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Sida Decentralised Evaluation

Annica Holmberg
[Name Protected]

Evaluation of [Name Protected] - Family Guidance Center and Shelter in Mazar- e-Sharif

Final Report

Evaluation of [Name
Protected]
- Family Guidance Center and
Shelter in Mazar-e-Sharif

**Final Report
April 2014**

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The views and interpretations expressed in this report are the authors' and do not necessarily reflect those of the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency, Sida.

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Abbreviations and Acronyms

AIHRC	The Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission
[Name Protected]	[Name Protected]
ANDS	Afghanistan National Development Strategy
CRC	Convention of the Rights of the Child
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DoWA	Department of Women's Affairs
ED	Executive Director
EVAW	Elimination of Violence against women
FGC	Family Guidance Centre and Shelter
GBV	Gender-based Violence
MoWA	Ministry of Women Affairs
NGO	Non Governmental Organisation
RAF	Result Assessment Framework
RBA	Rights-Based Approach
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health and Rights
ToR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
[Name Protected]	[Name Protected]

Preface

This is a results-oriented evaluation of the project “Family guidance centre and shelter in Mazar-e-Sharif” implemented by [Name Protected]. The evaluation was commissioned by the Embassy of Sweden’s Section Office in Mazar-e Sharif, Afghanistan.

The evaluation was carried out by Indevelop (www.indevelop.se) in collaboration with Tana Copenhagen (www.tanacopenhagen.com) under Sida’s Framework Agreement for Reviews and Evaluations. The evaluation was conducted over a period from February to April 2014, with two weeks of field work undertaken in Mazar-e Sharif.

The Project Manager at Indevelop for this evaluation, Jessica Rothman, has been responsible for compliance with Indevelop’s QA system throughout the process and quality assurance was performed by Ian Christoplos, Project Director for the Framework Agreement.

The members of the evaluation team were Annica Holmberg as Team Leader, a member of Indevelop’s Core Team of professional evaluators, [Name Protected] a gender specialist (participated in the inception work) and [Name Protected] (conducted the field work and analysis).

Begoña Birath-Barrientos was responsible for the evaluation at the Embassy. This report has incorporated comments received from [Name Protected] and the Embassy on the draft report.

Executive Summary

The [Name Protected] Family Guiding Centre and Shelter (FGC) in Mazar-e-Sharif in Afghanistan has been supported by Sida since 2008. This evaluation is an interim assessment of the extent to which the organisation has fulfilled the agreed goals and expected results for the activities aiming at supporting women and girls exposed to gender based violence and other human rights abuses in the Balkh province. In focus for the evaluation is the effectiveness, the relevance and the sustainability of [Name Protected] work at the FGC. The evaluation analyses the service delivery and the awareness raising activities at the FGC from a rights-based approach, gender and child perspectives and examines the effectiveness of the empowerment strategies applied among other things.

[Name Protected] and their FGC in Mazar have received Swedish support for two project periods, 2008-2011 and 2011-2014 and the evaluation covers the first five years. A desk-review was carried out of project-relevant documents, followed by a field study to Mazar-e-Sharif during the first two weeks of March 2014. The field study allowed the evaluators to interview almost 100 stakeholders, including women and girls that presently reside at the shelter or previously had received support from the FGC.

[Name Protected] and the FGC in Mazar play an important role for women and girl survivors of violence against women. [Name Protected] increases the possibility for women and girls to access legal aid. The FGC has managed to successfully attend to a great number of cases and has contributed to an increased awareness among citizens and duty-bearers on women's rights and how the civil and Islamic laws protect women's rights. [Name Protected] has been able to build alliances with local duty-bearers within the court system and the police, which has strengthened the position of the organisation and helped [Name Protected] to solve more legal cases. The organisation has a deep understanding of the local context and addresses highly contested issues in a hostile and dangerous setting. The fact that [Name Protected] does not focus heavily on challenging societal gender norms has made it possible to operate in environments normally hostile to women rights defenders. But it also limits the scope of the work, since it is not based on a more comprehensive approach to women's rights and gender equality.

The focus of the FGC is on service provision and the prevention work is not dimensioned in relation to the vast needs of information and awareness-raising among the population. The evaluation finds that the FGC provides a much needed service and that on an individual level the work promotes the rights of women and girls, but that the scope of the project promotes long term change only to a limited degree. The conclusion is that the FGC is effective in finding solutions to the cases that are presented to the organisation, that the methods used by the lawyers and the relations with the juḡ

dicial system are also effective and that the involvement of family members and relatives is a necessary and in most cases effective approach to stop the identified human rights abuses of individual women and girls. The evaluators found that the methods used at the FGC do not lead to a comprehensive empowerment of girls or women, nor does the organisation apply a rights-based approach. The evaluators also conclude that the project does not protect the rights of the girl-child in a broader sense at a societal level. In some cases trafficking and forced marriages are stopped and young girls arriving at the shelter are provided with education. Finally the evaluation assesses the sustainability of the FGC project to be rather low, both on an individual and societal level, due to the lack of a rights-based approach and a more in-depth and comprehensive perspective of women's rights.

Some of the recommendations for [Name Protected] are:

- To develop a gender equality policy or similar steering document that explains the position of the organisation on women's rights and gender equality; and to develop strategies and instructions on alliance building with women rights defenders also at local and provincial levels;
- To share experiences from its advocacy work at national level with the offices in the provinces in order to build internal capacities for advocacy work, to step up the advocacy work at provincial levels and to involve key staff members more in strategic discussions on how to promote change at local and provincial levels;
- To support method development and capacity building in the areas of rights-based approach, the rights of the girl-child and awareness raising (including how to promote attitudinal and behaviour change);
- To translate all relevant project documents to Dari in order to secure transparency and ownership among those who implement the project and to develop the M&E system, securing that objectives and expected results at output, outcome and impact levels are duly monitored. The evaluation recommends use of short term external technical support that also includes an in-house training involving all key staff;
- To continue to involve men in the work and focus even more on men as agents for change (and not primarily as decision-makers in the mediation of cases).

Sida is recommended to continue its support to [Name Protected] but to increase the dialogue on Sweden's expectations in relation to the country strategy for Afghanistan and relevant policies for the support to civil society actors; it is also recommended to include discussions on the policy development within [Name Protected] in this dialogue.

Sida is also recommended to stress the need for greater attention to organisational development and the building of internal capacities in areas such as M&E, RBA, risk and conflict management, and more explicit support is recommended to the advocacy and awareness raising work.

1 Introduction

This result-oriented evaluation of Sweden's support to [Name Protected] ([Name Protected]) Family Guidance Centre and Shelter in Mazar-e-Sharif¹, Balkh province, was commissioned by Sida. [Name Protected] is an international civil society organisation operating in eight Afghan provinces with its head office in Kabul. [Name Protected] has programmes supporting the rights of women in prison, child support centres² and transition houses for women leaving prisons or shelters. The Family Guidance Centres and Shelters (FGC) started in Kabul 2007, followed by Mazar in 2008 and the organisation now has eight Family Guiding Centres and seven Shelters in the country. The evaluation is an interim assessment of the extent to which the organisation has fulfilled the agreed goals and expected results³ for the Sida-supported FGC in Mazar.

1.1 SCOPE OF THE EVALUATION

The Terms of Reference (ToR) states that the evaluation should document experiences of [Name Protected] programme activities in Mazar; discuss and provide evidence on how the programme activities have met agreed targets; summarise lessons learned and provide recommendations for programme design and management going forward; identify and account for unintended outcomes such as targeting errors, recoil effects, fungibility or substitution effects.

The evaluated period is 2008-2013 and consists of two cooperation agreements⁴, 2008-2011 and 2011-2014. The study has followed up activities at the centre and the shelter, interactions with authorities and civil society actors based in Mazar, outreach activities such as awareness raising, training and dialogue with religious leaders. A broad range of stakeholders were consulted with focus on women, girls and affected family members supported by the FGC. The data collection took place in Mazar-e-Sharif. The evaluation does not cover any other of [Name Protected] programmes in Mazar or other FGCs run by the organisation in Kabul or in other provinces since Sweden only supports the FGC in Mazar. [Name Protected] receives additional support for awareness raising activities from other donors. As the evaluation did not look at these activities, there

¹ Mazar-e-Sharif will also be referred to as Mazar in the report.

² [Name Protected] has currently 3 Child Support Centres, one in Kabul, one in Mazar and one in Kunduz.

³ As specified in the Result Assessment Framework (RAF) in the project document dated March 2011-2014, of 2,2 MSEK signed in March 2008 (2008-2011) of 4,5 MSEK and the second in March 2011

may be additional results achieved by [Name Protected] that are therefore not reviewed in this evaluation.

1.2 SWEDISH AFGHANISTAN STRATEGY

The overall objective of Swedish development cooperation in Afghanistan is to enable people living in poverty, particularly women, girls and young people, to enjoy better living conditions in a peaceful, democratic and legally secure society. The current cooperation strategy⁵ focuses on 1) democracy, human rights and gender equality and 2) education. The ability of women and girls to enjoy their human rights is at the centre of the Swedish strategy and special priority is given to support for 1) women's participation and influence; 2) sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR), and 3) measures to prevent gender-based violence (GBV).

The Swedish Ministry for Foreign Affairs is in the process of developing a new cooperation strategy for Afghanistan. The so called initial values through which the Ministry instructs Sida on the process confirms a continuous focus on girls' and women's human rights and prevention of violence against women⁶.

1.3 METHOD

The evaluation applies a rights-based approach (RBA) including perspectives on risk and conflict, gender equality and child rights. It has further been guided by a critical, learning and participatory approach where almost 100 stakeholders have been consulted to explore the following six overall evaluation questions:

1. To what extent are [Name Protected] interventions in Mazar-e-Sharif effective in terms of achieving objectives stipulated in the applications and reports to Sida and its goals and expected results;
2. To what extent does [Name Protected] present results at outcome level (and impact if possible) as compared to those anticipated in the programme documents, applications and reports to Sida?
3. How does [Name Protected] implement the rights perspective based on the four principles of participation, non-discrimination, transparency and accountability?
4. How does [Name Protected] implement the child perspective?
5. How has [Name Protected] work with advocacy in Balkh province contributed to improve women's living conditions?
6. Is [Name Protected] intervention sustainable?

⁵ The current strategy (2009- 2013) has been revised and extended until December 2014; the new result strategy will cover the period 2015-2019.

⁶ Ingångsvärden för Sidas framtagande av resultatförslag för Sveriges bistånd till Afghanistan för perioden 2015-2019, Bilaga till Uppdrag för att ta fram underlag för Sveriges bistånd till Afghanistan, Utrikesdepartementet, Regeringskansliet, 2013-08-08

- How do [Name Protected] interventions contribute to sustainable poverty reduction?
- Is the intervention consistent with the elimination of violence against women, EVAW; and women's rights?

The data collection was initiated with a desk review of relevant project specific documents and country reports. The desk review was followed by interviews in Mazar and over Skype with management and board members in the US. Information was retrieved through semi-structured interviews and focus group discussions with women and girls; family members and relatives; local formal and traditional duty-bearers; [Name Protected] staff and management; donors and civil society organisations (CSO) present in Mazar.

