sustainability and gradual move to DEX</li> <li>✓ Continue to build</li> <li>✓ Reduce reliance on long-term international technical experts- favor short-term assignments focused on skills transfer and national</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Project approach emphasizes gradual change rather than driven by objectives strictly. Very effective.</li> <li>➤ Investment in Afghans as advisors at MOWA has helped to build capacity of MOWA and needs to be continued (as mentioned by head of planning)</li> </ul>	<p>capacity</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Emphasize team and participatory approaches/skills in Recruitment of all international and national staff</li> <li>✓ recruitment of expat staff</li> <li>✓ On track. Good practice</li> <li>✓ Nationalize process further to expand Senior Afghan technical and professional cadre within project staff</li> <li>✓ As above, limited international expertise on short-term, technical needs.</li> </ul>
<b>Resource Mobilization</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Resource mobilization: no sustained resource mobilization, marketing and communication, other donors, partnerships absent, most interviewees don't know about the project's achievements</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Need for a sustained RM strategy led by the CO and a comprehensive communications package</li> </ul>
<b>Impact, Sustainability, Effectiveness, Efficiency</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Quick impact hard to achieve, need longer time horizons for sustainable results, both for absorptive capacity but also because of the deteriorating socio-political status of women in Afghanistan (economic).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Future project should be planned and resourced adequately for 3 years at least</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Scope of project too vast and ambitious</li> <li>➤ Too many extensions/budget revisions generates insecurity and impacts on sustainability and long term project planning</li> <li>➤ Impact assessment requires baselines and a good M&amp;E system with GEP and MOWA plus within Ministries</li> <li>➤ Project reports needs more adequate structure and data</li> <li>➤ GEP started including men and boys in their activities as part of awareness raising</li> <li>➤ GEP had a good track record for generating new approaches/ideas through pilot approach, but scattered impact</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Consider this in next project design</li> <li>✓ Plan over 3 years with solid annual work plans</li> <li>✓ M&amp;E a key component in next phase</li> <li>✓ Re-format quarterly and annual reports (and data collection) to reflect both quantitative and qualitative achievements/ lessons</li> <li>✓ Expand and consider in next phase</li> <li>✓ More integrated approach required to build on pilots</li> </ul>
--	---	---

*Looking forward*

**Table 2: Women’s Empowerment and Gender Equality**

*Building on UNDP’s successes in the gender and development sector in Afghanistan*

<b>Pillar I: Policy Development and Capacity Building</b>  <u>Focus:</u> national and sub-national	<b>Pillar II Justice and Human Rights</b>  <u>Focus:</u> sub-national	<b>Pillar III Policy Development and Capacity Building</b>  <u>Focus:</u> national and sub- national	<b>Pillar IV Harnessing the Potential of the UNDP Gender Cluster</b>  <u>Focus:</u> national and sub-national
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy Development Center, MOWA and M&amp;E of NAPWA</li> <li>• Links with planned National and int’l policy centers including a roster of Afghan technical experts</li> <li>• Capacity-building of MOWA &amp; capacity building of sectoral gender focal points</li> <li>• Gender Studies Institute KU, MHE/Women’s Commission Parliament/MOWA</li> <li>• Downstreaming “Making</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal Help Centers</li> <li>• Training of religious (Mullahs) leaders in women’s rights, Islam and gender and development , law enforcement authorities, judiciary</li> <li>• HR education and public outreach</li> <li>• Establish links with regional institutions/ networks or Islamic scholars (ie. Women Living under Muslim Law)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy Development Center, MOWA and M&amp;E of NAPWA</li> <li>• Links with planned National and int’l policy centers</li> <li>• Capacity-building of MOWA &amp; capacity building of sectoral gender focal points</li> <li>• Gender Studies Institute Kabul University/MHE/ Women’s Commission Parliament/MOWA</li> <li>• Downstreaming “Making gender responsive budgets work” through national budget preparation processes within line Ministries</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender mainstreaming through all UNDP projects and their national counterparts, including joint projects between Gender equality project and other UNDP projects in common areas</li> <li>• Establish internal M&amp;E to track and monitor Gender cluster impact</li> <li>• Communication system to report achievements of Gender cluster as a “common” UNDP gender output.</li> </ul>

<p>gender responsive budgets work” through national budget preparation processes within line Ministries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement of CSO partners and capacity building of CSO partners</li> </ul> <p>Advocacy for a <b>Presidential Commission for Afghan Women</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awareness raising on <b>Afghan Women and the Transition (national conference and related media events)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement of CSO partners and capacity building of CSO partners</li> </ul> <p>Advocacy for a <b>Presidential Commission on Afghan Women</b></p>	
--	--	---	--

### I Strategic Approach

- ✓ Prioritize best practice to be built, expanded, deepened, scaled up
- ✓ Integrate legal/economic empowerment, to bring key players around women’s issues, ie. Police, judiciary (state and traditional), mullahs, attorney general for overall women’s empowerment
- ✓ Create concrete links, institutional and project based, with MRRD/DDA , ASGP/Provincial Development Council (PDC) to maximize their sub-national infrastructure and outreach capacity with an emphasis on increasing women’s political participation, (SdB)
- ✓ Expand and deepen focus at the subnational level where it has established a good presence and where donors look to it as a preferred partner.

### II Target beneficiaries

- Widows, female headed households, orphan girls victims of domestic violence as priority target group (not exclusively)
- Focus on boys and youth (for example: Madrassa)

### III Coverage

National/Sub-national balance/coverage: Some activities such as Mullahs and Judges training can have national coverage; same as PWDCS (as many provinces as possible), while others such as legal and economic empowerment can be designed more coherently and aim at depth in selected

provinces through the existing GEP provincial offices and in collaboration with the respective Departments of Women's Affairs (DOWA) in these provinces.

#### **IV Resource Mobilization and Communications**

- Success stories, best practices, short videos like the DDA woman leader to be aired on TV
- Comprehensive communication package for women's empowerment and gender equality targeting different audiences (donors, gov't, IPs, internal use) to inform on a timely basis of the achievements of the project and raise the profile of gender issues through this effort. This package to be developed in line with a corporate communication strategy and to include guidance on donor relations.
- Comprehensive communication package for women's empowerment and gender equality targeting different audiences (donors, gov't, IPs, internal use) to inform on a timely basis of the achievements of the project and raise the profile of gender issues through this effort; a documentary on the achievements of the last 10 years of MOWA (to be prepared) for presentation to targeted donors (Japan and others) and other high level international platforms – Commission on the Status of Women (CSW).
- The Afghan audience communication strategy and instruments to be developed in cooperation with Afghan media and communications NGOs, with supervision from MOWA to ensure the cultural, social and political relevance of these materials.

#### **V National and International Partnerships**

- MOWA, Economy, MOHRA, MRRD, MOJ, MOLSA, Higher Education, Interior, Agriculture, Finance, Kabul University, CSOs and UN Women/UNFPA, UNAMA on political participation, advocacy

#### **VI Coordination Mechanisms**

- Coordination with MOWA, between MOWA and Line Ministries, UNDP projects (CTA, sectoral technical resources) and gender focal points/working groups within these to be carefully considered in the design of the next phase.

#### **Next Steps**

- Activate Gender Cluster and establish M&E system within UNDP to monitor progress
- In depth assessment of pillar components and participatory strategic plan for UNDP gender project, aimed at creating a common vision and understanding among all key future partners.
- Project formulation and resource mobilization
- Development of a comprehensive communication package on GEP for the use of the CO in marketing gender project and raising funds. This package can be in two parts: one for the CO's resource mobilization efforts and one for the project to share technical information with partners. Afghan media and communications NGOs will need to be identified for the Afghan audiences to ensure culturally, politically and socially relevant content.

