

Women for Afghan Women #ByHerSide Project Final Report

Reporting Period: 01 November 2018 – 31 December 2019

Women for Afghan Women (WAW) thanks Dining for Women for its generous and timely support for the women and girls of Afghanistan. WAW is grateful for this opportunity to provide a final report on the #ByHerSide project, which has allowed WAW to provide critical medical care to low-income women and girls and survivors of domestic violence in 14 provinces across Afghanistan. As detailed below, WAW has achieved and exceeded its goals for its #ByHerSide project.

Project Details

Organization Name	Women for Afghan Women (WAW)	
Project Title	#ByHerSide	
Grant Amount	\$50,000	
Contact Person	Name	Najia Nasim
	Title	Executive Director
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Project Outcomes

Outcomes and Targets		Achieved
Outcome 1:	250 women and girls will gain access to critical health services	346
Outcome 2:	At least 10 (up to 20) women/girls will be provided funding for emergency medical procedures/care	20
Outcome 3:	250 women and girls will receive shelter and/or intensive support services while recovering from gender-based violence	1,923
Outcome 4:	250 of these women and girls will receive educational programming to strengthen life/literacy/vocational skills to improve self-sufficiency	1,788
Total family/community members indirectly impacted through #ByHerSide:		13,461

Project Summary

- **1,923** clients were provided protection and shelter against life-threatening violence.
- **1,788** women and girls received educational programming to strengthen life/literacy/vocational skills to improve self-sufficiency.
- **1,751** clients received intensive emergency care safety counseling.
- **1,565** clients were successfully reintegrated into society.
- **1,146** community outreach sessions were conducted on women rights for 37,537 participants.
- **1,137** women and girls were provided with medical care, transportation and accompaniment to medical appointments or surgeries.
- **326** women and girls gained access to critical health services.
- **160** survivors of physical abuse or violence were served.



- 151 clients received OBGYN services, resources, and check-ups including birth/after-birth services.
- 20 women/girls were provided funding for emergency medical procedures/care.
- 18 clients were served for critical medical services.
- 17 survivors of rape or incest were treated.

Description of Project Activities

As mentioned in WAW's interim report, at the beginning of the project, WAW's province managers in Afghanistan and key staff from its Kabul headquarters were briefed on the #ByHerSide project, which allowed WAW to provide dedicated and more holistic emergency and medical services to women and girls on an increasing scale, instead of on an ad hoc basis, as previous resources allowed.

In addition, WAW's province managers continually met with several public stakeholders in Afghanistan and to officially inform their respective province's Directorate of Women's Affairs (DoWA) and Department of Public Health (DoPH) about the #ByHerSide project's objectives and activities.

All provincial DoWAs and DoPHs were pleased with the project and continue to welcome this important initiative in their areas in order to lessen morbidity and mortality rates of low-income women and improve services for survivors of domestic violence. They continue to extend their full support and officially refer and introduce eligible beneficiaries to WAW's provincial offices. As detailed in succeeding sections, these partnerships have allowed WAW to reach an additional 286 women and girls who were referred by these partner agencies.

Project Funding

Thanks in large part to leveraging this grant from Dining for Women, in April 2019, WAW received additional funding support in the amount of \$15,000 for one year for the #ByHerSide project from the Tomberg Family Philanthropies. This grant is renewal for up to three years and will be instrumental in the project's sustainability. WAW continues to fundraise for this project, especially given the successful implementation of the #ByHerSide project in its first year, during which the project exceeded all goals.

WAW continues to implement the project. Other sources of revenue for the project currently are Tomberg Family Philanthropies and WAW's general support funds, which includes foundation and individual charitable donors in the U.S. and other countries.

Project Situation

Beginning in January 2019, Ms. Najia Nasim assumed her new role as WAW's Executive Director. Najia was formerly WAW's Country Director in Afghanistan for five years from January 2014 to December 2018. She brings over 17 years of experience in the nonprofit field, with a focus on civil rights, women's empowerment, and international development.