Data from the narrative reports was triangulated throughout the field visit with different stakeholders. Representatives from each stakeholder group were consulted at different stages of the data collection to enable the evaluators to follow-up data given by respondents during the first days, as well as to triangulate this information throughout the data collection. For example, data provided by women staying at the centre was followed-up with case-workers, lawyers and the shelter supervisor, women who had previously stayed at the centre and whose cases were closed, and family members to other women. It was then discussed again in a focus group of women at the shelter with the purpose of validating the information.

The evaluation team also conducted a half-day RBA workshop with 8 staff members in order to allow deeper discussions on the rights in focus in [Name Protected] work and how the organisation works with those rights. Finally the field visit allowed the evaluators to observe the daily interaction among staff members, between staff and the women and girls currently staying at the centre and among the women and girls at the shelter.

Most interviews were conducted at the FGC. All women and girls with ongoing and closed cases, as well as their family members and relatives, were interviewed at the FGC office or the shelter. Duty-bearers such as the Police, Head of the Family Court, Ministry of Justice, General Attorney for Family Affairs, and CSO respondents were interviewed in their offices. Teachers were consulted at adult learning centres and religious leaders at one of the Mosques in Mazar.

1.3.1 Adopted interview methods

The Evaluation Team developed a set of interview guides for the different stakeholder groups⁷. These guides were adjusted to each interview situation, using different methods to extract as much information as possible given the level of literacy, age, relation

⁷ The foreseen discussion with underage accompanying children at the shelter was not realised since all children present were under the age of seven.

to the FGC, etc. Practically all guides were somewhat revised after the first interviews. Consultations with girls and women at the shelter were in most cases held only by the Dari speaking evaluator to minimise the pressure on the respondents and respect their personal integrity. Special methodologies were used in the interviews with illiterate women and those with few years of schooling, e.g. raising questions with help of images or asking the respondent to draw. These interviews focused on fewer questions giving the respondent more time to develop their thoughts.

1.3.2 Assessing outcomes

The data provided in [Name Protected] reports, data base and case file system focus on individual cases of women and girls and relate to results at an output level. In order to assess outcomes the evaluators asked different stakeholders to refer to changes that they had been able to see as a result of [Name Protected] activities. These statements were as far as possible triangulated in other interviews and discussions. The evaluators could not assess outcomes by following-up closed cases at community level outside the city of Mazar due to security matters. Interviews related to closed cases were held with women and family members at the FGC office. The findings are hence mainly based on what processes of change⁸ the respondents said that they had been able to see and attributed to [Name Protected] work or what changes they have experienced in their own life.

No baseline was conducted prior to the first or the second project period which meant that identified and reported results could not be compared with the situation before 2008. The duty-bearers were asked to recall how the situation for women and girls exposed to violence was before the FGC opened. The coherence of their responses made it possible to draw some overall conclusions on what has changed.

1.3.3 Assessing relevance

Issues of relevance are closely linked to the rights-based approach and child rights perspective. The evaluators looked at *steering documents* and to which extent these documents relate to child rights or a rights perspective; what *methods and tools* were used to help staff to implement rights and child perspectives, how the organisation *talks* about rights, how management and staff *understand* the rights and child perspectives and the *importance* that was given to this in the daily work. Girls and women were asked to explain how they were informed about their rights and how they understood their rights.

The question of women's and girls' empowerment is also related to the RBA and the relevance of the contribution. The staff's perspective on the girls' and women's agency and the level of active and meaningful participation of the rights-holders in processes they were involved in, were used as indicators. The evaluators also

⁸ Such as increased knowledge about women's rights, increased agency among women and girls, changed attitudes towards shelters, attitudes favouring women's rights and in behaviour defending the rights of women and girls, etc.

searched for information on how [Name Protected] works with building the self-esteem and self-confidence of the rights-holders. Questions were raised on what methods were used to counteract the internalisation of feelings of inferiority and guilt that are often the result of long exposure of gender based violence (GBV).

Another indicator of relevance is how the organisation is targeting patriarchal and discriminatory attitudes against women and girls and if the different forms of awareness raising activities lead to attitudinal changes among the individuals and groups that come into contact with the FGC.

A contextual analysis of the systems and practice of risk assessment and risk management, including mitigation of risks for staff and rights-holders, was also included in the assessment of relevance.

1.4 LIMITATIONS

The security risks posed real limitations for the evaluation. The situation was aggravated by the political campaign meetings held for the presidential elections in April. It was not possible to interview stakeholders in districts outside the city of Mazar due to the risks involved in travelling⁹. Hence no follow-up of closed cases was possible in the communities. Assessment of the impact of awareness raising activities was only possible in Mazar and through interviews with stakeholders that came to FGC. This limited the possibility to talk to the desired number of participants in from different examples of training.

The desk-review showed that [Name Protected] mostly account for results at output level. The evaluation was therefore dependent on the quality of discussions with [Name Protected] on processes of change and achieved outcomes so far. Equally, the evaluation team needed other respondents to have the capacity to explain and give examples of results at outcome or possibly impact level. It turned out to be a real challenge and just a few additional outcomes could be identified and verified. The organisation keeps good track of activity plans and case specific progress, as well as collection of data related to activities and outputs, but there is no systematic approach to the collection of results in the medium- or long-term. Monthly and annual reports produced in Mazar are not related to the project specific objectives. The absence of a monitoring system at the FGC in Mazar made it difficult to trace outcomes through the review of the data base and staff reports. The implications of lack of systematic monitoring of results and learning processes are discussed in chapter 4.3.

⁹ Some districts were assessed as safe to visit but [Name Protected] does not have a secure vehicle, no access to security staff and the fact that the Team Leader is not Afghan could also increase the risks of attacks¹¹

Language barriers constituted less challenges than foreseen since the last minute change of a member in the Evaluation Team meant that the team had a Dari speaking evaluator. When interpreters were used it was evident that nuances and indirect answers were lost in the translation. The quality of the translation was low. The evaluators decided to limit the service of the interpreters as much as possible.

Since all interviews with the women and their family members were held at FGC, the evaluation was skewed towards those [Name Protected] invited to take part in the interviews and the rights-holders that had the possibility to come to the centre. Given the security risks, the evaluators had no influence over this rather significant limitation. In the case of women living at the shelter or in the transition house, the evaluators had greater possibility to choose whom to talk to and how focus groups should be formed. The number of participants in the different focus groups discussions was another challenge; due to the poor availability of the right-holders it was sometimes not possible to interview more than two respondents at a time, which limited the methodological approach.

1.5 EVALUATION TEAM

The Evaluation Team experienced some changes during the evaluation. Initially the team was formed by the team leader Annica Holmberg and [Name Protected], who conducted the desk review and produced the inception report. The same week the field visit was planned to start [Name Protected] had to cancel her trip due to family matters. Since it was not an option to postpone the data collection due to the increased security risk related to the April elections, a new team member had to be identified. [Name Protected] a Danish evaluator, was able to join the team on short notice, and there was no change to the agenda for the field visit. The fact that [Name Protected] not only speaks Dari but was originally born in Mazar-e-Sharif meant that the ability of the team to read cultural codes and understand nuances in responses greatly increased.

2 Women's rights in the Afghan context

One of the worst places to be a woman: breaking down the numbers

1. Afghanistan is the 2nd worst country in the world to be a mother.
2. One woman in 11 dies in pregnancy or childbirth in Afghanistan.
3. 87% of women in Afghanistan experience domestic violence.
4. 13% of females over 15 years old are literate, compared to 43% of males.
5. Almost double the number of boys compared to girls are enrolled in school.
6. The average Afghan woman will not live to see her 50th birthday.
7. According to local reports, from mid 2012 to early 2013, 30 female political and civil society leaders have been killed. Female political candidates are the target of 90 percent of all threats against candidates in Afghanistan.
8. Targeted attacks on civilian women and children as they go to work or school have increased by 20 per cent in 2012 compared to 2011.

Source: Amnesty International Australia¹⁰

This presentation of the context in which [Name Protected] operates describes the current situation for women in Afghanistan and recent developments related to gender equality. As one of the poorest countries in the world¹¹ Afghanistan has some of the worst indicators globally for the situation of women and their rights. One example is the high rate of underage and forced marriages. The legal age of marriage for girls is 16 years (18 for men) but according to Unicef 57% of all marriages are with underage girls.

Afghanistan has signed and ratified all relevant human rights instruments that protect women's rights¹². However the ratification of international and national laws by the government are, according to women networks and advocacy groups, estimated not to be driven by a real commitment to implement gender equality.

¹⁰ Information published March 3, 2014, www.amnesty.org.au/afghanwomen; References in the box: 1: State of the World's Mothers 2012, Save The Children, 2012; 2: [Living With Violence: A National Report on Domestic Abuse in Afghanistan](#), Global Rights, 2008; 3: [Country Profile: Afghanistan](#), UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning; 4: [UN Women](#); 5: [United Nations News Centre](#).

¹¹ UNDP HDI Index

¹² As for example the Conventions on Elimination all Forms of Racial Discriminations, on Elimination of Torture and other Oppressive, Inhuman and Degrading Treatments, on Elimination of all Forms of Discriminations against Women, the Declaration of Elimination of Violence against Women, Convention and the Child Rights Convention.

The Afghan Constitution states that “The state shall adopt necessary measures to attain the physical and spiritual health of the family, especially of the child and mother, upbringing of children, as well as the elimination of related traditions contrary to the principles of the sacred religion of Islam”¹³. The National Action Plan for the Women of Afghanistan (NAPWA) 2007-2018 provides a framework for the implementation of women’s constitutional rights, the CEDAW and the Beijing Platform for Action. It has also been endorsed in the Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS) 2008-2013¹⁴.

The Law on Elimination of Violence against Women, EVAW, was adopted in 2009. It identifies 22 forms of violence against women and has strong protection of women’s rights¹⁵. It has an institutionalised monitoring mechanism through the High Commission for the Prevention of Violence Against Women, chaired by the Ministry of Women’s Affairs. There are 28 provincial commissions (out of the 34 provinces), but less of half of them could be said to be functioning¹⁶. The knowledge of the law is low among duty-bearers, and customary law and tribal justice are still regarded higher than EVAW in many instances, and the implementation of the decree remains largely unenforced. EVAW has also encountered open resistance from a number of parliamentarians who in May 2013 branded the law as un-Islamic. EVAW is currently being reviewed by a parliamentary committee with the risk of amendments.

The Law is despite the resistance considered as a major step forward in the legal protection of women’s rights. It is a joint achievement of Afghan women from civil society, parliament and government. EVAW law criminalises child marriage, forced marriage, selling and buying of women for the purpose or under the pretext of marriage, *baad*¹⁷, forced self-immolation and 17 other acts of violence against women including rape and beating.¹⁸ After a rigorous debate about the EVAW law, its revision has been on hold due to presidential elections in April 2014.