**Note: Project Formulation Concept is attached as Annex V**

## Introduction

1. 2.0 From 2-21 November 2011, an independent evaluation of the UNDP Gender Equality Project (GEP) AFG/00054320 was undertaken by external consultants. The main objective of the evaluation, as stated in the Terms of Reference, and re-iterated in briefings by the Senior Management of UNDP, was two-fold: a) to conduct a review of the project's interventions, assess the impact of the capacity building programs, and b) assess funding prospects and produce an overall report on future direction of support to strategic government/ non-government partners at the national and sub-national levels in pursuing gender mainstreaming
2. 2.1 The mission team was composed of one international and one national consultant, who were assisted in their tasks by the Cross-Practice Unit (CPU) and the GEP staff in making the mission arrangements and providing logistical support.
- 3.
4. 2.3 In particular, the evaluation team was asked to focus on lessons learned and best practices during the years 2009-2011 in order to distill the wisdom and experience of the UNDP experience in the gender sector in support of the development of a future project.
- 5.
6. 2.4 Especially under review were the project activities related to gender responsive budgeting; capacity building of partner ministries; gender sensitive monitoring and evaluation mechanisms; local access to justice initiatives; sensitization of religious leaders; leadership training on women's rights and legal rights; and economic empowerment. Issues such as sustainability, impact, efficiency and effectiveness were also assessed by the evaluation team.
- 7.
8. 2.5 The working methods of the team included evaluation approach and activities at the outset, briefing of UNDP and the project staff on the same; interviews, field visits; debriefing at the end of the evaluation, draft report and final report.
- 9.
10. 2.6 The methodology used by the team consisted of a review of existing documentation with regard to the gender sector, including key UNDP corporate documents, project documents, periodic report, concept notes and terms of reference, the National Action Plan for Women (NAPWA), the Afghanistan National Development Strategy, the Afghanistan Compact, the National Priority Program 5 and other relevant documents. The team adopted a qualitative methodology because of a dearth of quantitative data. Interviews and meetings between the evaluation team and the main stakeholders and beneficiaries (in Kabul and Balkh) provided the primary sources for the evaluation.
11. 2.7 In particular, the evaluation team was asked to focus on lessons learned and best practices during the years 2009-2011 in order to distill the wisdom and experience of the UNDP experience in the gender sector in support of the development of a future project. This evaluation report, therefore, primarily focuses on the period September 2009 to December 2011 with a view to provide strategic direction for future capacity building and gender mainstreaming based on the successes and lessons of GEP in its various pilot activities, and on the future needs of the government partners as expressed in the evaluation consultations.

## Performance, Best Practice, Lessons Learned

### National Level

#### Building the capacity of State in improving national level gender sensitive mechanisms

##### Activity 1: Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB)

1. The achievements of GEP for this activity include the establishment of a gender responsive budgeting cell in the Budget Directorate of the Ministry of Finance (MOF) and a wide range of activities covering the integration of gender specific elements in the budget statements/circulars; training of line ministries staff, review and analysis of budget documents for gender sensitivity, approaches for the integration of GRB into line ministry budget processes. Technical capacity building of 45 line ministries on GRB was carried out for 45 people, of which 15 were women. In addition, 30 planning and budget staff in the Ministry of economy was provided with skills in gender responsive budget preparation.
2. Among the challenges encountered by GEP in this activity were the briefness of the technical inputs from an international consultant (she was fielded for one month), and lack of coordination with UNDP's "Making Budgets and Aid Work (MBAW)" project which also operates within the Budget directorate of the Ministry of Finance. Importantly, a key constraint was the location of the gender units under the Finance and Administration within line ministry and the relatively low position of the gender focal points which effectively prevents their participation in the budget process.
3. As a pilot project, this activity was successful in planting the seeds for the inclusion of gender responsive budgeting in Ministry of Finance. The "down-streaming" of GRB as a matter of standard operating procedure needs to be assessed further, in terms of bureaucratic bottlenecks such as the one mentioned above and technical support needs to be provided on a longer term basis to have an impact. Importantly, UNDP's project "Making Budgets and Aid Work" needs to be reviewed to identify entry points for GRB on the one hand, and greater coordination of the two projects promoted through the Gender Cluster.

##### Activity 2: Policy development Center/ Gender Sensitive Monitoring and Evaluation

1. The Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Unit at MOWA was established to perform the role of an oversight body to supervise the implementation of National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) indicators by other ministries.
2. This GEP activity's outputs have included, to date, the preparation of a concept paper for the establishment of the M&E Unit at MOWA; a matrix of indicators for M&E unit of MOWA aligned with Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) indicators; the establishment of the Unit and its action plan; as well as the development of its Capacity Development Plan; and that of an Action Plan); preparation of the draft M&E mechanism with its chain of reporting system

the development of an Action Plan; the development of a budget for Component 6 of its NPP for submission to the Human Resources Development (HRD); review of major program documents of line ministries to integrate gender sensitive component; a matrix outlining NAPWA indicators according to the ANDS model; a training program held for 17 members of MOWA on monitoring and evaluations mechanisms; technical support to MoWA provided in completion of 100 day reports to HRD cluster; and a first draft of the M&E Handbook. The recruitment of an M&E expert is under way.

3. A concept paper for the establishment and institutional development of a Women's Policy Development Center (WPDC) within MOWA has been drafted and an agreement reached with the Afghanistan Research and Evaluation Unit (AREU) reached to provide technical support to help establish its research capacity. The WPDC is intended to function as a cross-sectoral entity: it will provide the policy framework and overall practical guidance for each ministry and sector to incorporate women's needs and interests into the total development process for guaranteeing gender balanced results.
4. While the substance of the WPDC has been identified with clarity, its organizational development as a center with specific human resource, management information systems, corporate policy with respect to cost recovery/income generation (possibly through the provision of knowledge products at a "market" price to assure its sustainability); a communications plan, all need to be further developed to ensure its institutional and financial sustainability. A short-term organizational and capacity development specialist will be needed to backstop the institutional development of the WPDC at the start, and then punctually over its foundational period. Integration within the MOWA structure, capacitation and sustainability are core issues to be addressed to ensure compatibility and importantly that a supply of national technical experts are secured. MOWA may consider a review of its tashqeel in order to attract these resources both at national and sub-national levels to ensure its sustainability.

### **Activity 3: Capacity building of partner ministries**

1. The details of this project activity are outlined in detail in the results matrix. The highlight of this activity cover focus group discussions with relevant deputy ministers (technical) regarding their role in gender mainstreaming; training programs for DOWA; gender mainstreaming in the Ministry of Agriculture initiated; TORS for establishing linkages between MOWA and 19 gender units in line ministries; Gender and Macro-Economic Planning workshops; study tours and training workshops in the Philippines and Thailand; training of Ministry of Agriculture staff on gender and food security; needs assessment of line ministry gender units; study tour for Ministry of Economy to India under the theme : "Gender and Macro-economic planning".
2. Capacity-building of line ministries needs to continue in the next phase of GEP, be extended to additional line ministries and technical support provided to the gender units and technical departments of participating ministries on policy development; gender mainstreaming. With MOWA as a coordinator, direct support to line ministries has to be extended in order to accelerate the process by reducing policy and activity implementation lags. Line ministries, in this way, can continue to work closely with MOWA while pursuing their gender equality goals



more actively. Line ministries should be prioritized for capacity assessments from the Bangkok team and step by step capacity building plans for gender mainstreaming be implemented over the course of the next phase.

**Activity 4: Gender Studies Institute (GSI)**

1. Kabul University, the home of The Gender Studies Institute is the largest and oldest institution of higher education in Afghanistan, established in 1932. For its first fifty years, it was the most important university in the region, attracting students from the Middle East, India, Pakistan and Iran. In spite of major setbacks suffered by the university during the years of conflict, the university remains central to the higher education sector in Afghanistan, offering useful channels for gender sensitization of faculty, students and curriculum. KU boasts 750 faculty members of which 150 are women, many with affiliations with professional associations hence an outreach capability.
2. GSI was established in November 2004 by agreement between UNDP and Kabul University. To date, the Institute has been granted land by KU, architectural plans were drawn up for a state of the art building to house both GSI and the School of Journalism (funded by USAID), and a Certificate course in Gender, Conflict and Development elaborated with a core group of trainers formed on gender mainstreaming in academic institutions. Other noteworthy activities of GSI include research products, such as “Gender-based Violence in 3 Universities: Kabul, Herat, and Balkh” and “The Role of Women in Agriculture and the Economy” in collaboration with UNESCO. GSI has also developed a Master’s level course on gender and development to begin shortly, an important contribution to graduate studies at KU. GSI was endorsed by the Ministry of Higher Education, MOWA, and the Parliamentary Commission on Women, the three main partners committed to its realization.
3. At the level of the project, however, the progress of GSI was hampered by disagreements between the University and UNDP regarding the construction of the GSI building. The architectural plans provided by KU were felt to be costly, at the rate of one, two, and three million each as options for a constructed and furnished building. Following the abrupt withdrawal of CIDA funding, the GEP supported activities came to a halt. KU, however has continued to implement its GSI activities with a skeletal staff in the chancellor’s office, but also with support from many faculty. Key departments of KU are on board with the proposed Institute, as are important faculties such as the faculty of Islamic Studies. The land is still available to GEP, as agreed, and interest still high on the part of the University, the Ministry of Higher Education, MOWA and the Parliamentary Commission on Women.
4. The lessons learned thus far from the GSI are the importance of better planning, as it appears that faults in planning contributed to the breakdown of cooperation between KU and UNDP with regard to the building construction. Longer term commitments and adequate technical resources to ensure the institutional development of GSI are required to move GSI beyond its current status and to enable it to capture the academic gender mainstreaming potential which exists within Kabul University.