As WAW's Country Director, Najia built strong relations with government officials, international donors, civil society, and influential local elders and religious leaders. She successfully led a major countrywide program and staff expansion, as well as honed the vision, strategic direction, programmatic development, financial management, and infrastructure growth of WAW in Afghanistan. During her tenure, WAW



increased its presence from 10 to 14 provinces, while simultaneously implementing organization-wide evaluation, reporting, operational policies, and workflow systems that have greatly improved WAW's functional efficiencies and program execution. Najia established WAW's Security Department, which has become instrumental in successfully protecting WAW's facilities, clients, and staff. Moreover, she has adeptly navigated the significant social, political, and security challenges that WAW grapples daily in Afghanistan.

Najia was nominated for the "10 Bravest Women of the World" award in 2014 by Amnesty International and the 2015 Vaclav Havel Human Rights Prize, and in 2018, she won the Mother Teresa Memorial Award for Social Justice on WAW's behalf. In addition, she has received official appreciation letters from both Afghanistan's Independent Human Rights Commission and the Ministry of Women's Affairs for WAW's outstanding performance under her leadership.

Najia holds a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration (*summa cum laude*) with double majors in Economics and Accounting from Bucknell University in Pennsylvania. Her academic training in the U.S. and years of work experience in Afghanistan has equipped Najia with robust financial management skills, technical knowledge, and the practical program expertise required for strategizing, developing, supervising, and expanding programs and services to support WAW's mission to save, protect, and empower Afghan women, children, and their families. Najia is fluent in English, Dari (Farsi), and Pashto.

Project Objectives

WAW continues to provide lifesaving and life-changing services to women and girls in Afghanistan through its 32 centers and programs in 14 of the country's 34 provinces. WAW provides protection and shelter against life-threatening violence, as well as critical medical services and procedures, intensive emergency and safety counseling, eventual successful (safe) reintegration into the community, and importantly, educational programming to protect, promote, and reinforce safety and self-sufficiency of women and girls.

There was no change to the project's objectives during the grant period. Thanks to support from Dining for Women, WAW successfully transitioned the #ByHerSide program from providing services on an ad hoc basis to an ongoing and expanding program with support from local leaders, including Afghan government officials, law enforcement, and the local communities.

Achieving Project Objectives

During the reporting period, the #ByHerSide project successfully provided Afghan women and girls with critical access to healthcare as well as life-saving services to support survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) and met all the project outcome goals. WAW's Afghanistan-based monitoring and evaluation unit monitored the #ByHerSide project's activities and measured the results through existing monitoring checklists, surveys, and reporting templates. Specifically, during the reporting period of November 1, 2018 to December 31, 2019, WAW achieved and monitored the following:

Protection and shelter against life-threatening violence: WAW provided protection and shelter to **1,923** women and girls who were survivors or at risk of GBV through its 12 Women's Protection Centers (WPCs) in Afghanistan. This exceeded the project's original objective of serving 250 women and girls.

In the WPCs, they received safe shelter for themselves and their children, legal support, and family counseling and/or mediation, when feasible and safe. They also participated in educational programming in the WPCs to strengthen life skills, literacy, and vocational skills with the goal of promoting their self-sufficiency and ensure their safe and productive return to their communities (more details below).

In addition, WAW's WPC medical doctors conducted public awareness sessions in their respective provinces to inform the general public of the #ByHerSide project and the services offered. They reached **37,537** individuals through public awareness sessions conducted during the reporting period.

Critical medical services and procedures: WAW provided **346** women and girls with medical services, as well as other needed procedures to recover from GBV or other reproductive health issues. This exceeded the project's objective of serving 250 women and girls, and included **20** women who were provided with critical *emergency* medical care, and a total of **301** beneficiaries, including women and their children, who received health kits that included personal hygiene items and items needed before and after medical procedures and/or delivery.