¹³ Article 54, The Constitution of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, (Ratified) January 26, 2004

¹⁴ UN Women 2013

¹⁵ Art 2 ensures women’s legal rights and their dignity, protecting families and fighting against customs, traditions and practices causing violence against women, protecting victims of violence, prevention of violence against women, raising public awareness about violence against women and prosecuting perpetrators of violence against women. Art 3 defines violence against women stating that whatever act which causes “harm to the individual’s character, emotion, body or property” are considered as violence against women. Source: Violence against Women in Afghanistan AIHRC, 2013

¹⁶ http://www.cw4wafghan.ca/Afghanistan_EVAW_Law

¹⁷ Settling family disputes by trading a young girl as “payment”, which means that she is forced into marriage and slavery as a result of the settlement.

¹⁸ As chapter 4 will show, almost all women and girls at [Name Protected] shelter in Mazar were victims of crimes and misconducts.

In many cases the Afghan court and justice system treat women and girls who flee domestic violence, forced marriage and other forms of violations of rights as criminals. As of spring 2012, 400 women and girls were in prison and juvenile detention for the “moral crimes” of running away from home or sex outside marriage.¹⁹ The organisations providing shelter services to women in Afghanistan encounter many challenges. Their activities have been and continue to be highly contested by conservative actors in the society. In 2010 the President established a commission to investigate the claim that shelters are immoral. The commission visited shelters across the country including [Name Protected] shelters. No findings have however been published. In 2011, the Afghan government sponsored a bill that proposes to seize the 14 women’s shelters in Afghanistan from the organisations that founded and place them (including 4 run by [Name Protected]) under the total control of Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA). Since then no action has been taken.

The Afghan government’s failure to respond effectively to VAW undermines the state of women’s rights. In March 2013, President Karzai publicly endorsed a statement by a national religious council calling women “secondary”, prohibiting violence against women only for “un-Islamic” reasons, and calling for segregating women and girls in education, employment, and in public. Karzai initially supported the statement and the minister of justice’s description of battered women shelters as sites of “immorality and prostitution” raises questions about the government’s commitment to protect women’s rights.

Another recent example of how women’s rights are contested is the new criminal prosecution code which in its first version included an article banning relatives from testifying against each other. After strong protests from women rights advocates, among them [Name Protected], the article that would have silenced victims of GBV, forced marriage and child abuse, was removed.

2014 is a critical year for the lives of the Afghans, men as well as women. The insecurity that has evolved around the country’s future has had a negative impact on the lives of Afghan women. Many women networks and CSOs foresee attenuation in the achievements women have had during the past 12 years, some of them already seen in 2013 as a result of Karzai being reluctant to sign a security agreement with the US. The 2014 presidential candidates have all promised to sign both the EVAW and the security agreement (the latter with some modifications). If both are signed, this will ease the tension at some level and will be a relief for particularly women networks.

¹⁹ Human Rights Watch Report 2013

3 Safe spaces and access to legal aid

3.1 [Name Protected]

[Name Protected] was founded in April 2001 by Afghan women living in Queens, New York, USA. The board members of [Name Protected] are based in the USA and Afghanistan, chaired by the founding member [Name Protected]. Starting with volunteers, the organisation took on its first staff members during the following two years and engaged in conferences among other things. In 2006 a feasibility study was conducted in Afghanistan that led to the plan to start Family Guiding Centres. A first centre was established in Kabul in 2007. [Name Protected] now runs 8 FGCs and 7 shelters, three Child Support Centres and two halfway houses. [Name Protected] has worked on almost ten thousand cases since 2007 and since every case involves the girl's/woman's family an equal number of Afghan families have been in contact with FGC since the start.

The organisation runs "frontline programmes" in 8 Afghan provinces (Kabul, Kapisa, Mazar-e-Sharif, Kunduz, Badakhshan, Faryab, Sar-i-Pul, Nangarhar) and in Queens, New York, with a community centre for Afghan women living in NYC and surroundings. [Name Protected] embraces a community-based approach fighting for women's rights according to rights in Islam, the national constitution and laws and international human rights instruments signed by Afghanistan. [Name Protected] defines itself as a grassroots organisation fighting for justice and gender equality, working on a small scale in different local contexts defending the rights and promoting the security of individual women and girls. [Name Protected] combines service delivery with awareness and advocacy work. [Name Protected] strives to enable the women to return to their families and only in limited cases searches for other alternatives.

3.2 THEORY OF CHANGE

[Name Protected] Theory of Change is a multi-layered approach towards addressing the issue of violence against women. At a broader level it seeks to develop an understanding of society about the harmful impact of violence on the lives of children, women and society. It positions the issue as a human rights violation and deliberately works within the societal norms to be able to operate in the conservative Afghan society.

At another level, it addresses the need for laws, policies, systems and structures that can help prevent and/or address such violations more effectively. It realises the need for effective and sensitive support for women victims and thus its own shelters address this core need. It is the belief that when women and children are in an environment which is safe, sensitive, providing justice, and works with them closely to develop skills, knowledge and attitude that is empowering, they will be able to bring about sustainable changes for the better. It understands the cultural and social context

of society and thus involves the family of women to also educate them about the impact and implications of violence. All these efforts thus contribute towards the overall objective that seeks to empower women and fulfil their human rights.

The figure below shows how the intervention logic is understood:

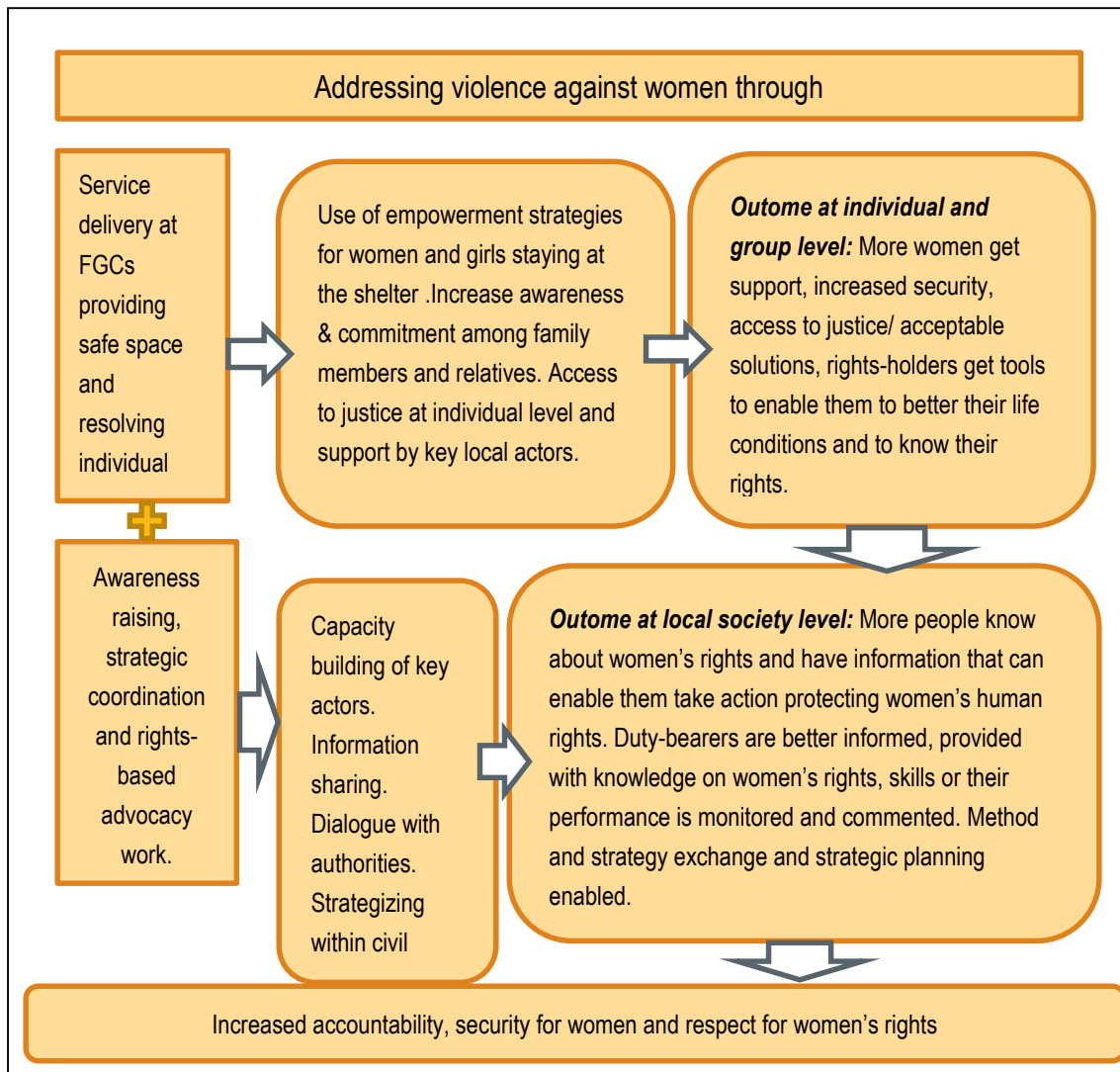


Figure 1. Theory of Change of [Name Protected]

3.3 FAMILY GUIDING CENTRES AND SHELTERS

The overall goal for the first period 2008-2011 was *to fill the immense void in concrete services for individual women seeking relief from domestic violence and other violations of their human rights and for families in crisis*. In the following project period of 2011-2014 it is *to improve the rights, status and living conditions of vulnerable women and girls in conflict with conservative culture in Afghanistan*.

The FGCs provides multiple services to women and girls (referred to as clients by [Name Protected]) whose human rights have been violated. The women and girls seek support at

the FGC or are referred to the centre by the police, the court, other CSOs, community leaders or family members. The case workers assess each case and contact family members. Decisions on what actions should be taken is decided together with the client within three days. The measures can be legal action providing the women with one of the FGC's lawyers, counselling and/or mediation sessions with family members and/or referring the client to the shelter for their safety.

Counselling and mediation services are provided to women staying at the shelter. Those who don't, as well as most other clients, get legal help. Medical services and kindergarten are provided to the accompanying children who stay at the shelter with their mothers. Most women and girls staying at the shelter receive literacy, life skills and vocational training (handicrafts). The life skills training mainly relates to health and hygiene issues, religious rituals, parenting and basic knowledge on rights. Most women also meet a psychologist once a week in the beginning of their stay (or for longer periods when necessary).

The case workers and the lawyers follow up closed cases where the women have returned to either their husbands or their family. It ideally consists of direct visits, but in many cases follow-ups are conducted through phone calls, both due to the risks of travelling and the fact that some women live too far away. The follow-ups are a mix of services to the women and girls, overseeing of commitments made by the family members/relatives and continuous awareness raising targeting relatives, family members and the local community, including religious leaders.

The FGC also provides awareness raising training with teachers, community leaders, mullahs and women. The short-term objective is to increase the knowledge about laws and to disseminate written material on the rights of women in the civil and Islamic laws. The training also serves to spread information about the FGC, the possibility to get legal aid and the existence of the shelter. The long-term goal is to contribute to increased awareness and knowledge on women's rights that will lead to attitudinal changes resulting in increased respect for the rights, the security and lives of women, adolescent girls and the girl child, and the compliance with the law and the responsibilities of the state.

[Name Protected] in Mazar is led by the Provincial Manager responsible for all programmes in the province. The FGC has two supervisors, one for the centre and one for the shelter, three case workers (all with a background as teachers), three lawyers, one trainer, four shelter caretakers and three teachers (literacy, life skills and vocational training). In addition to these staff members there are administrative and financial staff, drivers, guards, caretakers and a cook.