## Subnational Level

### Promoting Local Mechanisms to Ensure Gender Equality and Women's Empowerment

#### Activity 1: Local access to Justice Initiatives

1. With assistance from UNDP, 8 (eight) legal help centers were established in the departments of women's affairs (DOWA) and departments of justice (DOJ) in Herat and Balkh provinces. Female members of CDCs were trained as paralegal volunteers in both provinces. Each month, over 100 cases for legal help are registered in each province. Though these numbers are low, they are significant if taken in the context of a country where the majority of cases are dealt with by the informal justice system.
2. Based on interviews with project staff both from Herat and Balkh, the demand for legal help has been rising as awareness of the availability of this service increases. This is especially the case in urban areas. Also in urban areas, the attitude of the judiciary towards the concept of "right to legal defense" has been improving gradually. The cooperation of DOWA and DOJ in awareness raising on the Elimination of Violence Against Women law, and public outreach through the GEP media have contributed to changing attitudes. Based on informal data, awareness raising of EVAW (though EVAW has yet to be ratified in parliament) has acted as a deterrent for men.
3. Dispute resolution for women and the reduction of violence against women is a complex phenomenon in Afghanistan because the roots of conflict and violence are found in poverty, illiteracy, and the prevalence of customary justice which in itself is unfavorable to women. According to the legal help center in the Balkh DOWA, many cases which come to them for mediation include factors related to illiteracy, extreme poverty, and traditional attitudes towards women. Training on women's rights in Islam is useful, however, it does not deal with the causes of domestic violence. Access to justice, therefore, needs to be conceptualized on multiple fronts, including legal and economic empowerment, education and awareness-raising of women's rights in Islam, human rights education for both women and girls, but also for the main figures representing patriarchy in communities: male heads of households, youth, the elders, religious leaders.
4. While the legal help centers supported by GEP have demonstrated both the receptivity and the demand for legal help, a comprehensive package integrating the various dimensions outlined above, implemented in an integrated fashion within particular communities/districts would help attack the root causes of violence against women. Importantly, there is a need to recognize the central role of the religious leaders as bulwarks of public opinion, as mediators in disputes, and as non-state duty bearers holding special responsibility for public welfare. In this context in particular, their interactions with the judiciary need to be the locus of interventions designed to increase women's access to justice and their claims on their human rights (see JHRA Mid-term external evaluation for lessons learned, July 2011).
5. The integration of both gender and the human-rights based approach in the design and implementation of all GEP activities would help further consolidate the gains made to date and in the future in facilitating women's access to justice.

## **Activity 2: Sensitization of religious leaders (Mullah's training)**

1. The aim of this activity has been to (as stated in their minutes) to build bridges on issues pertaining to the linkages between Gender and Islam with the objective of disseminating the correct interpretation that would impact the status of women in society within the overarching framework of religion and cultural values. To achieve this aim, a working group was established at the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs (MOHRA) for promoting a better understanding of gender sensitive issues. The working group on gender and Islam consists of members from MOHRA, MOWA, GEP, the Afghan Women's Network, and the Afghanistan Sciences Academy. The activities have covered training of religious leaders in Herat and Balkh, training of community representatives, publication of topics about gender and Islam in MOHRA's "Payam e Haq" (Message of Truth) magazine and exposure visits to Turkey and Malaysia. To date, 560 Mullahs in Herat, 1320 Mullahs in Nangarhar, and 250 Mullahs in Balkh have participated in 3 different phases of training on Gender and Islam.
2. The sensitization of religious leaders, known as Mullah's training, was undertaken using a multipronged strategy which seems to have yielded better than expected results from all accounts. This strategy consists of the creation at the national level of a working group within the Ministry to drive the process internally; the selection of study tour participants who are open to learning from the experience of other Islamic countries; targeting provincial and community levels; and outreach through MOHRA's own internal newsletter. Importantly, the approach taken by GEP, one which begins with respect for "the overarching framework of religion and cultural values" and seeks to work within it to "the appropriate realization of Islamic statements regarding gender as well as the involvement of women in social and economic activities under the umbrella of Islamic Law". Informants in this and a previous evaluation of a similar activity in a UNDP assisted project have underlined that though they practice as religious leaders and dispute mediators within their communities, a significant amount of the information they received in their training and exposure visits was not known to them. Exposure to other interpretations within other legal traditions (not to mention secularly oriented Islamic countries) has helped to open their views.
3. This activity has laid the foundation, so far, for a powerful agent of change in the attitude and behavior of a central group of traditional leaders in Afghanistan. As indicated by the officials interviewed, the activity needs to be expanded to more provinces. In the next phase of GEP, the role of religious leaders in mediating disputes and informal justice at the community level needs to be integrated into this activity. Furthermore, linkages between MOHRA and the judiciary need to be identified and strengthened around their respective roles and interface in the area of justice and human rights within both formal and informal justice mechanisms. A more comprehensive training package will need to be developed to include coverage of these additional dimensions, as will the development of standardized training manuals which can be used by other actors in this area (to include among others, training of trainers, learning objectives, lesson plans, evaluation). The selection of provinces to be included in this range of activities will need to be (among others) prioritized on the basis of existing GEP provincial

coordination offices; security concerns; government preferences; proximity to current GEP and other Gender Cluster activities and potential linkages.

4. The Gender and Islam working group holds vast potential for introducing catalytic change into MOHRA by raising more sensitive and far-reaching issues, and by seeking their support in areas that go beyond the conventionally accepted ones to topics like legislative reform, for example. In this way, it can increase its role as an advocacy tool of GEP to help table issues for internal discussion within MOHRA of a wide range of topics, using soft diplomacy and debate, and gradual change of attitude. The approach taken by GEP to date, which supports internally driven changes of attitudes within MOHRA has shown that the potential exists for taking the subject of Gender and Islam further within the religious community in Afghanistan. This experience also shows that attitude and behavior change are long term complex processes of social behavior at the level of the individual and the community, therefore, interventions based on a thorough understanding of Afghan culture and society are likelier to succeed than reliance on superficial awareness raising and advocacy activities typically found in other donor programs, such as radio and TV shows unaccompanied by genuine contextually driven community level social change. Ownership and community mobilization in support of such change should constitute foundational pillars of any gender equality initiative in Afghanistan. Human-rights based approach targeting both the demand side of justice and equality and the supply side is also quintessential in a context where the informal justice system is predominant.

### **Activity 3: Provincial Women Development Councils**

1. The establishment of Provincial Women's Development councils responds to the global recognition since the late 1990s that democratic local government cannot be realized without an equal representation of women and men. This newly begun activity of GEP *aims to strengthen the capacity of the officials of provincial and district governments as well as other traditional institutions from a gender perspective to enable them to design and implement activities for promoting the **political and socio-economic empowerment** of women* (PWDCs concept note). The PWDC concept builds both on the sub-national governance policy (and capacity-building effort) of UNDP under its flagship project ASGP and on the networks and presence of GEP's sub-national level activities since 2008.
2. Four PWDCs have been established to date, in Herat, Balkh, Bamyan and Nangarhar provinces. The Balkh and Herat PWDC members were trained on "Gender and Socio-economic empowerment of women in post conflict situation". These are preliminary initiatives as the PWDCs are newly established and will begin to implement their mandates in the next phase of GEP.
3. The offices of the Provincial and District Governors are key partners for the PWDCs, as are the provincial departments of the partner ministries. Various channels, including selected CSOs, media and women's groups, will be engaged in the implantation of project activities to extend the outreach and impact of the PWDCs. This will help create a broad base for institutionalizing the gender-specific interventions implemented by GEP.

4. The work program planned for the PWDCs, still at the conceptual stage, is far-reaching and ambitious. While it holds huge potential for building further on the work of UNDP at the sub-national level, the creation of new institutions in a volatile environment such as Afghanistan at this juncture can be fraught with challenges. A risk analysis highlighting the potential risks and mitigating measures will be necessary, as will “conservative” small steps based workplans (while keeping the concepts’ broader vision). Importantly, while the political support of provincial and district governors are key to the PWDCs success, measures will need to be identified to assure “good governance” within the PWDCs. For instance, the selection of the members of the PWDCS should emphasize specific criteria and qualifications required to reduce the risk of strictly political appointments by the governors’ offices. It is also recommended that the terms of reference of the PWDCs be designed in a manner to ensure compliance with minimum standards of good governance and code of conduct for its officials. As for the Women’s Policy Development Center, an organizational development approach which lays out institutional parameters (the Policy Center concept outlines a structure, but needs to detail further how the objectivity of the center’s policy outputs will be maintained) and safeguards will help protect these nascent institutions from counterproductive political influence.