Of the **346** women and girls served, **286** were referred by Afghanistan's DoPHs, provincial hospitals, DoWAs, and the police department. The breakdown of referrals and services provided are as follows:

Province	Referral Agency			
	DoWA	DoPH	Public Hospital	Other
Faryab	15	10	10	4
Saripul	45	40	35	47
Jawzjan	20	15	5	0
Samangan	2	0	0	7
Kunduz	11	1	0	0
Takhar	7	0	0	0
Badakhshan	14	16	2	2
Kapisa	5	0	25	0
Kunar	0	0	0	0
Kabul	0	2	0	0
Herat	0	3	0	0
Balkh	0	3	0	0
Total	119	90	77	60
Breakdown	286			60

Additionally, WAW staff also conducted **1,146** community outreach sessions during the period to encourage community members to donate blood or other resources to those in need.

Intensive emergency and safety counseling: During the reporting period, WAW provided **1,751** women, whose lives were at risk, with intensive emergency and safety counseling. This included an individualized safety plan for each woman to find the safest and most viable solution to her situation. When safe and

ready, WAW then worked with each beneficiary to develop a plan for her future, including building her skills for self-sufficiency.

Rescue and transportation: WAW provided **1,137** women and girls with medical care, transportation and accompaniment to medical appointments or surgeries, and connected them with local medical providers, health care institutions, and/or WAW's medical staff in order to receive the care they needed. This number exceeded the project's goal of 250 for the year, and WAW's brave and dedicated staff arranged rescue and transportation for these women and girls at any time or day, 24/7.

Successful (safe) reintegration into the community: During the reporting period, WAW's comprehensive services resulted in **1,565** women being successfully reintegrated with their families or community, exceeding the goal of 250 for the year. WAW staff worked with each woman and her families and communities to seek the safest and most productive reintegration option for each client. This included family mediation and counseling, meetings with community leaders to ensure client safety, and creating a reintegration plan for each client, including self-sufficiency options such as vocational training or connecting her to local businesses that can sell, for example, hand-made products by WAW's clients.

Educational programming to bolster self-sufficiency: During the reporting period, **1,788** women participated in WAW's educational programming at its WPCs, which includes literacy, life skills, and vocational trainings. This exceeded project goal of **250** women, and WAW also connects these women with local businesses who can employ or buy their handmade products as a vital step towards their self-sufficiency.

Indirect impact: To date, WAW estimates that **2,134 families (13,461 individuals)** have been indirectly impacted by the #ByHerSide project in Afghanistan.

Challenges and Proposed Solutions

As reported in the interim report, the ongoing economic and security issues in Afghanistan posed some challenges to the #ByHerSide project. No additional challenges were encountered during the remaining period of the project. All the challenges were properly addressed using WAW's existing strategy, as detailed below:

The number of eligible beneficiaries was very high due to the country's poor security and economic situation leading to increased poverty and declining access to healthcare. Due to the vastness of Afghan women's needs, WAW did not have enough resources to accommodate all eligible beneficiaries. Needed resources included additional transportation/vehicles for hard-to-reach areas and more timely responses to emergencies, increased number of #ByHerSide healthcare kits for distribution, and increased resources to meet medical and safety needs of Afghan women who were from low-income households and/or survivors of GBV.

To address these needs, WAW continued to fundraise for the #ByHerSide program, as mentioned previously. WAW successfully received another grant for this project, and worked hard to fully address this need. In addition, WAW refined its criteria for selection of the neediest beneficiaries, which included income level, treatment period, and treatment mechanisms.



The deterioration of security in most of Afghanistan's provinces also posed a challenge for the project. Unsafe conditions prevented WAW's access to some remote districts that are run by the Taliban and other armed insurgent groups. WAW's Security Department and province managers worked with local officials and community leaders to assess the situation and find safe ways to reach women and girls living in these areas.