4 Findings

The Family Guiding Centre and Shelter in Mazar primarily functions as a service provider to girls and women who have been or are under risk of being exposed to serious forms of violence and other human rights abuses. The main part of the Sida funds are used for service delivery, and only limited resources are allocated to awareness raising and advocacy activities²⁰ (though as the evaluation was being concluded the team was informed that [Name Protected] receives considerable support from other donors for these activities). [Name Protected] operations in the Balkh province do not have a focus on the root causes of violence against women but target the right of women to access justice and the rule of law for women and the immediate protection for girls and women survivors of violence. This main focus on service provision has been confirmed by the Provincial Manager, the Country Director, the Executive Director (ED) and board members of [Name Protected]. They all also stress the importance of working with awareness-raising and the need for more funds for such work.

The Swedish Government expects its development cooperation partners to also work towards structural changes challenging the root causes of discrimination and marginalisation of people, particularly those living in poverty. Swedish policies and strategies stress the importance that CSOs claim the accountability of duty-bearers and that they enable the voice and the active participation of the rights-holders. It has therefore been important for the Evaluation Team to assess to what extent the support to FGC in Mazar also includes these aspects. This chapter responds to the evaluation questions raised by Sida in the ToR. They include assessment of the fulfilment of the overall and specific objectives, aiming at providing services, promoting greater awareness of women's rights and the empowerment of women in the Balkh province.

4.1 EFFECTIVENESS

In order to assess the effectiveness of the work of the FGC we need to look at the overall objectives of the two supported project periods. Overall the project objectives for the first period are activity oriented and maintained on an output level. The second period objectives relate somewhat more to changes on outcome level. It should be noted that all reports from 2008 to 2013 to Sida refer to the 2008-2011 objectives.

²⁰ The approved budget is not specified according to the different project objectives or areas of intervention but to staff and running costs for the Kabul (overhead) and Mazar offices and the shelter. It is therefore difficult to estimate the costs for the awareness raising activities. The cost for the community mobilizers in relation to other staff cost can however be used as a reference. It corresponds only to 7% of the total budget for the staff.

Project period 2008-2011

Overall objective: Provide counselling and mediation to solve family crises and improve family relations. Provide legal support, represent women in court, and to partner with organisations working to strengthen the rule of law.

Specific objectives:

To provide individual women in danger with safety from chronic domestic violence.

Comment: *Fulfilled.*

To treat children who have been victims of or witnesses to violence.

Comment: *No reference to this in the annual or final reports for the period or evidence of such activities in the interviews.*

To empower shelter clients and develop a cadre of progressive Islamic teachers, male and female to conduct classes in the FGC and elsewhere on family relationships, women's rights, and related topics.

Comment: *Limited processes of empowerment. No evidence of "cadre" of progressive Islamic teachers, this is not mentioned in the reports and the stakeholder consultations did not generate mention of the objective related to the teachers.*

To educate the community on women's rights and publicise the benefits of [Name Protected] including family counselling by using men (husbands, fathers, etc.) who have been treated in the FGC as well as women.

Comment: *Evidence on training and increased knowledge about the laws, the possibility to get support at the FGC, but the scope in terms of women's rights is limited to the focus on the extreme forms of VAW and rights related to trafficking, marriage and divorce. No quantitative or qualitative report on male relatives functioning as educators, no information on this was given by the respondents.*

To maintain detailed information to utilise as a data bank that can yield reliable statistics not currently available on women's rights violations.

Comment: *The data is shared with duty-bearers and other CSOs.*

Project period 2011-2014

Overall objective: To improve the rights, status and living conditions of vulnerable women and girls in conflict with conservative culture in Afghanistan.

Specific objectives:

Protection of Afghan women and girls from violence, sexual exploitation, and other human rights abuses through social protection services including professional family counselling and mediation with a goal of social or family reintegration.

Comment: *The specific objective is too broadly defined, not specifying the target group enough as it refers to Afghan women and girls in general. Protection has been provided to clients who seek help or are referred to the FGC, but not women and girls in general in the Mazar area.*

Enhanced access to justice for Afghan women in Mazar and surrounding areas through legal counselling and civil and criminal defence services.

Comment: *Fulfilled but with the same comments as above.*

Access for women (and their accompanying children) and girls subjected to human rights abuses to safe living quarters where they may spend anywhere from a few weeks to 2 years.

Comment: *Fulfilled, but as above.*

Awareness raising/advocacy programme reaching the widest possible range of Afghans in Balkh province and bordering areas on the subject of women's human rights

in Islam, international conventions signed by Afghanistan, the Afghanistan constitution and civil law, and other Muslim countries. Information about [Name Protected] contact information will also be distributed.

Comment: *Evidence of training on women's rights in Islam and the civil law. Information on [Name Protected] and FGC resulted in increased knowledge and demand of their services. [Name Protected] possibility to work broadly in the province is restricted by the security situation. Low awareness of a more comprehensive view of women's human rights according to CEDAW, etc. No evidence of advocacy work at provincial level.*

The evaluation has especially looked at the progress of the fulfilment of the expected results in the Result Assessment Framework (RAF) for the 2011-2014²¹. Since the project is based on service to individual rights-holders, and the results are not defined in accumulative manner, the evaluators stress that most of the results can be assessed for the full project period despite the fact that the final report is not available.

Expected results	Findings assessed results as per March 2014
<i>In relation to the overall objective:</i> <i>By the end of the programme, the vulnerability of women and girls at risk from harmful cultural practices is addressed.</i>	This was found to be to rather great extent achieved, but only for the women who get direct support from [Name Protected]. The organisation has very limited possibilities to follow-up the vulnerability of the women with closed cases, particularly those living in distant and/or insecure districts, and practically no capacity to follow up the vulnerability of daughters to women who have been given divorce. The limited scope of the prevention work does not show this kind of results and [Name Protected] has not monitored changes at this general level. There is no baseline data with which to compare any process of change. <i>The reported number of new cases of women and girls that have received support from the FGC during the first two years is 574. [Name Protected] reports on the total number of resolved cases and do not specify how many of these cases stem from the earlier period. The 2012 report informs of 196 closed cases and 108 resolved cases; the report 2013 (until March 2013) of 307 closed cases and 251 resolved cases. It is not clear if the 2013 only refer to cases closed and resolved during the reported period or if the figures are accumulative for the two first years.</i>
<i>In relation to specific objective 1:</i> <i>The rights, status, and living conditions of extremely vulnerable women/girls are im-</i>	This is found to be partly achieved and only for most but not all of the women who get direct support. (The goal of a total of number of women who have received support by the end of the period was set to 600; this quantitative goal has already been met.) It is true that the immediate death threats are gone and that the exposure to extreme forms of violence decrease. The

²¹ The current project period ends by March 31, 2014.

proved through re-established family relations, agreements to stop violence, and access to quality social protection networks and services in Mazar.

women who are granted their rights to choose whom to marry or get a divorce have improved their rights situation.

The specific objective 1 in the RAF is somewhat over-ambitious for the project since it does not define what kind of rights and living conditions are expected to be improved. Based on the interviews with the women representing closed cases it was however not proven that the overall status of women, their living conditions in general or access to the full range of their human rights had improved.

Furthermore the follow-up mechanism of closed cases has some weaknesses. [Name Protected] is of course greatly limited by the security risks in the province, which limits their possibility to do the follow-up they wish to do. Nevertheless, the cases are only followed-up during one year; severe cases are monitored more often, while other cases are not, and most of the monitored cases are in Mazar and not in the districts; follow-up might be done through community leaders, use of phone (which according to one case worker is not a good method since the husband can be giving the woman instructions, “how can you assess results when you cannot do a proper follow-up” she said); the follow-up is not on processes of change, but on security and compliance with agreements and contact with male family members is scarce. According to [Name Protected], follow-up is to make sure that the woman is safe and not being violated again.

In relation to the specific objective 2: Provision of legal services (civil and criminal representation) for women in Mazar lead to reduction of convictions, fair sentencing, elimination of bribery and corruption, ultimately to the enactment of civil laws protecting women

Since there is no baseline data this expected result cannot be assessed. What was found was that [Name Protected] is quite successful in defending the rights of women. Representatives within the court system declared that more women now get access to their legal right to a trial and that their defence lawyers have a high rate of solved cases.

A total number of 261 women have received legal aid according to the reports (April 2011 until March 2013).

What should be highlighted here is the progressive increase in cases referred to the FGC and the increase in numbers of women who directly seek help at the centre. This is an indicator for results at outcome level since it shows that a) [Name Protected] has been successful in reaching out with the information that there is help available and that the support actually works, and b) that the trust for the shelter has increased and that family members and rights-holders see the FGC as an option despite the prejudices against shelters.

The expected result on elimination and corruption would be hard to assess even with a baseline and is an implausible expected outcome for a project like the FGC. The project does not work on the elimination of corruption in particular. One of the

	lawyers however highlighted that there is discontent in some courts because fewer bribes are paid since [Name Protected] started its operations. The lawyer said that no bribes were paid in any of his 46 solved cases and took the fact that it is possible to solve all these cases without bribes as an indicator of the situation improving.
<i>In relation to specific objective 3:</i> Through counselling by caseworkers and legal advisors, women in shelter gain time to consider options to life of relentless domestic violence and other abuses.	This was found to be true in most of the studied cases, but the interviews indicated that there were also examples of women who felt pressured by the counselling to look for solutions contrary to their wishes.
In shelters, women can find constructive ways to cope with situations that had seemed beyond their control	In most of the cases this was found to be only partly achieved. The next section on relevance further develops the arguments for this finding.
In shelters, women can develop self-esteem and self-confidence, set goals and keep track of personal progress.	On a general level this was not found to be achieved. The next section on relevance further develops the arguments for this finding. One of the most valid instruments was found to be the literacy classes, but there were no aggregated data available of the increase of literacy among clients.
Existence of shelters means police, other gov't agencies and NGOs can refer cases to FGC rather than detention centres.	This was found to be achieved. All external stakeholders that refer women to FGC highlighted their respect for [Name Protected] work, the good quality of the FGC service, the importance and relevance of the centre and the shelter.

There are no results expected for the awareness raising or advocacy work of the project other than that data from [Name Protected] can be used by the Government and other stake-holders²². This does not really relate to the awareness raising work and no advocacy work is carried out at Balkh provincial level. Training seminars aiming at increased

²² The RAF states the following as expected results in relation to Objective 4: Data can be used by GoA in MDG3 and other reports to illustrate progress made toward women's rights in Afghanistan; Data can be used to encourage GoA to support civil law, democratic reform, women's human rights; Data can be used by international stakeholders too.

awareness are one of the most visible parts of the prevention work and the outreach activities. These activities are however rather limited; there is only one trainer employed at the FGC and her work is not based on any developed strategy on how to transfer the provision of information on the laws to attitudinal and behaviour changes among key agents for change. The lawyers also sometimes participate in the seminars giving more in-depth information on the laws.