#### **Activity 4: Women’s Economic Empowerment**

1. Originally, the project was intended to model gender mainstreaming through the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock with an associated objective to provide other ministries with a replication model. Agriculture is the largest sector of the economy in Afghanistan. However, women’s important role in agriculture and thus women’s contribution to the economy is often hidden, especially women’s vital roles in farming, animal husbandry and agro-processing. A key output of this activity was to be a gender mainstreaming strategy for the Ministry of Agriculture (The Gender Unit of MAIL had developed a Gender Policy and Strategy which was fine-tuned in late 2009 with the support of GEP).
2. The project has produced research through GSI in the form of a report entitled “Women’s Role in Agriculture”. Furthermore, the following activities have been undertaken and completed: a needs assessment of 39 women-owned cooperatives; two food-processing income generating activities in Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif providing economic opportunities to over 200 women; a Business Development Services training package; improvement in the dairy value chain for 80 women headed households; establishment of associations of women dairy producers
3. All income generation activities were implemented on the basis of needs assessments, market demand, value chain analysis, with food security within household as the main target.
4. Income generation activities in Afghanistan have had mixed results. Many NGOs have focused on tailoring, crafts production, carpet making and so on, not always linking them with potential buyers nor embedding them in value chain analyses. The comparative advantage and distinctive feature of the UNDP supported income generation activities has been their focus on “non-traditional” areas in terms of selection of products, training of women, product diversification, and marketing. Although the selection of products is often based on an informal assessment of the demand in the market, as in the case of home based food processing, some of the informants interviewed stated emphatically that their products (in this case jams and pickles) have come to be preferred by local buyers over similar imports from Iran. Word of mouth in the bazaar also generates valuable market information on the basis of which production decisions are made.

5. These pilot projects have both demonstrated the demand for greater investment in income generation projects along similar lines as have been implanted by GEP, but also highlighted several aspects that will need to be addressed in the future to support women's economic empowerment:
- A more comprehensive support package including literacy, numeracy, business literacy; management training, access to credit, land and space for their operations, appropriate technology for packaging, marketing support, business planning training, leadership training; quality control; sanitation
  - Strengthening of linkages with the National Solidarity Program and the Afghan Rural Enterprise Development Program of the Ministry of Rural Rehabilitation and Reconstruction (MRRD), and the UNDP National Area Based Development Program's district development assemblies for up scaling and expanding GEP's successful income generation activities.
  - Establishment of cooperatives and food processing training centers at the district level to facilitate access;
  - Expansion of the income generating activities to allow the participation of a greater number of women, as the demand is higher than the supply of project resources;
  - Impact monitoring system to include key indicators such as change in nutritional status and food security of households; impact on child care; access of women to income they produce;
  - Development of simple saving schemes at the level of the cooperatives to encourage saving;
  - More systematic market studies, should products such as saffron be pursued in the future;
  - Dialogue with the government on land reform to provide access to women for both land for their orchards, and for credit;
  - Based on the agricultural sector studies done by MRRD and MAIL, development of a strategy for women's participation in agriculture
  - Gender mainstreaming strategy in the Ministry of Economy to make adequate resources and provide opening for women's participation in the economy.

**Activity 5: Communities sensitized/equipped for the promotion of women's rights. Communities and local institutions capacitated to promote women friendly local level justice system and facilitate women's access to justice in selected provinces**

Note: this has been done from the perspective of women's legal rights as an adjunct to the activities of the Legal Help Centres (LHC). The paralegals have been trained from the communities and the CDC members especially the female members have been trained in Herat and Balkh about women's legal rights.

**Activity 6: Gender sensitive Media Centers**

1. Gender-sensitive media centres have been established in the Directorates of Women's Affairs (DOWA) in Balkh, Herat and Nagarhar and will be launched in Bamyan, soon. This activity included the provision of technical equipment for undertaking media related activities: recording

of gender sensitive, basic editing of documentaries on the key activities of DOWA among others. In addition, local journalists from the print and electronic media have been trained in reporting gender specific issues including those which are considered controversial. In Balk and Herat more than 150 local journalists and media personnel have been trained and in some programmes experts from Kabul have facilitated a number of such programmes. As a result of the gender-sensitive media centres in the DOWAs, publication of their quarterly magazines as well support a television series on women's rights have been supported by the concerning provincial offices of the Gender Equality Project (GEP). These training programmes are an on-going activity after regular intervals both the refresh the skills acquisition of the participants and also train young and dynamic journalists, women and men, to focus on pertinent issues relating to women's rights, their access to opportunities and the prevalence of harmful traditional practices which perpetuate women's subordinate position in society.

2. The media centres also serve as the hub for planning and organizing advocacy campaigns on important dates: international women's day, elimination of violence against women and other relevant occasions. These have proved effective platforms to sensitize communities about women's role in society and their rights. Also joint activities with other development agencies have been organized in Balkh, Herat and Bamyan to mobilize communities and raise their awareness about improving women's access to education and productive resources.
3. In the next phase, the media centers will become central to support the advocacy and public outreach planned under the economic empowerment and justice and human rights pillars of the project. They will also be linked to the activities of the PWDCs.

## Results and Recommendations Table

Components	Results	Lessons Learned/Findings	Recommendations
<b>National level : building the capacity of State in improving national level gender sensitive mechanisms</b>			
1.Gender Responsive Budgets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) cell established in the Ministry of Finance and inclusion of gender specific elements in the budget statement and circulars.</li> <li>• trained 45 (15 women &amp; 30 men) officials of line ministries on GRB with support from external experts</li> <li>• GRB initiatives being integrated into line ministries</li> <li>• Training on GRB was organized for 30 (12 women and 18 men) planning &amp; budget officials of the Ministry of Economy for including the key GRB principles into their preparation of the Ministry's budget</li> <li>• An international consultant for reviewing budget documents and making them gender sensitive is hired</li> <li>• sector heads of Budget Directorate was briefed about GRB</li> </ul>	Successful at developing a gender responsive budget mechanism in Ministry of Finance	Downstream gender responsive budgets through line Ministries' budget preparation processes



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>documents for implementing key principles of GRB through line ministries developed</li> </ul>		
2. Policy development Center/ Gender Sensitive Monitoring and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Concept paper for establishment of the M&amp;E Unit at MOWA developed</li> <li>Monitoring and Evaluation (M&amp;E) Unit at MOWA established for performing the role of an oversight body to supervise the implementation of NAPWA indicators by other ministries.</li> <li>matrix of indicators for M&amp;E unit of MoWA homogenous with Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) indicators prepared</li> <li>Assisted MOWA in the preparation of budget for Component 6 of its NPP for submission to the Human Resources Development (HRD) Cluster/ ministry of Finance.</li> <li>Assisted MOWA to review major program documents of line ministries to integrated gender sensitive components</li> <li>The draft M&amp;E mechanism prepared</li> </ul>	New initiative, basic steps under preparation	Important activity to continue under new phase

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Matrix for preparation of NAPWA indicators according to the ANDS model developed</li> <li>• Training program held for 17 members of MOWA on monitoring and evaluations mechanisms developed</li> <li>• Technical support to MoWA provided in completion of 100 day reports to HRD cluster</li> <li>• Establishment of Women Policy Development Center approved by board of MoWA</li> <li>• first draft of M&amp;E Handbook prepared</li> </ul>		
<p>3.Capacity building of partner ministries</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Organized focus-group discussions with concerning Deputy Ministers (Technical) of line ministries and their officials for identifying the specific role of each ministry vis-à-vis the gender mainstreaming goals of MOWA;</li> <li>• organized training program for the staff of DOWA in Balkh province on increasing their management skills</li> <li>• coordinating mechanism for interactions of</li> </ul>	<p>Work in progress, good results, improved sense of ownership</p>	<p>Extend to more ministries</p>

	<p>DoWA in Balkh with the different stakeholders for a regular flow of information was developed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender mainstreaming strategy for the Ministry of Agriculture established</li> <li>• Technical support extended to MOWA for achieving the milestones of the third and fourth set of 100 days for MOWA's National Priority Programs (NPP).</li> <li>• TORs for linking Gender Units of 19 ministries with MOWA was developed and a workshops to clarify their roles conducted,</li> <li>• mechanisms to collect data on NAPWA indicators and linkage with line ministries developed,</li> <li>• 5 officials (1 women and 4 men) from the Ministries of Economy and Women's Affairs participated in an international training programmes on "Gender and Macro-Economic Planning"</li> <li>• 19 officials (7 women and 12 men)</li> </ul>		
--	--	--	--