Finally, though WAW has successfully built partnerships with most provincial DoWA and DoPH officials, which resulted in **286** referred cases to WAW during the grant period, there remain some provinces that need to gather support from the local DoWA and DoPH offices, which can provide access to hard-to-reach areas and increased referrals of women and girls who pass through their systems.

WAW conducted outreach with these agencies and worked with other partners, such as community leaders, schools, police, and other local officials, to reach women and girls in need of medical care and safety as a result of GBV. WAW also conducted outreach to the public in order to make them aware of the project and services available.

Lessons Learned

Afghanistan is a developing country where women and girls do not have access to quality reproductive and emergency health services due to poverty. WAW received high number of beneficiaries who had not been impacted by domestic or community violence, but were suffering from health issues due to their economic situation. Due to poverty, a large proportion of women and girls were not receiving adequate reproductive and emergency healthcare services in many areas of Afghanistan.

With the implementation of #ByHerSide project, WAW's reputation has increased positively among the governmental and non-governmental organizations in Afghanistan. The success of the projects outcome showcased the competency and strength of WAW's experienced staff members to implement a large scale and multi-dimensional project.

An unexpected outcome during the implementation of #ByHerSide project was the large number of beneficiaries, which resulted in providing health services to more beneficiaries than the project target.

Future of #ByHerSide Project

WAW continues the #ByHerSide project thanks to funding support from the Tomberg Family Philanthropies, and general support funds. This was made possible by this generous grant from Dining for Women, which jumpstarted WAW's initiative and capacity to shift this program from an ad hoc service to a fully-fledged project in Afghanistan.

As reported above, the project was extremely well-received in Afghanistan, including among community members, leaders, and public officials. The #ByHerSide project received more beneficiaries than expected, and community members and officials continue to request for the services provided under this project.

WAW continues to fundraise for this program with renewal of its Tomberg Family Philanthropies grant already in process.

#ByHerSide Impact Story

Farah (name changed to protect her privacy and safety) is a 17-year-old girl from Faryab province who was referred to WAW by the Directorate of Women's Affairs. She was given to a man in baad marriage to compensate for a family member's crime. Farah was continuously starved, tortured, and beaten by her in-laws. She was burned with a hot iron and boiled water, and beaten with sticks. As a result of her torture and physical abuse, she developed an infection in her skin and muscles.

Upon her referral to WAW, her injuries were so grave that she was in need of life-saving medical services and surgery to stabilize her condition. After receiving critical treatment, she responded to the treatment well and was able to eat and drink. To receive quality health services, she was referred to Abn-i-Sina hospital, which specializes in burn and plastic surgeries.

She lost substantial tissues in her right and left lower limbs and was diagnosed with 3rd and 4th degree burns and tissue loss. Initial assessments in Faryab province suggested possible limb amputation, but after receiving intensive healthcare in Mazar-i-Sharif City, Farah's health condition has seen significant improvement.

Since Farah experienced severe torture at the hands of her in-laws, she suffers from a mental disorder, including trauma, and requires extensive psycho-social support. WAW assigned a caseworker from WAW's Faryab office to handle Farah's case from the day she was referred to WAW in order to monitor her health condition regularly and make sure that she receives all needed services on time.

At the moment, the Afghan government has taken the lead on Farah's treatment with partial cost and services covered by WAW under the #ByHerSide project. The medical doctors are hopeful that she will walk again and her limbs will become stronger than before.

Farah has a long road ahead to become healthy again, but with continuous support and coordination, WAW hopes to ensure her full physical and mental recovery.

#ByHerSide Photos



WAW's Province Managers in Coordination Meeting with DoWA and DoPH, 2019



Beneficiaries receiving critical health services, #ByHerSide project, April 2019



The client who was burned by her in-laws, and needed critical health services, 2019



WAW's Province Managers in Coordination Meeting with DoWA and DoPH, 2019



Clients while receiving emergency health services, 2019



Client receiving critical health services through #ByHerSide project, 2019



WAW's Province Managers in Coordination Meeting with DoWA and DoPH, 2019