The evaluators reviewed the training manual to verify focus and approaches. Training methodologies used by [Name Protected] are mostly lecture based and found rather normative in the sense that gender stereotypes and societal notions on the roles of women and men are not challenged. The training manual used by [Name Protected] one trainer is primarily based on the Afghan ‘Nasihah’, which can be translated into ‘advice’. ‘Nasihah’ is given from the elders to the youngsters, from parents to children, from husband to wife and from authorities to their ‘subjects’. The section on religion generally covers sessions given to women and girls at the shelter, e.g. practicing religion, how to pray, wash and wear a hijab etc. There is relatively limited mention of how women’s rights are ensured by national, international and Islamic law.

The evaluators assessment of the result of the training is that it is limited to increased knowledge about the laws and that the participants’ discussions on violence against women as a result of the training are held at household level with family members and not with a broader target group. No results at outcome or impact levels are reported in the annual reports or noted in the discussions with the different stakeholders. The evaluators did not witness any self-reported attitude and behaviour changes among teachers/students and/or community members that participated in FGC’s training. It should be said that sometimes it is difficult for people to acknowledge the lack of knowledge. Nonetheless, the evaluators enquired quite a bit on this issue in the interviews to capture people’s attitudes towards women and girls facing violence.

FGC staff assessed that about 90% of all the cases that end up at the organisation are justified and that the women have legitimate claims and are entitled to legal aid and support to mediate with their families.

“The difficulty for a woman to live alone, or at least without a husband, sustain and protect herself constitutes a formidable obstacle to leaving a shelter. Therefore, the way out for most victims is to seek possibilities of returning to the family from they fled, in many cases leading to continued abuse.”²³

²³ Missing the target, A report on the Swedish commitment to women, peace, and security in Afghanistan, A Wilsen, 2012, p.22

4.1.1 Gender equality and root causes to [Name Protected]

The effectiveness of the work at FGC is closely related to which root causes of violence against women are possible to challenge in an Afghan context. It relates to what is seen as possible by the [Name Protected] staff, officials within the judicial system and the police, by the women and girls that seek support at FGC and their families. The limitations of how women's rights issues are addressed within the project and the identified levels of acceptance of a certain degree of violence against women are interlinked with [Name Protected] view on gender equality and social and cultural norms. It is also inter-linked with the self-perception of the supported women and girls. It is unlikely that women will or can challenge prevailing social and cultural norms of what a woman expects to accept when it comes to different forms of violence from their husbands and family members, if the women have not been provided with tools to build their self-confidence and self-esteem or to combat the guilt feelings over what have happened to them. The evaluators found no evidence of in-depth discussions on the dynamics of the internalisation of feelings of inferiority, submission or guilt. The staff that interact directly with the women have not been trained in how to address the deeper impact of gender based violence.

[Name Protected] reports that their main method has been “learning by doing”. None of the founders or the current staff at [Name Protected] Mazar had earlier experiences on working with women's shelters, women's movement working on violence against women or advocacy work related to VAW. Board members of [Name Protected] participate in shelter movement networks, which has opened up for experience sharing and the possibility to learn from other organisations. At Kabul level [Name Protected] meets with other shelter organisations on a monthly basis. All case workers and the shelter supervisor are teachers. None of the staff has a professional background as social worker²⁴ or experience in trauma treatment or empowerment methods.

The board of [Name Protected] is in the process of drafting policies, but currently [Name Protected] does not have a gender policy. It was difficult to get a clear picture of how the organisation defines goals regarding equality between women and men. On a general level board members, management and the staff have a comprehensive understanding of women's rights, but it was hard to see how this was translated into the daily work. The evaluation team found that life skills training for example emphasised a woman's role as one of having to “endure and accept” based on cultural codes and norms. Notions on differences between rural and urban girls and women and how ‘open-minded’ one's family is were not challenged.

4.1.2 Knowledge about the project and Swedish policies

The project documents have not been translated into Dari. The project applications are written by board members and the executive director based on internal discussions

²⁴ It should be said that in the Afghan context it is hard to find professional social workers.

with the provincial managers. The content of the agreements with Sida has orally been explained to the Provincial Manager in Mazar. The Provincial Manager explained the content to the supervisor who in turn passed on the information to the different teams. The project document, or the agreement with the donor, are not used in meetings or monitoring activities at the FGC. The supervisor uses daily, weekly and monthly plans and follow-ups based on the on-going cases and scheduled external activities. The data sent to the Kabul office for the production of the annual and final reports is not related to the overall or specific project objectives but is compiled according to realised activities, number of cases and the status of the cases.

No respondent within [Name Protected] had knowledge about the Swedish cooperation strategy for Afghanistan or the policies and strategies for civil society support, gender equality, gender based violence, child rights perspective or RBA. It should be noted here that the management has asked for a closer dialogue with the Embassy.

4.2 RELEVANCE

The evaluation has addressed relevance by looking at the application of the child perspective in the work at FGC and the implementation of external and internal aspects of RBA, including the empowerment of the rights-holders. It further looked at [Name Protected] risk assessment and management of security issues related to the Balkh context, to the safety and wellbeing of clients and staff, and to the organisational level. Relevance is related to the need for women in Balkh of protection and legal aid, given that the authorities do not provide them with these rights.

4.2.1 Accountability, transparency, participation and non-discrimination

A rights-based approach implies among other things that claims on accountability and transparency should be raised towards the duty-bearers, that transparency also should guide [Name Protected] internal processes and that an active participation of the rights-holders should be promoted. Active measures to counteract discrimination and exclusion of individuals and/or groups are equally an important aspect of the approach.

The work at the FGC focuses on the right for the women and girls to access justice. The centre provides the clients with legal aid securing the women's access to the court system and to a certain extent obliges the family court to attend to the women's claims²⁵. The other form of accountability approach is maintaining tight and good re-

²⁵ Cases where lawyers at FGC had called attention to the negligence or corruption within the judicial administration were referred to. This is primarily done in relation to specific cases where officials or community leaders are not fulfilling their obligations to citizens. [Name Protected] then claim that they should provide the service or participate in the mediation/legal process and if this does not happen they contact the authorities at a higher level to apply pressure. This was however more on an anecdotal level and was not understood by the evaluators as a strategic approach to claim accountability of the duty-bearers.

lations with duty-bearers which facilitate direct contacts in specific cases and the possibility to claim services. There was no evidence of strategic advocacy work or support to advocacy networks at Balkh provincial level.

No examples were given by staff members or management on RBA practice within [Name Protected] or towards the women. The organisational structures are hierarchal and leave little room for bottom-up perspectives. The understanding of implementation of RBA within the organisation is low and no special attention was noted regarding participatory and inclusive methods.

Though respondents within [Name Protected] acknowledge that there are differences in life situations between the women they did not see any need to focus on particular groups in their prevention work or to increase the outreach to certain areas or groups. The training and meetings are held at a general community level.

[Name Protected] understands vulnerability as being exposed to extreme forms of violence, including trafficking, the denial of girls' rights to decide over engagement and marriage and the denial of women to divorce despite legal cause. [Name Protected] stressed that every family and case is unique and informed that women from all social groups and backgrounds seek support from the FGC. Some [Name Protected] respondents connect vulnerability to the level of literacy and education, rural origin and coming from poor circumstances, but not to other social stratification such as social status, age, ethnic groups, loss of parents for young girls, disabilities or other factors that could increase girls' and women's risk of being abused. The evaluators did not find any evidence of active non-discrimination measures.

With over 70 % of Afghan women illiterate, it is not strange that the majority of women at the shelter that the evaluators met had little or no access to formal education. The illiteracy combined with low social and economic status seemed to increase the vulnerability of these women, not only in their marital relations but also in how they were attended at the FGC. [Name Protected] does not discuss how to counteract social prejudices. According to RBA, active measures that also address stereotypical thinking within the organisation is needed since all social actors tend to reflect, in one way or another, on power relations and social hierarchies in society. The evaluators found that staff unconsciously treat women and girls differently due to clients' level of education, age and socio-economic status. This had influence on the level of decision-making related to each case. In literacy classes middle class girls with some level of education seem to be prioritised while girls and women who are illiterate or undereducated are encouraged to focus more on vocational skills. This was something that was raised by several of the illiterate women and girls representing on-going and closed cases. No special pedagogical methods are used to deepen the understanding of rights of the illiterate girls and women.

Another observation was how the idea of 'open-mindedness' is understood as something that decreases the risk of violations. This means that if you are from an open-

mind family there is no risk of your rights getting violated. Such a notion will have impact on how women and men from such a background are perceived as both victims and perpetrators.²⁶ In summary, the following RBA practice was found:

<i>RBA – external and internal practice</i>	
Accountability	
External practice	• [Name Protected] coordinates with other human rights/lawyers' CSOs sharing experiences and to support each other on difficult cases to increase the leverage in relation to the court • Awareness training to community and religious leaders • No references made by any stakeholder of accountability work by [Name Protected] targeting duty-bearers of women's rights in the Balkh province • None of the consulted formal duty-bearers had participated or heard of any capacity building initiatives by [Name Protected] targeting court officials or
Internal practice	• No mechanisms at provincial level of [Name Protected] in place to enable staff or rights-holders to claim accountability of the management • Information on decisions made by the board, [Name Protected] Kabul or [Name Protected] Mazar is shared orally with staff when assessed as relevant by the management
Transparency	
External practice	• Information is shared with duty-bearers, AIHRC and certain CSO clusters, both on regular basis and on demand • The organisation disseminates information on the laws (civil and Sharia) to a broad range of stakeholders • No claims raised on the duty-bearers in Mazar to increase transparency or secure access to information on the laws protecting the rights of women.
Internal practice	• Staff members are aware of steering documents but do not have access to them • The project document is not translated to Dari • Rights-holders and staff members, including the supervisor, do not know/or only partly know the objectives and expected results of the Sida supported project • Decisions made by board and management are made known to the staff but staff or rights-holders are not aware when and how decisions are made
Participation	
External practice	• No claims or monitoring of citizens' participation in policy processes or decision-making related to VAW

²⁶ In one of the interviews with the case workers the staff expressed that they were surprised with the cases of women coming from educated families and the middle class. GBV is seen as driven by poverty and low knowledge.

²⁷ [Name Protected] stated however that they had worked with the police on a regular basis. Before they opened the centers, women who went to the police were either sent back home or sent to prison. [Name Protected] stressed that, due to their capacity building and advocacy work, the police now bring women to the shelters instead of putting them in prison.

Internal practice	• Management of cases is based on the women's decisions and active participation • Staff take active part in day-to-day and weekly planning and follow-up • Rights-holders do not take part in any planning or follow-up of the activities at FGC • Right-holders participate in activities without control over the agenda • Rights-holders or staff do not participate in the development of objectives, strategies or other overall level of decision-making • Rights-holders or staff do not participate in the monitoring of outcomes
Non-discrimination	
External practice	• Claims of access to the law for all women • No specific claims (in advocacy or awareness raising) for women belonging to discriminated groups • No specific measures to reach women and girls in higher risk of violence (because of other forms of discrimination they are exposed to)
Internal practice	• Information sharing with women seeking support adapted to their level of literacy • Anti-sexual harassment policy in place • In group activities women at the shelter are always mixed, no awareness of need of for example age differentiation • No application of special methods due to age, kind of trauma, disabilities, etc. • No internal discussion in the organisation on active non-discrimination measures

4.2.2 Empowerment

The issue of empowerment is highly relevant for women's rights work. [Name Protected] states that women and girls who receive support at the FGC are empowered. The evaluators did not find any coherent interpretation of what empowerment means to [Name Protected]. On a general level it could be said that the staff understand empowerment as something they contribute to at the FGC by providing support and opportunities so that the women are able to improve their own situations. The question is then if the women have received enough "resources" to have the capacity to act? Have the discussions on rights resulted in that the women become aware of themselves, their own situation and by that gain a sense of power and confidence that they can change their lives? In other words, does the support lead to increased agency of the women?