	<p>from the Ministries of Women’s Affairs, Economy, Agriculture, Budget Directorate and Provincial Governors’ offices in Herat and Balkh attended a training programme on “Gender Mainstreaming &amp; MDGs” in Manila and Bangkok;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitated the training workshop of MAIL on Gender and Food Security for 45 officials -18 women and 27 men,</li> <li>• Two training programmes conducted in collaboration with JICA officials on gender analysis, gender disaggregated data and other relevant topics for the officials of MoWA. An action plan has been prepared to continue with these trainings over the coming months.</li> <li>• Capacity of 30 senior officials of MOWA enhanced to scan policies/programs of line ministries from a gender perspective</li> <li>• Needs assessment of Gender Units undertaken</li> <li>• Arranged a study tour for the Deputy Minister (Technical) &amp; senior officials of</li> </ul>		
--	---	--	--

	<p>the Ministry of Economy to meet with women decision-makers of the Planning Commission, Government of India to understand the need for mainstreaming gender into economic planning for replication</p>		
<p>4. Gender Studies Institute – GSI</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Certificate course in , "Gender, Conflict and Development" organized in Kabul, Herat and Balkh universities; a core group of trainers on gender mainstreaming in academic institutions was formed and courses have been facilitated in other academic institutions.</li> <li>• Gender sensitive survey methodology developed</li> <li>• CSO and field staff trained on gender sensitive survey and tested in 2 provinces</li> <li>• The report on "Gender-based Violence in 3 universities: Kabul Herat and Balkh" was published</li> <li>• The template for the collection and analysis of gender sensitive data in collaboration with the Central Statistics Office (CSO) was</li> </ul>	<p>Some stop/start problems identified , but substantive work accomplished and smooth progress made</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KU and MOWA keen on moving forward, as is Women's Commission of Parliament</li> <li>• Important source of research for future MOWA policy development Center</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>finalized</li> <li>Launch of the second research study in collaboration with Kabul University and UNESCO on “The Role of Women in Agriculture and the Economy”</li> </ul>		
<p><i>Subnational Level: Promoting local mechanisms to enhance gender equality and women’s empowerment</i></p>			
1.Local access to Justice Initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>8 LHCs established in HRT &amp;MZR established</li> <li>female members of CDCs trained as paralegal volunteers in MZR and HRT</li> <li>each month over 100 cases for legal help registered in each province</li> </ul>	Successful through legal help centers	A central part of future project using a more comprehensive approach to community development and legal empowerment
2.Sensitization of religious leaders (Mullah’s training)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishment of working group at the Ministry of Hajj and Religious Affairs (MOHRA) for promoting a better understanding of gender sensitive issues</li> <li>Completed Training of 500 religious leaders from Herat and Balkh</li> <li>Exposure visits to Malaysia and Turkey for religious scholars</li> <li>Training program for 50 community representatives conducted to raise</li> </ul>	Highlighted as best practice, extremely successful	Continue, expand to include judiciary, and roll out to provinces, however need to use a comprehensive training package and approach

	<p>their awareness about Islamic interpretations of gender</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Topics about gender and Islam identified to be published in publication of MoHRA “Payam e Haq”</li> <li>• Training on Mullahs were conducted in Kandahar in collaborative with USAID’s project - the STRATCOM office</li> <li>• 145 mullahs trained in Herat on socio-economic rights of women,</li> </ul>		
3.Provincial Women Development Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishment of 3 WPDC in Herat and Balkh and Nangarhar provinces</li> <li>• PWDC members of Balkh received training on “Gender and Socio-economic empowerment of women in post conflict situation”</li> <li>• The training program was organized for 25 key members of the PWDC in Herat</li> </ul>	New initiative, to be rolled out	Central component in new project
4.Economic Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• needs assessment survey of 39 women-owned cooperatives in collaboration with the Home Economics Department of the Ministry of Agriculture,</li> </ul>	Good results and many lessons learned/ demand is high	Need a more comprehensive support package with links through MRRD-NSP/NABPD-DDA and ASGP/PDC



	<p>Irrigation and Livestock (MAIL) and the USAID's Agricultural Credit Enhancement Program completed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Two income-generating activities (IGA) in Herat and Mazar-e-Sharif were implemented which provided economic opportunities to over 200 women</li><li>• finalized a Business Development Services - BDS training package for selected officials of the two departments to enable them to provide effective services for improving the income of women producers and rural women entrepreneurs</li><li>• DOWA in Balkh was supported to inaugurate a women's craft show in collaboration with women's shuras and 12 women-led associations under the umbrella of Association of Women in Business (WIB).</li><li>• Supported 80 women headed households with improving the dairy value chain in collaboration with DOWA and Directorate of</li></ul>		
--	--	--	--



	<p>Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (DAIL) of Balkh.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formed associations of women dairy producers in order to improve milk production and diversification of milk products in Balkh.</li> <li>• Women extension department of MAIL was supported by developing of a questionnaire to conduct survey on the needs of women-owned cooperatives</li> <li>• survey launched in 14 provinces in collaboration with MAIL and USAID project on agriculture development</li> <li>• organized a professional training of “Cotton Production” for the 25 women in Herat province</li> </ul>		
<p>5. Gender sensitive Media Centres</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 gender sensitive media centers established in MZR and HRT</li> <li>• local journalists and staff of media centres on techniques of gender-focused reporting;</li> <li>• 8 local media organizations in Balkh, conducted radio programs to</li> </ul>	<p>Groundwork done in Balkh</p>	<p>Will be needed to support public outreach in the future</p>

	<p>raise awareness about socio-economic role of women in Afghan society</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Master course curriculum on gender and development submitted for vetting of MoHE</li> </ul>		
<p>6. Communities sensitized/equipped for the promotion of women's rights Communities and local institutions capacitated to promote women friendly local level justice system and facilitate women's access to justice in selected provinces</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training program organized about ERAW LAW for community development council members</li> </ul>	<p>Some achievements through legal help centers</p>	<p>Needs to be done more systematically and deepened</p> <p>A central part of future project using a more comprehensive approach to community development and legal empowerment</p>

## Progress Towards MDG3, NAPWA, CPAP, ANDS, Afghanistan Compact

1. The UNDP Gender Equality Project has contributed towards all the key UNDP and National benchmarks and the Millennium Development Goal 3: promote gender equality and empower women.
2. Within the UNDP Afghanistan Country Programme Action Plan 2010-2013, gender is recognized as a cross-cutting issue to which UNDP has committed to continue its advocacy and programme of support to the Government for increasing the role of Afghan women in peace building, governance and development through implementation of the national action plan for women, including human rights, participation, employment, independence and advocacy.
3. GEP contributes to NAPWA's pillar 1, Security, which focuses creating a secure environment for women and a life free from intimidation, fear and violence. This has been covered by the LHCs with its objective to address violence against women and raise awareness about human rights, women's rights and reduce gender-based violence. It supports Pillar 2, Governance, Rule of Law and Human Rights which focuses on adoption and implementation of comprehensive leadership and capacity building programs for women; increasing opportunities and mechanisms for women's leadership and participation in their communities among others It supports Pillar, Economic and Social Development which underpins the "recognition of women as economic agents" by improving women's access to economic opportunities to compete equally with men in the marketplace.
4. 5.4 These are covered through the 3 components of the project – in most cases jointly with the Ministry of Women's Affairs (MOWA) such as the leadership, capacity development training programmes and sensitization about participation in political arena were arranged with the Training and Advocacy Department of MOWA in 2010 and 2011. In the northern, central and region over 200 potential women parliamentary candidates were trained by the project in collaboration with MOWA trainers before the 2010 elections. It also contributes to Pillar 3 Economic and Social Development which has 3 main components: economic, work and poverty, health and education. In the first component, the project has been active in enhancing the economic status of women through different initiatives – income-generating activities, provision of business development services, women's entrepreneurship development training programmes. In the field of education, the project has been involved in including gender sensitive issues into the academic curricula at different levels, established the Gender Studies Institute (GSI) in Kabul University, and undertakes research, training and advocacy campaigns for improved access to education for girls and women.
5. Gender is a cross-cutting feature of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy's Social and Economic Development Pillar, and it is also enshrined in the Afghanistan Compact as a commitment to the provisions of ANDS and NAPWA. GEP contributes to several sectors within the social and economic development pillar of ANDS, including culture, media and youth; agriculture and rural development (which covers income generation activities); social protection (which covers justice and human rights); and private sector development (which includes access to training, credit and support to women owned and operated businesses).
6. While GEP's various activities and outputs have covered the main international and national priorities outlined above, in order to achieve meaningful impact on a greater number of Afghan women, the next phase will need to considerably increase its level of financial investment over an adequate period of time, based on the lessons learned from GEP as outlined in this report.

## Gender Cluster

1. In line with UNDP's CPAP commitment to "further mainstream gender empowerment and equality across the entire country programme, and the specific gender targets in its Results and Resources Framework, there are currently a large number of direct (targeted) and indirect (inclusive focus) gender related activities in the UNDP project portfolio.
2. The Gender Cluster, to which GEP plays a technical support function, provides a valuable mechanism for expanding the scope of UNDP's impact nationally and to the grassroots, and through its multiple partnerships with government institutions and CSOS, a channel for "cascading" UNDP's gender mandate and goals in Afghanistan. UNDP's mainstreaming capacity, through its various projects at the subnational level and its outreach at community level, has been recognized by donors and government alike. To streamline this effort, a unique UNDP Afghanistan approach to gender and to capacity development, along with guidelines for implementing this approach through the project portfolio, and an internal tracking and monitoring system is needed to help harness the enormous outreach potential of the UNDP program in Afghanistan.
3. The managers of the various projects in the Gender Cluster appear very committed to gender mainstreaming in their activities, and all seem to have activities in their plans for this. However, many expressed their frustration at the lack of technical resources available to them to implement this commitment. GEP as a project has its own parameters and resource limitations, and cannot be expected to service such a large portfolio. Though many of the project have the necessary budget to recruit their own gender focal points, there have been bottlenecks in their recruitment, hence hindered their ability to move effectively in their mainstreaming plans.
4. In addition to insufficient technical resources, the cluster projects demonstrate a clear lack of active coordination and complementarity/synergy. There are overlaps and duplication of activities between GEP and JHRA, for example in the training of religious leaders; or between LOTFA and JHRA, in their gender work with law enforcement authorities.
5. A strong need has been expressed for a coordinating mechanism within UNDP, both through the cluster mechanism and subject/sector specific working groups to build concrete bridges of collaboration on gender issues. The consensus is strong among the cluster projects on the vast potential of the UNDP portfolio to have a real impact on women, however, without technical support and active coordination, this potential will remain constrained.
6. The cluster needs to be activated, and hold regular meetings to begin to address some of the problems its projects are encountering in gender mainstreaming. In doing so, it is important that they recognize that GEP can be more than just a source of technical backstopping for them, but also an equal partner in joint activities and possibly a beneficiary of some of their own project resources.
7. To streamline this effort, a unique UNDP Afghanistan approach to gender and to capacity development, along with guidelines for implementing this approach through the project portfolio, and an internal tracking and monitoring system is needed to help harness the enormous outreach potential of the UNDP program in Afghanistan. The terms of reference and operationalization plan for the Gender Cluster will need to be updated to reflect this unique approach, and their implementation supported by a multidisciplinary team of specialist working in the Cross-practice unit with both GEP and with focal points in the cluster projects. Such a multidisciplinary team may be more cost effective than each project recruiting its own gender specialist.

8. To capture the mainstreaming potential present in the large number of government partners in the gender cluster pool, terms of reference and operationalization plans will need to be developed to mobilize gender focal points in ministries more actively (energies, skills, capacities) to support mainstreaming, through MOWA and through gender activities/components of UNDP projects.

## Management, Implementation, Partnerships

1. The implementation of GEP, especially from 2009-2011 shows that its achievements were very significant considering the available level of resources, financial and human/technical. The project made great strides in terms of improved national ownership and capacity transfer, and in emphasizing gradual change and flexibility/adaptability rather than being strictly driven by project objectives solely.
2. However, its institutional memory undermined because of too many changes/staffing (documentation on the project's activities/performance is scarce before mid-2009). Subsequent stop/start patterns in project implementation have been disruptive, resulting in staff loss/turnover due to job insecurity.
3. Investment in Afghan advisors has helped to build the capacity of MOWA. This approach needs to be accelerated in the future, through the recruitment of senior Afghan advisors/experts in GEP. Along with this emphasis on local expertise, and to continue to build capacity, GEP will need to reduce reliance on long-term international technical experts- and favor short-term assignments pre-conditioned on skills transfer and national capacity.
4. GEP's participatory planning and decision-making approaches has been key to its success, hence in the recruitment of both national but especially international consultants, team building and a track record in participatory approaches/skills should be emphasized.
5. Furthermore, there has not been a sustained and systematic resource mobilization, marketing and communication effort. Many donors are not aware of the project's achievements. A comprehensive package of communication materials, technical for project partners use, and PR/resource mobilization oriented for donors and international partners needs to be developed and implemented systematically by the CO. Such a resource mobilization strategy has to be an integral part of a corporate image and marketing approach to ensure that potential donors develop a perception/image of "one face" for UNDP (a unique "brand" for UNDP Afghanistan so to speak). Sectoral or cross-cutting projects' resource mobilization materials would thus be embedded in a broader corporate marketing/RM strategy, and their presentations and presentation materials reflect an "esprit de corps" and common vision of UNDP's work in this country.
6. The original scope of the project was too vast and ambitious, and its language too complex to "translate across culture", and this may account for some of the challenges it has encountered in its implementation. It is important to recognize that quick impact is hard to achieve, and that longer time horizons are needed for sustainable results, both for a low absorptive capacity but also because of the deteriorating socio-political status of women in Afghanistan (economic). Therefore, while GEP had a good track record for generating new approaches/ideas through its piloting approach, impact remains scattered and difficult to assess in the absence of a baseline and monitoring and evaluation system within the project itself. In relation to this, project reports also need to be revisited for a more adequate structure and data. It is recommended that GEP

consider re-formatting quarterly and annual reports (and data collection) to reflect both quantitative and qualitative achievements/ lessons

7. GEP needs to continue building on its successes and expand its scope for at least another three year phase, however, much greater levels of human, financial and technical resources will be required for sustained impact- with longer time horizons. The future project should be planned and resourced adequately for 3 years at least to secure a good supply of long-term staff and achieve its intended impact.

## Annex I

### Impact Case Studies

Fahima expands her business after receiving the handicrafts and home decoration items training.

Fatima of Khoshan village in Herat province participated in the 3 month long training program in 2011 on skills development for the production of handicrafts and home decoration items that was organized jointly by the Directorate of Women's Affairs (DOWA) and the UNDP-Gender Equality Project (GEP) in Herat. Fatima who owns a beauty parlor, on completion of the training program, began to make hand bouquets and crowns for brides who are usually her customers in the parlor. She makes these items for 100 Afs and sells them for 250 Afs and makes a profit of nearly US\$200 per month.



Encouraged by this success, she is now planning to decorate cars for weddings with artificial flowers although she is aware of the competition she would have to face from two other entrepreneurs in this field. But she is confident and said "I know that I may face competition as there are two other men who also do the same business but I am quite sure I can break my competitors as I have already seen their work and am confident about my products". She has planned to rent a space for this business and engaged some of her classmates to help her as she is aware the expansion of her business will require more people to assist her. Fatima is confident that through these different entrepreneurial efforts she would be able to build her own confidence as well as help others to overcome the barriers to women's economic empowerment.

In Herat, nearly 400 out of the 550 religious leaders who have participated in the UNDP-Gender Equality Project's training programme on Gender and Islam have demonstrated a positive change of attitude towards women's equal participation in society and they are against any kind of violence against women in the name of religion. During the Friday sermons some of the mullahs are preaching in the words of one "to have good behaviour with women and girls, not to use violence against women, and bring equality between girls and boy inside the family and community".

Through the four Legal Help Centres (LHC) established in the province, more than 600 women who experienced GBV have been able to access legal protection and put in touch with appropriate justice system for redress. About 120 women have directly benefited from legal support which has changed their lives in a positive way.

Around 90 women have learned new vocational skills on vegetable production, cotton production, sericulture and production of decorative handicrafts. Of these women, 55 women have expanded their businesses and become economically self-dependent.

Herat Women's Shura is a well-known place for women to come and find solutions for their domestic conflicts. Every week several women who are affected by domestic violence and

discrimination visit the Legal Help Center (LHC) established within this women's organization. FATIMA, a 20 years woman requested the paralegals and staff of the LHC to save her life because for the past two years she has been trying to get a divorce from her husband, Sayed Aqa who is a drug addict and very aggressive towards her. But she did not know the legal process involved for this.



*Fatima's mother is reporting the case to legal help center, requesting for support.*

However, when her husband broke her leg with a wooden cane, Fatima's parents decided to find legal solutions by approaching the LHC in women's shura. With the help of the staff of the LHC, and after several sessions in the District Governor's office and at the district court, Fatima obtained the divorce and now she is living with her father. As she is still young, Fatima hopes in future to have a family of her own one day and is happy that she is free from domestic violence for the rest of her life.

Rahima is the mother of seven children, living in dire poverty in a village in Khulm District of Balkh province. She had been struggling to make both ends meet as she did not have a steady income to maintain her large family. Since her childhood she had an interest in selling fruits but never had an opportunity to learn how this can be done as a source of income. When the

UNDP Gender Equality Project in Balkh organized the fruit processing training programme in 2010 in her district, she attended the full course and after the training was over, she was provided with a juicer to process the locally available fruits and sell the juice.