The fact that the women are listened to and told that they have a right to have a say about their future husband, to seek divorce and to say no to violence, is, according to [Name Protected] and many of the consulted stakeholders, a first step to empowerment. The evaluators agree that the knowledge of the existence of laws that protect women's rights and the legal, protective and emotional support provided to the women and girls contribute to a process of increased self-confidence.

The literacy training given to illiterate women and girls at the shelter is also a relevant strategy. The ability to read and write is empowering, even when it only leads to functional literacy. The scope of this method depends on the length of the stay at the shelter and is therefore somewhat beyond the control of [Name Protected].

The vocational training focuses on handicrafts and can lead to new or improved skills. If the women are able to use these skills as a source of income this could lead to economic empowerment and increased self-esteem. The evaluators did not get any information from the women who had stayed at the shelter before that backed this assumption and were not able to follow up any other cases.

An important finding is that most of the interviewed women (currently or previously at the shelter) stated that they could not learn since they were unable to concentrate due to the stress they were under. These learning difficulties caused by trauma are not being tackled by [Name Protected] and teachers also mentioned the difficulties they have to teach when the girls and the women cannot concentrate.²⁸ The life skills training are lecture-based and do not include methods that address self-esteem, self-confidence or the consequences of the process of internalisation of subordination. The counselling sessions with girls and women were assessed to mainly concern good behaviour (as a risk mitigation technique) and acceptance of good enough solutions to cases that did not have support in the law, or where the family did not accept the desires of the girl or woman. Illiterate village girls and women were found to have been counselled how to be a ‘good wife’, particularly in the cases where their spouses were assessed as being a ‘good husband’. The evaluators found that this had in these cases reinforced feelings of guilt, inferiority and submission. Contrary to what could be expected of support that aims to lead to individual empowerment, a great number of respondents expressed strong feelings of lack of confidence and despair. They said that their reasons for seeking help sometimes were questioned by the staff and that they were told that there are worse cases than theirs. Some girls and women expressed that threats from husbands or family members had meant that they had to go back or feared that they would be forced to go back to an abusive situation. The risks this entailed for the FGC and the security of the staff at the FGC were mentioned as a contributing factor for finding quick solutions.

4.2.3 Child perspective

[Name Protected] has a special Child Support Centre (not funded by Sida), where children of imprisoned women and women at the shelter live and/or attend classes. Small children, boys 0-5 years, girls 0-7 years accompanying their mothers stay at the shelter. There are some children at the support centre who are direct victims of abuse and are too young to be at the shelter or transition house. The evaluation did not include any study of this centre and cannot say if methods applied there adhere to the principles of the Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC). The evaluators could however assess that despite specific child oriented projects within the organisation, the FGC does

²⁸ “The women need to talk about their experience first before it is possible to start with the teaching. Sometimes we sit and cry together.”

not apply a child rights perspective in its daily work. The FGC staff said that they do not have any coordination with the child protection unit at the CSC and said that they actually do not “deal with children”.²⁹ There are no systematic approaches in use to address specific needs and rights of children and adolescent girls at the shelter or at the centre. There is no child protection policy or specific monitoring of children’s security in households where the wife with children has left the husband (temporarily in the shelter or got divorced). [Name Protected] states in the project documents that the assessment of children’s vulnerabilities to emotional, sexual and physical violence within the household is part of the work. The evaluators did not encounter any information on how and if this is done.

Children and adolescent girls take part in the decision-making related to their own cases, but do not participate in the planning of any other activities at the centre or the shelter. This is also the case of adult women. [Name Protected] executive director informed the team that [Name Protected] in principle follow the wishes of their clients on how to proceed with their cases, but when it comes to the adolescent girl only when she is a bit older.

Staff members explained that they use different communication with girls and that they spend more time with them, but acknowledge that there were no specific routines on how to apply a child rights perspective or a youth sensitive approach in the support to underage clients. Girls who have been abused receive the same services, in the same way as adult women.

There is no division of age groups in the different trainings and no special activities for adolescent girls. This has particular implications for how life skills training is given and how different topics are dealt with. The evaluators noted that adolescent girls are in general not seen as children (according to the CRC, childhood extends until 18 years of age). There were cases of adolescent girls over 16, married when underage, who were counselled to return to their husbands despite that they had been forced to marry as a child.

Finally the evaluation looked at how the right of the girl child is raised in the awareness training. Information on forced marriage is given through several channels and [Name Protected] stresses that fathers and male relatives, community leaders and mullahs should be aware of the obligation to have the woman’s consent to be married. How the consent is achieved and what power a young girl has to say no (or a poor or an “ugly” girl) is not discussed according to the information the evaluators received. The right to education is another issue that is raised in training.

²⁹ The evaluators raised the fact that according to the CRC all persons under 18 are children. The staff did not seem to see the adolescent girls as children, and did not seem to include the underage children at the shelter as their indirect clients.

4.2.4 Risk management and security issues

The evaluation has assumed that comprehensive risk assessment and management in the context that [Name Protected] operates needs to be based on the following aspects: the general security situation in Balkh province and in the city of Mazar; the fact that [Name Protected] is working with highly contested issues and that the work involves providing protection to individuals that are under threat of violence (affecting the security of the staff and persons visiting the centre or staying at the shelter); standard internal risks that all organisations face; and special attention to the risk of staff turnover and the wellbeing of the staff since their work implies a high level of psychological stress.

[Name Protected] has policies of risk management and security issues. A ground rule is that the organisation only works in communities where [Name Protected] has been invited. The second project proposal has a section on risk management. It refers solely to external risks and describes some of the security measures³⁰. The agreement with Sida does not include any risk management plan.

Narrative reports mention staff training on security issues and that case workers and the trainer do not travel to areas that are insecure. The FGC and the shelter have unarmed security guards. Women and girls use burqua when they are outside the shelter. [Name Protected] uses their contacts with duty-bearers and security authorities to update their risk assessment but the evaluators did not hear the organisation mention any particular coordination with the UN or other CSOs on security matters at Mazar level. On national level [Name Protected] coordinates with UNWomen.

Most of the risk management relates to the districts and provinces outside Mazar. Travelling to the districts is however done with the staff in an ordinary car. There is no back-up if the car would break down and the staff would be approached by discontented relatives or by armed groups. According to some of the staff respondents the security readiness is low. Together with other shelter organisations [Name Protected] are now in the process of drafting a security plan for their shelters.

The lawyers informed the team that they sometimes receive threats; they then inform the office and the police and [Name Protected] coordinates these issues with the court and the police authorities.

The evaluators found no real internal risk or conflict management. Most measures in place relate to the reputation of the centre, which of course is vital for the security of

³⁰ From the project application: To protect our facilities against possible attacks, we have taken basic precautions: Armed guards hired from the company that protects President Karzai protect the FGCs around the clock; The locations of our shelters are kept secret and also protected by guards; Our caseworkers do not go out into the field alone; They are always accompanied by a male driver and usually by another caseworker; Caseworkers carry a pepper spray device with them at all times.

the clients and the staff. The sexual harassment policy is one such measure, as is the policy that no men are allowed inside the shelter. Staff is expected to handle the difficult situation on their own despite no background or training in working with highly traumatised persons exposed to extreme forms of violence and abuses. The evaluators could note a heavy workload on the very committed staff, a challenge [Name Protected] shares with most women human rights defender organisations. There was no institutionalised debriefing or stress management mechanisms in place. Staff members said however that they were supported when they felt that they were under great pressure but that they in general are strong and endure a lot.

4.2.5 Being the sole service provider

Finally, relevance of the project must be seen in the absence of official support to women and girls exposed to human rights abuses. Women face great difficulties in accessing legal aid, to get correct information on procedures and how their rights can be secured. Practically no options other than to seek protection at the houses of mullahs and community leaders exist for the majority of the women. Women who escape abuse are treated as criminals by the police and the local judicial system. In such a context the services that [Name Protected] provides are of course crucial in many ways. Apart from offering the women protection the FGC enables the women to get their rights within the judicial system and directly increases the knowledge among family members and duty-bearers on women's rights. It is not likely that the Afghan authorities, in a near future, will comply with their responsibilities and provide the women in the Balkh province with similar services that are given by the FGC. How [Name Protected] provides the service is however relevant as is the balance between prevention of violence and providing services when the acts of violence have already occurred.

4.3 MONITORING SYSTEM

The organisation has functional procedures to plan, steer and capture short-term tasks and immediate needs from the rights-holders that seek support from the FGC. The focus is on individual cases of women and girls and outreach activities. The monitoring procedures lie under the responsibility of the FGC supervisor and could be summarised as follows:

1. Each case has its file, managed by the case workers and the lawyers and is registered in the data base;
2. Case workers/lawyers report on their cases daily, weekly and monthly to the team and the supervisor;
3. The supervisor follows up on the different cases direct with the clients, with the police, court and prosecutor and based on these follow-ups and the reports from the case workers and the lawyers she produces two monthly reports based on statistical data and realised activities: one board up-date (summary) and one global monthly report to [Name Protected] in Kabul.
4. Additionally follow-up of the database is done one year after the case is closed.

5. The supervisor provides the data for the annual and final project reports that are produced by [Name Protected] in Kabul.
6. The activities at the FGC are also externally monitored by the AIHRC and the provincial departments of the ministries of justice and women affairs. The database also serves as a source of information to the authorities and other CSOs on reliable statistics not currently available elsewhere on women's rights violations.

The data filing system was assessed as meticulous and up to date, combined with daily and weekly follow-ups by staff and the supervisor. However, the FGC lacks an overall monitoring and steering mechanism that could help the organisation to follow up on results at outcome and impact levels. The closed cases are normally followed up over a period of one year and that is also the time frame for the more long-term monitoring. The organisation has not conducted any internal assessments of the sustainability of improved life conditions of those women whose cases have been solved through the support of the FGC. Neither are there any studies of how the level of awareness of women's human rights has increased or has been maintained through direct contact with the FGC mediation and counselling services or information and training activities. Data from the individual cases are not aggregated on an outcome level and the analysis of the achievements is held on a general level in the narrative reports. Focus is on what has happened in each of the individual cases.

The FGC in Mazar does not seem to have a clear picture of the intervention logic (such as the Theory of Change as presented in this report) in the applications to Sida and does not see the monitoring system as a tool for learning. The low understanding on what kind of expectations a donor like Sweden has on the monitoring results for supported development projects was found problematic.