She started selling fruit juice from her home and her children helped her. At the time of opening the business, Rahima exclaimed "the moment my little juice shop was opened, it was the biggest and happiest time of my life". People from Khulm began visiting her shop to buy the different kinds of traditional Khulmi fresh fruit juice for their parties in the town. As the word spread about Rihama's good quality fruit juice, many buyers started to visit her shop from neighbouring villages after walking all the distance. When asked about what she thought about her success, Rahima's answer was: "the best way any one can help is by giving a tool which allows us to be independent, self-reliant and free again".

Ms. Zargul with her two children and husband who worked as daily wage worker lived in poverty before she joined the greenhouse vegetables production income-generating project of UNDP Gender Equality Project (GEP). This opportunity provided her a chance to grow vegetables during the winter through the adoption of a new technology in the greenhouse that she received and after going through the training programme organized by the Department of Agriculture, Irrigation and Livestock (DAIL), She realized that "Before this job I was busy with home activities and I always was thinking that outdoor work is only for men. But now it is 6 months that I have an occupation besides daily domestic activities" After selling the vegetables in the local markets where there is a demand for these products, Ms. Zargul is able to earn about US\$ 80 per month. She is able to use some of the





vegetables for the family which has improved their nutritional intake and can now decide on how to spend the money on her children. She feels UNDP-GEP's project has been very useful for women like her who are living in villages and have no income of their own and says we are grateful to UNDP and Women's Department for this support."

Since the establishment of LHCs in January 2010, about 100 hundred cases are registered every month and over 900 legal cases have been resolved through community level negotiations. For the income-generating activities, nearly 1200 women, most of whom are heads of family have learned a skill to manage their own enterprises.

Over 25 active local media organizations in Balkh province have been sensitized and this has contributed to increased broadcasting of programmes on gender related issues – gender-based violence, forced and early marriages among others.

The UNDP Gender Equality Project in Balkh organized a training programme on dairy product development by increasing value addition to the women's existing business of selling milk. The women's association headed by Ms. Ziba in Dehdadi district of Balkh province comprising 8 sub-groups received dairy seats along with technical and practical training which contributed to an increase in their daily income – they were previously selling raw milk but after the training, they began processing different milk products, packaging these products and selling them in the local market. This has directly increased their daily income and impacted positively on their families – better schooling opportunities of their children, improved quality of food intake for the household, among others.

Ms. Ziba, head of the women's association who is a high school graduate said: "We now feel stronger because we can also contribute to our livelihood. Like our husbands, we are also independent human beings; this is called the real empowerment of women in rural areas."

## Annex II

### Evaluation Team Members

#### **Ms Fainula Rodriguez, Team leader, international**

**Fainula Rodriguez** is a specialist in Rule of Law and Governance, working continuously in Afghanistan since 2002. A doctoral student and Senior Fellow in Governance and Development at the Center for Global Studies, University of Victoria, her research focuses on "**Islam, Law, Culture and Governance in Afghanistan's Reconstruction Experience**", with special reference to legal pluralism and institutional transplants. She is also a member of the Board of the Afghanistan Agency for Development Assistance (**AADA**), an Afghan NGO delivering healthcare to remote communities.

[Fainula@uvic.ca](mailto:Fainula@uvic.ca)

#### **Ms Hangama Anwari, Team member, national**

Hangama Anwari is a Lawyer, women right activist who have worked in the past 12 years in the area of Human rights and in particular women rights and child rights. Hangama has been a former human right commissioner for 7 years and has established an NGO which is involved in the area of research and advocacy on the rights of women and children. She has been part of many national networks to draft legislations and policies namely EAW law, Juvenile Justice law and family code.

[Hangama.Anwari@yahoo.com](mailto:Hangama.Anwari@yahoo.com)

## Annex III

### References And Documents Consulted

- 1) UNDP/GEP Project document, Initiation document, Annual and Quarterly Reports, Workplans, Project Board Minutes, Strategic Plan (2009-2011)
- 2) Concept Paper of Women's Policy Development Centre (WPDC)
- 3) Smith, Deborah J and J. Lamey. A Holistic Justice System for Afghanistan (AREU Policy Note Series. Dec.2009).
- 4) [www.areu.org.af](http://www.areu.org.af) (AREU's Community-Based Dispute Resolution Case Studies)
- 5) Reforming Afghanistan Broken Judiciary – International Crisis Group – Nov 2010
- 6) <http://www.parliament.uk/briefing-papers/SN06132> *Women and the Afghan transition* - Commons Library Standard Note
- 7) National Priority Program 5 Human Resource Development/Gender Equality
- 8) Building on Success , The London Conference on Afghanistan , Afghanistan Compact- February 2006
- 9) Afghanistan National Development Strategy, 2008 – 2013; a strategy for Security, Governance, Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction
- 10) UNDP Country Program Action Plan – CPAP 2101 – 2013
- 11) Conference report: Public Legal Awareness/ Legal Aid national conference; Inter-Continental Hotel, Kabul – Afghanistan May 13, 2011
- 12) The Human Rights Based Approach to Development Cooperation: Towards a Common Understanding Among UN Agencies [http://hrbaportal.org/?page\\_id=2127](http://hrbaportal.org/?page_id=2127)
- 13) UNDP-BCPR: Compendium #1- Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation in Conflict Prevention and Recovery Settings
- 14) [http://www.undp.org/bcpr/documents/prevention/integrate/CDA\\_complete.pdf](http://www.undp.org/bcpr/documents/prevention/integrate/CDA_complete.pdf)
- 15) UNAMA A Long Way to Go: Implementation of the Elimination of Violence against Women Law in Afghanistan (November 2011)
- 16) UNDP/GEP , concept note for Provincial Women's Development Centre (PWDC), June 2011
- 17) UNDP JHRA Report of the Mid-Term External Evaluation (July 2011)
- 18) UNDP Gender Cluster Operationalization Plan, Gender cluster TORs, Summary Report of Gender Portfolio

## Annex IV

### List of Persons Interviewed

1. David Akopyan Deputy Country Director UNDP
2. Natsuko Kaneyama, Head of CP & UN Unit /UNDP
3. Sharmistha Dasbawa, Project Manager – GEP/UNDP
4. Abdullah Azizi Programme Associate – CP & UN Unit/UNDP
5. Ahmad Shakib Jafari, Admin/Procurement Associate - GEP/UNDP
6. Nooragha Tajik Provincial Coordinator- GEP – Herat
7. Lisa Naeem Finance Associate GEP
8. Syed Haroon Ahmadi Project Associate UNDP/GEP
9. Stella Tandai Makanya Gender Advisor – UNAMA
10. Nasera Rahman Director of Extension Service for women – MAIL
11. Dr Nazir Ahmad Shahdi Deputy Minister Ministry of Economy
12. Fawzia Habibi Head of Coordination and International Relations Department MoWA
13. Dr. Husn Bano Ghazanfar Minister of Women’s affairs
14. Nasir Amir Admin –Finance DoWA Balkh Province
15. Naser Ahmad Hoqoqi Head of DoJ Balkh Province
16. Freshta Neazi Family Extension Unit Department of MAIL in Balkh province
17. Nadia Head of Legal Aid DoWA, Balkh province
18. Head of DoHRA Balkh province
19. Chief Technical Advisor, Chief Technical Advisor APRP/UNDP
20. Shahriniso Najmetdinova, Component Manager JHRA
21. Julie Vandassen, Human Rights Specialist JHRA
22. Ahmad Salari , Human Rights Specialist JHRA
23. Huma Saeed, Program Officer, DGU/UNDP
24. Sandeep Kumar, Project manager LoTFA
25. .... Project manager ASGP
26. Prof. Hamidullah Amin chancellor of Kabul University and Advisor to MoHE
27. Shabana Basij Rasekh National Gender Advisor NSP/MRRD
28. Syed Sadiq A.J, Deputy Country Director UNWOMEN
29. Vic GETZ, Gender advisor NSP/MRRD
30. Mohamad Tariq Ismati, Executive Director NSP/MRRD
31. Key Schwendinger Deputy Head UNRCO
32. Homa Sabri ICDU Manger UNWOMEN
33. Murtaza Hamid Head of Mosques – MOHRA
34. Susana Fioretti, Italian Embassy Italian Development Cooperation
35. Fabrizio Falcone, Program Officer, Italian Embassy, Italian Development Cooperation
36. Jennifer Myles, First Secretary, Canadian Embassy
37. Mr. Murtaza Hamid, Director Masjids and Husainas (GEP Focal Point) MOHRA

## Annex V

# Formulation of Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Project

### Concept Note

#### Background

In November 2011, an external independent evaluation of UNDP's Gender Equality Project was undertaken with a two-fold objective: 1. To conduct a review of the project's interventions; and 2. Based on the lessons learned/best practices during 2009-2011, to distill the wisdom of UNDP's experience in the gender sector in support of the development of a future project. This note outlines the next steps in the formulation of a future project, a schematic presentation of which was approved by the Senior Management of UNDP Afghanistan (attached as Annex A under the title "Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Project"<sup>2</sup>)

#### Objectives of the Formulation Exercise

The main objective of the project formulation exercise is to further assess and detail the goals, objectives, output/outcomes, monitoring/evaluation, management arrangements, technical and funding requirements of the Women's Empowerment and Gender Equality Project.