4.4 SUSTAINABILITY

It is important to note that for the area of work that [Name Protected] carries out it is extremely difficult to obtain sustainability at project level³¹. It was already foreseen during the inception of the evaluation that it would not be possible to discuss sustainability of outcomes at societal level and that findings on the sustainability of outcomes at individual level would likely be highly anecdotal. Furthermore the scope of the evaluation does not allow the assessment of sustainability of any advocacy work.

³¹ Shelters and safe houses all over the world encounter challenges to a real sustainability for their work; it is normally the level of strategic advocacy work and through effective alliances that points towards some sort of sustainability enabling the organisations to get long-term support, or that the government starts to provide, or at least finance the recurrent costs of such services to women and girls.

The evaluators have focused the discussion on sustainability on four dimensions; 1) how the organisations addresses the root causes of VAW and if the work supports a sustainable poverty reduction (from a multidimensional view on poverty) for the rights-holders that have received support from [Name Protected]; 2) if strategies in use lead to any actual commitments by key actors (meaning that these actors challenge men who use violence, and parents physically disciplining (abusing) children), and whether discussions on other (non-violent) forms of masculinity are part of the intervention; 3) how [Name Protected] space and position as Women Human Rights Defenders is viewed by duty-bearers and other CSOs, and 4) how [Name Protected] has managed the growth of the organisation and what financial sustainability strategies are in place.

4.4.1 Violence Against Women and poverty reduction

As discussed earlier, the FGC in Mazar does not address the root causes of violence against women and girls but tries to convince the perpetrators to stop the abuse by referring to existing civil and Islamic laws. It furthermore informs the community about the existing law and claims the rule of law for women. This is a valid strategy in many ways, but it does not address the reasons why women in the first place are seen as less of a person, with less freedoms and rights. The FGC mainly reaches communities, leaders and family members that already have experienced cases of GBV. It might have a deterring effect on the use of violence in the future, particularly in the cases of the girls and women that already are victims of GBV, but not on a societal level since the outreach is rather limited. This is obviously beyond the capacities of an organisation such as [Name Protected], and would inevitably need to be addressed though a more comprehensive approach together with other like-minded organisations.

According to [Name Protected] management, mediation is seen as the most sustainable solution at individual level. The case workers also saw the awareness raising activities as a way to decrease poverty in the long-term since the knowledge about rights opens up for the possibility for another way of life and freedom of choice.

A multidimensional perspective on poverty includes a life without violence as an important aspect. If all forms of violence that are listed in the EVAW would be abolished in the women's lives this would truly be a big step to improve their life conditions and their level of poverty. The evaluators did not, however, find that violence is discussed from such a comprehensive way in [Name Protected] or that the women are informed of their right to live without any kind of violence. One respondent said that "Yes we do fight poverty because we fight violence", and that is of course correct, but only in a limited sense. Nonetheless, any decrease of abuse and violence is of course a huge step forward for every woman that has been helped by the FGC.

Poverty reduction is generally not discussed in these terms within [Name Protected]³², since poverty is looked at from deprivation of basic needs and extreme vulnerability. FGC grounds a lot of the counselling to women on the risks for increased poverty for her and for her children. This is particularly true for illiterate women. The best solution is seen to be to return to the husband and to stay married, or there is a risk that her children will starve.

4.4.2 Support to agents for change

On an individual level it was evident that FGC had succeeded in changing family member perpetrators' awareness and that commitments to stop the violence were made either voluntarily by mediation or by force through the legal system. The evaluators met with male community leaders, family members and religious leaders that were convinced that violence against women is wrong and that the Koran defends the rights of women. The contact with FGC had strengthened them in this conviction. But there were also cases of husbands, mother-in-laws and also the women themselves that raised that there are limitations for women's rights (meaning that husbands and elders have rights that the women need to respect). None of the respondents that had participated in training said that they had taken a stand to prevent violence against women or to challenge men using violence as a result of the training; there was no information on work related to the promotion of alternative ways to be a 'good man', and no evidence was found that training, counselling or mediations addressed physical or mental abuse of children.

What was found as being most strategic in relation to this second dimension of sustainability was the coordination with the religious leaders. There was great coherence in the respondents' conclusions on who the most crucial agents are for change. Any actor that promotes women's rights in the country needs to engage in close dialogue with the religious leaders. The space that formal civic duty-bearers within governmental bodies as well as the appointed community leaders have to act in the defence of women's rights depends greatly on the support from the Sunni and Shia imams. [Name Protected] states that positive change cannot happen without their support.

4.4.3 Credibility and good reputation

The third aspect the evaluators looked into was the perception that local duty-bearers and other human rights defenders have of [Name Protected] and the FGC. In order to work and maintain a good reputation³³ in the hostile environment that [Name Protected] operates in, the support and the acknowledgement of other key actors is vital. The respect and the

³² This remarks refer both to staff in Mazar and management at higher level.

³³ [Name Protected] is taking every measure necessary to protect its reputation, which is crucial in an Afghan context. Shelters are in general questioned and by the opponents of shelters seen as immoral. In order to operate the FGC strives to have an image which reflects the norms of the society, that the shelter is perceived as a 'pure' and 'modest' house of 'government' for women in need.

good impression given by the services that FGC provides was unanimously confirmed by all external stakeholders. Most duty-bearers and organisations formed by lawyers confirmed the strong coordination and exchange of experiences. Other actors more involved in strategic advocacy work were less impressed by the organisation's awareness raising activities and said that [Name Protected], at provincial level, was missing in the more strategic coordination around women's rights.

4.4.4 Growing as an actor

The organisation has expanded its work rapidly during the past six years. The Executive Director said that “until now we have just been working” and now was the time to get into more strategic planning within the organisation. The FGC in Mazar has been supporting the development of operations in four provinces. It has of course been intense to coordinate and support the development of new centres, but has also given a lot in learning processes according to the FGC Mazar staff that have been involved in the support to other centres. According to the FGC supervisor, one factor that has made the expansion possible and has decreased the pressure on [Name Protected] staff is the fact that they have established effective coordination with the authorities and different duty-bearers. They are able to solve cases quicker than many other actors; they get strong support from the courts and despite that the number of cases has increased the management of the cases has improved thanks to the close relations with the authorities.

The board members and the ED are working on the process of developing from the legacy of being a more voluntarily based board to respond to the demands that a more professional organisation faces. The board recently met to develop the strategic planning for the organisation, both in general terms and in relation to the presidential elections and the withdrawal of the international troops next year. The organisation has a new advocacy and fundraising function in Washington and the board is looking into funding strategies (how to expand the funds from private and individual donors and also to attract more corporate support). The dependency on international donors is still high and [Name Protected] expects these funds to decrease during the nearest three year period. The interviewed board members and the ED stressed the importance to increase the advocacy and awareness raising work and the need to search for more funds for these activities.

5 Conclusions

5.1 EFFECTIVENESS

The overall conclusion is that [Name Protected] and the FGC in Mazar play an important role for women and girls exposed to violence and other human rights abuses in the Balkh province. In the absence of governmental protection of women's security and human rights, [Name Protected] increases the possibility for women and girls to access legal aid and the rule of law. The FGC has during its six years of operation managed to successfully attend to a great number of cases and has contributed to an increased awareness among citizens and duty-bearers on women's rights and how the civil and Islamic laws protect women's rights to choose whom to marry and the right to divorce. Through the quality of service, increased access to legal aid and the focus on mediation with family and relatives, searching in the first hand for solutions for the return of the women and girls to their homes, the FGC has also contributed to decreasing the prejudices and criticism among the public towards shelters.

[Name Protected] has been able to build alliances with local duty-bearers within the court system and the police, which has strengthened the position of the organisation and helped [Name Protected] to solve more legal cases. [Name Protected] in Mazar claims compliance with the law in individual cases but does not hold duty-bearers accountable in general for the lack of legal services, access to relevant information on the law to the rights-holders, protection of women survivors of VAW or the absence of rule of law for women. The strategy at provincial level is close relations and cooperation with the authorities. The effective service delivery is hence partly due to [Name Protected] good relations with the authorities. The affinity to the local authorities might however limit [Name Protected] in the much needed demands on accountability.

The organisation has a deep understanding of the local context and addresses highly contested issues in a hostile and dangerous environment. The strategy to stay close to a literate reading of Sharia law and maintain good relations with religious leaders is valid. The fact that [Name Protected] does not challenge societal gender norms, but only harmful traditions not supported by the Koran, has also enabled the organisation to operate in environments normally hostile to women rights defenders. But would it be possible for [Name Protected] to think outside the box more than the organisation does and have a more comprehensive approach to women's rights and gender equality? The evaluators conclude that an even tighter interaction with other women's organisations and networks at national and provincial level would be healthy in this regard.

[Name Protected] states that the strategy to involve men is important. The evaluators agree with this but found that men are involved in the discussion related to their position as lead-

ers and from traditional roles, using arguments from Islamic law stressing their responsibilities as moral guides, fathers, brothers, male relatives and husbands. Their counselling and mediation is based on a normative notion of a good husband and does not challenge the subordination of daughters and wives. As long as the husband provides for the family's basic needs, which is his duty, he is identified as a good husband. Statements from stakeholders lead the evaluators to draw the conclusion that [Name Protected] staff unintentionally stay too close to the notion that a woman gains respect (and thus her rights) when she accepts her duties as good wife and submits to the re-strictive societal norms. The good contextualisation tends to lead to focus on mitigation of risks, rather than the promotion of women's rights.

The focus of the FGC is on service provision and the prevention work is not dimensioned in relation to the vast needs of information and awareness raising among the population in the province. As raised already in the inception report the issue of advocacy towards duty-bearers and the population at large is central for the effectiveness of outcomes and impacts as well as for the sustainability of the project. The Mazar chapter of [Name Protected] does not participate in strategic networks nor advocacy work to strengthen and defend women's rights in general. The evaluation find that the FGC provides a much needed service and that on an individual level the work promotes the rights of women and girls but that the scope of the project promotes long term change only to a limited degree.

The conclusion is that the FGC is effective in finding solutions to the cases that are presented to the organisation, that the methods used by the lawyers and the relations with the judicial system also are effective and that the involvement of family members and relatives is a necessary and in most cases effective approach to stopping the identified human rights abuses of the individual women and girls. The evaluators did not find that the methods used at the centre and the shelter lead to *real* and comprehensive empowerment of the girls and women.

The evaluators also conclude that the project does not protect the rights of the girl-child in a broader sense at a societal level. In individual cases trafficking and forced marriages are stopped and young girls coming to the shelter are provided with education.

Apart from impact on individual level in the cases of women and girls that have received support from the FGC, the one impact the evaluators could find is the increased knowledge in Mazar and its surroundings about the laws against violence against women and the work at the FGC. The evaluators agree with [Name Protected] conclusion that the number of clients that have accessed legal aid and other forms of support has increased the authorities' and the public's knowledge and respect for the work of the organisation. This has in turn meant that [Name Protected] can increase their outreach to more women and girls.