#### Participatory Planning Approach

A participatory planning and project development approach will be taken to further build on the significant sense of national ownership expressed in the evaluation of the Gender Equality Project by the Afghan Government. Effort will also be made, to the extent possible, to impart project formulation skills to national team members. The in-country mission will begin with a strategic planning/brainstorming workshop which will be facilitated by the formulation team. A briefing session of the main partners will close the in-country mission, this with a view to reinforce the buy-in of the main stakeholders of the new project. The team will be committed to take a participatory and inclusive approach in all its tasks.

#### Specific Tasks

<b>Tasks Pre-mission:</b>	Planning, research, document review, preparation of mission schedule/activities
<b>Tasks Mission:</b>	In-country mission to include brainstorming/planning workshop; possible field visit; meetings with key national/international stakeholders and actors; project design; de-briefing of UNDP SM and project partners

---

<sup>2</sup> The proposed project builds on the content of the Initiation Phase document, the GEP Strategic Plan, and the findings of the evaluation mission.

**Tasks Pro-doc:** Drafting of project document, review/revisions, finalization

**Outputs:** Planning workshop design/agenda; summary of results  
1<sup>st</sup> draft of the project document  
Final project document  
Follow up activities- as necessary

### Timing (to be confirmed)

Tasks Pre-mission: start 10-15 January, 2011

Tasks Mission: Start in-country 25 January, 2011

Tasks Pro-doc: Completion by 10-15 February (on the outside)

Total: one month or 30 days for all three phases

### Team Composition/Specialization

The team will consist of two consultants, one international and one national, both of whom should have extensive experience both of Afghanistan and with UNDP's mandate, policies, and procedures and the Gender cluster. All team members should also have a track record in participatory methods and with Afghan stakeholders.

In addition, given the participatory nature of the formulation exercise, the consultants will work in close cooperation with the GEP project manager and regional coordinators, the CPU unit team at UNDP, and technical specialists from partner ministries. These ministries may be requested to join on a punctual basis for specific inputs in order to keep the team small and efficient. Group inputs/workshops may be used as a modality to bring the larger team together. The formulation team will be assisted in their tasks, both technically and administratively, by members of the Cross-Practice unit in an effort to enhance their engagement in the project from the outset.

### Team Composition

Consultants	GEP Project Partners	National Partners	UNDP CO team
Team leader (international), specialist in planning, gender, justice and human rights and capacity-building	Project Manager (with special inputs on women's economic empowerment, policy, capacity-building among others)	Technical specialists from project partners: MOWA, Economy, Agriculture, MRRD, MOJ	Head of CPU Program Officer CPU
Team member (national), specialist in gender, human rights and justice	Regional Coordinators		

## Looking Forward

**Table 2 Women’s Empowerment And Gender Equality**

*Building on UNDP’s successes in the gender and development sector in Afghanistan*

<b>Pillar I: Policy Development and Capacity Building</b>  <u>Focus:</u> national and sub-national	<b>Pillar II Justice and Human Rights</b>  <u>Focus:</u> sub-national	<b>Pillar III Policy Development and Capacity Building</b>  <u>Focus:</u> national and sub- national	<b>Pillar IV Harnessing the Potential of the UNDP Gender Cluster</b>  <u>Focus:</u> national and sub-national
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy Development Center, MOWA and M&amp;E of NAPWA</li> <li>• Links with planned National and int’l policy centers including a roster of Afghan technical experts</li> <li>• Capacity-building of MOWA &amp; capacity building of sectoral gender focal points</li> <li>• Gender Studies Institute KU, MHE/Women’s Commission Parliament/MOWA</li> <li>• Downstreaming “Making gender</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Legal Help Centers</li> <li>• Training of religious (Mullahs) leaders in women’s rights, Islam and gender development, law enforcement authorities, judiciary</li> <li>• HR education and public outreach</li> <li>• Establish links with regional institutions/networks or Islamic scholars (ie. Women Living under Muslim Law)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Policy Development Center, MOWA and M&amp;E of NAPWA</li> <li>• Links with planned National and int’l policy centers</li> <li>• Capacity-building of MOWA &amp; capacity building of sectoral gender focal points</li> <li>• Gender Studies Institute Kabul University/MHE/Women’s Commission Parliament/MOWA</li> <li>• Downstreaming “Making gender responsive budgets work” through national budget preparation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender mainstreaming through all UNDP projects and their national counterparts, including joint projects between Gender equality project and other UNDP projects in common areas</li> <li>• Establish internal M&amp;E to track and monitor Gender cluster impact</li> <li>• Communication system to report achievements of Gender cluster as a “common” UNDP gender output.</li> </ul>

<p>responsive budgets work” through national budget preparation processes within line Ministries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement of CSO partners and capacity building of CSO partners</li> </ul> <p>Advocacy for a <b>Presidential Commission for Afghan Women</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Awareness raising on <b>Afghan Women and the Transition (national conference and related media events)</b></li> </ul>	<p>processes within line Ministries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Engagement of CSO partners and capacity building of CSO partners</li> </ul> <p>Advocacy for a <b>Presidential Commission on Afghan Women</b></p>	
---	--	---	--

### I Strategic Approach

- Prioritize best practice to be built, expanded, deepened, scaled up
- Integrate legal/economic empowerment, to bring key players around women’s issues, ie. Police, judiciary (state and traditional), mullahs, attorney general for overall women’s empowerment
- Create concrete links, institutional and project based, with MRRD/DDA , ASGP/Provincial Development Council (PDC) to maximize their sub-national infrastructure and outreach capacity with an emphasis on increasing women’s political participation, (SdB)
- Expand and deepen focus at the subnational level where it has established a good presence and where donors look to it as a preferred partner.

### II Target beneficiaries

- Widows, female headed households, orphan girls victims of domestic violence as priority target group (not exclusively)
- Focus on boys and youth (for example: Madrassa)

### III Coverage

National/Sub-national balance/coverage: Some activities such as Mullahs and Judges training can have national coverage; same as PWDCS (as many provinces as possible), while others such as legal



and economic empowerment can be designed more coherently and aim at depth in selected provinces through the existing GEP provincial offices and in collaboration with the respective Departments of Women's Affairs (DOWA) in these provinces .

#### **IV Resource Mobilization and Communications:**

- Success stories, best practices, short videos like the DDA woman leader to be aired on TV
- Comprehensive communication package for women's empowerment and gender equality targeting different audiences (donors, gov't, IPs, internal use) to inform on a timely basis of the achievements of the project and raise the profile of gender issues through this effort. This package to be developed in line with a corporate communication strategy and to include guidance on donor relations
- Comprehensive communication package for women's empowerment and gender equality targeting different audiences (donors, gov't, IPs, internal use) to inform on a timely basis of the achievements of the project and raise the profile of gender issues through this effort; a documentary on the achievements of the last 10 years of MOWA (to be prepared) for presentation to targeted donors (Japan and others) and other high level international platforms – Commission on the Status of Women (CSW)
- The Afghan audience communication strategy and instruments to be developed in cooperation with Afghan media and communications NGOs, with supervision from MOWA to ensure the cultural, social and political relevance of these materials.

#### **V National and International Partnerships:**

- MOWA, Economy, MOHRA, MRRD, MOJ, MOLSA, Higher Education, Interior, Agriculture, Finance, Kabul University, CSOs and UN Women/UNFPA, UNAMA on political participation, advocacy

#### **VI Coordination mechanisms**

- Coordination with MOWA, between MOWA and Line Ministries, UNDP projects (CTA, sectoral technical resources) and gender focal points/working groups within these to be carefully considered in the design of the next phase.

#### **Next Steps:**

- Activate Gender Cluster and establish M&E system within UNDP to monitor progress
- In depth assessment of pillar components and participatory strategic plan for UNDP gender project, aimed at creating a common vision and understanding among all key future partners.
- Project formulation and resource mobilization
- Development of a comprehensive communication package on GEP for the use of the CO in marketing gender project and raising funds. This package can be in two parts: one for the CO's resource mobilization efforts and one for the project to share technical information with partners.