5.2 RELEVANCE

The evaluators conclude that the project is relevant in the sense that [Name Protected] covers the gap of a much needed service. It is improbable that the authorities will assume the responsibility to provide women and girls in the Balkh province with this kind of protection, or that the judicial system will secure the rule of law for women in the near future. Both the advocacy work and the service delivery of civil society actors are assessed as necessary for a foreseeable future. The project evidently also has great relevance for the individuals that get direct support by the FGC. The relevance of the project is however less when analysing the scope of the work and the approaches used by [Name Protected]. The evaluation finds that the project is not promoting social change beyond the individual or family level and that the methods to empower women are insufficient. The outcomes of the training given at the shelter are limited both by the lack of trauma treatment and the lack of application of gender equality strategies for survivors of violence against women.

The absence of a holistic child perspective decreases the impact that the defence of the girl-child's right could have. The organisation addresses rights of women but does not apply a rights-based approach in its external or internal work. The rights focus tends to be limited to service provision and is not translated into claims or practices of inclusion, active and meaningful participation, non-discrimination, transparency or accountability. [Name Protected] stresses that the involvement of men is crucial for success. The way women's rights are situated within societal and cultural norms does not however challenge the "given" rights and privileges to men but mainly draws attention to what the laws say. To raise the awareness among men of how the civil and Islamic laws protect the rights of women is a valid strategy, but it is not enough. The root causes of the violence and human rights abuse and the biased power relations within the family³⁴ also need to be addressed.

5.3 KNOWING THE PROJECT

As stated above, the evaluators found that the focus on delivering quality services to women has left the commitments to more long-term changes somewhat behind. The awareness that the agreement with Sida also includes objectives striving towards societal changes is rather low within the organisation. The project documents have not been translated into Dari and the content of the agreement with Sida has only been orally transmitted to the provincial manager and the key functions within the project. The evaluators assess that central information gets lost in these flows of communication. The fact that [Name Protected] has continued to report against the first period's objectives (that are more activity oriented) explain partly why the provincial manager and the

³⁴ Such as power relations between husband and wife, between father and daughter, between older and younger women or first and second wives.

supervisor believe that the project is only about service delivery and why the RAF has not been used in the planning and follow-up of the work. This has in turn had impact on how the FGC staff reports on their work and how they monitor results.

The evaluators also found the management of donor relations to be too centralised to the Kabul office, leading to limited participation at provincial level in strategic discussions with donors. The expectations from donors, and in particular their gender equality strategies, need to be understood by the management at different levels.

5.4 ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The FGC in Mazar has a committed team working in a very challenging environment. One of the organisation's most salient strengths is its legal expertise, which is a contributing factor to the high level of solved cases over the years. But few staff members have previous experience from development work and have limited understanding of how to promote change processes at a societal level. Many of the standard instruments for a development project are partly there, but are only understood as tools to record activities. The follow-up visits are a good initiative, but are not implemented in an adequate manner. The evaluators heard limited reflections over experiences where cases 'went wrong' or when the work failed to run smoothly. The absence of critical thinking might have been provoked by the fact that the organisation in Mazar had never been evaluated before, but could also be an indicator of a hierarchical structure that is not adept for work on social change.

The evaluation found that FGC in Mazar lacks a monitoring system that allows the organisation to follow medium and long-term results. Effectiveness is understood as complying with planned activities and outputs. The willingness to improve and develop the system exists, and the evaluators trust that this could be achieved in the next project period with some technical support and in-house training to all key staff. In order to monitor outcomes beyond the individual cases the organisation also needs to develop its conception and understanding of gender equality and the knowledge of the root causes behind gender based violence. Without this deeper understanding of the gender perspective, an improved monitoring system will only result in a technical improvement and not in outcomes for the women and men in the Balkh province.

As the interviewed board members correctly stated, after years of expanding the activities it is now time to develop the organisation's strategies and secure that [Name Protected] has structures and competencies that are fit for purpose. This implies a closer look at the organisational development at different levels of [Name Protected]. There is a need for steering documents and tools that will allow the staff to understand social development processes and enable them to promote social change beyond individual level. The ownership of the theory of change needs to be built throughout the whole organisa-

tion and serve as a fundament for the staff's planning and follow-up of different activities. Guidelines on rights-based approach³⁵, gender and child perspectives are also needed to enable a more inclusive and participatory approach in the daily work.

The focus on the individual cases leaves little room to follow-up the quality of the outreach activities and training at the shelter. There is no systematic approach to capacity building and the current organisational set up and competencies cannot assure the quality of the awareness raising activities in the communities or at the shelter. There was no doubt that [Name Protected] understands the need for more awareness raising, but the question is how well equipped the organisation is to increase this kind of activity. The evaluators found that the organisation needs to build its capacities in this area and develop its organisational structure for advocacy work before scaling up the prevention work. The evaluators conclude that [Name Protected] needs technical support at national and provincial levels to develop its organisational structures and capacities for prevention work.

5.5 SUSTAINABILITY

The evaluators noted in the inception report that shelters and safe houses all over the world encounter challenges to a real sustainability for their work; it is normally the level of strategic advocacy work and effective alliance building that point towards some sort of sustainability. The fact that FGC is known for its quality services contributing to solving difficult cases gives [Name Protected] positive attention and stimulates more rights-holders to seek support and exercise their rights through the stance of the FGC. This builds the credibility of the organisation and increases the possibility to attract future support. The strategies of the board for securing long-term funding were found to be positive and show that the organisation has capacity to deal with donors' exit strategies.

Having said that the overall assessment is that the sustainability of the results of the FGC project is low both on an individual and societal level. Looking at the Theory of Change it is the combination of quality service delivery with awareness raising, strategic coordination and rights-based advocacy work that is expected to lead to the overall project objective. The sustainability is thus dependent on secured long-term changes both for the women that have been supported by the FGC and for women exposed to the risk of violence and other human rights abuses caused by gender discrimination. At a societal level the work needs to lead to substantial attitudinal changes among duty-bearers and the population at large regarding women's status in society. The current project design does however not focus sufficiently on long-term changes in order to be assessed as sustainable since it rather addresses immediate and urgent

³⁵ The CIVIL RIGHTS & RESPECT POLICY STATEMENT, that the [Name Protected] board adopted in March 2014 could be instrumental in the process of developing rights-based guidelines.

needs at individual level. The evaluators come to this conclusion based on the following observations;

- 1) There are insufficient resources in the project to follow-up the situation of the women and girls that have received support from the FGC;
- 2) That individual solutions are sought mainly within what is socially acceptable for the families of the women and girls, which means that the rights of the women are not always in focus. The understanding of the local context also has impact on the staff's perception of when and how a case should be solved. Several cases that were presented to the evaluators as solved had many pending issues, including the security situation, and this left the evaluation team with doubts regarding how sustainable these solutions would be for the concerned women and girls. More resources allocated to the costs related for the staff's closer follow-up during longer periods of time could partly counteract this;
- 3) The prevention work is not aligned with the needs of advocacy work targeting formal and informal duty-bearers, and the awareness raising activities are mostly information given to target groups and not based on strategies on how to promote attitudinal and behaviour changes. It is important that all prevention work is accompanied by effective methods that promote change and monitor mechanisms that allow the organisations to identify what kind of actions are needed to support such changes to be sustainable;
- 4) The root causes to violence against women as understood in Swedish development cooperation policies are not addressed in a comprehensive manner by the project and not related to any poverty reduction strategies;
- 5) The FGC strategies to support agents for change, mainly men defending women's rights, are not developed sufficiently;
- 6) The staff work under much pressure and the conditions for particularly the staff at the shelter were found to be worrisome. The lack of institutionalised mechanisms for stress relief and conflict resolution constitute a risk for the organisational sustainability.

5.6 LEARNING PROCESSES

[Name Protected] has evolved through "learning by doing". The shelter activities were not based on lessons learned by other shelter organisations or women rights organisations. The curricula for the different training, both at the shelter and in the communities has also been developed solely by [Name Protected]. The organisation has not turned to organisations with longer experience of capacity building, popular education for awareness raising, attitudinal and behaviour changes.

The supervisors at FGC say that methods to manage difficult cases have evolved over time and that the organisation has learned to deal with both the authorities, resistant communities and family members. These lessons learned are passed on to new colleagues through meetings where cases are discussed and experiences are also shared with other defence lawyers. The development of skills and adjusted techniques are however not documented and a lot of the in-depth understanding and knowledge is

kept with the key staff, as for example the experienced supervisor. The organisation needs to develop methods to institutionalise these lessons learned.

There are two dominant professional perspectives at the FGC: the one of the teacher and the one of the lawyer. This affects how the organisation works, what methods they use, and how the organisation understands change through social action. This leads to some limitations in how development issues, the role of the civil society, rights issues and women's empowerment are understood. Among other things, this leads to an over-emphasis on problem-solving at individual level, where targeting societal change seems irrelevant or impossible.

The evaluators found [Name Protected] to be positive to the idea of seeking external support to develop its organisation and methods. A closer connection to other organisations working on women's rights and the root causes of gender inequality would promote learning processes and possibly facilitate [Name Protected] to come in contact with empowerment methods adapted to the Afghan reality.

6 Recommendations

6.1 RECOMMENDATIONS TO [Name Protected]

6.1.1 Organisational development

The [Name Protected] board and management in Kabul are recommended to:

- develop a gender equality policy or similar steering document that explains the position of the organisation on women's rights and gender equality;
- develop strategies and instructions on alliance building with women rights defenders also at local and provincial levels;
- share experiences from its advocacy work at national level with the offices in the provinces in order to build internal capacities for advocacy work and to step up the advocacy work at provincial levels;
- support method development in the areas of rights-based approach, the rights of the girl-child and awareness raising (including how to promote attitudinal and behaviour change);
- further develop the human resource policies of the organisation including mechanisms for stress relief and conflict management measures in order to secure sustainability and the wellbeing of the staff.

6.1.2 Internal capacity building

[Name Protected] is further recommended to:

- invest in capacity building on RBA and child's perspective at different levels of the organisations, including all key staff at FGC in Mazar-e-Sharif. At Mazar level this could for example be done through in-house training that includes the development of best practices, reaching agreement on what methods should be used in mediation, counselling, the different activities at the shelter and in the dialogue with duty-bearers, communities and different rights-holders. It should also involve an enhanced understanding of gender perspectives and empowerment;
- use available gender and women's rights experts in Mazar and elsewhere to link the service provision to the strategic work of other women rights defenders;
- consider (when possible) to contract additional staff with more extensive experience in the field of development cooperation and gender equality projects;
- develop skills for risk assessment and management securing that all staff have sufficient awareness on risk and security matters and that procedures are followed.

6.1.3 Project management

At project level [Name Protected] is recommended to:

- translate all relevant project documents to Dari in order to secure transparency and ownership among those who implement the project;
- develop the M&E system, securing that objectives and expected results at output, outcome and impact levels are duly monitored. The evaluation recommends use of short term external technical support that also includes an in-house training involving all key staff;
- continue to involve men in the work and focus even more on men as agents for change (and not primarily as decision-makers in the mediation of cases);
- involve key staff members more in strategic discussions on how to promote change at local and provincial levels.

Finally, the final report for 2011-2014 must relate to the agreed RAF and the objectives for the relevant project period.

6.2 RECOMMENDATIONS TO SIDA

The overall recommendation to Sida is to continue its support to [Name Protected] considering the following:

- Increase the dialogue on Sweden's expectations in relation to the country strategy for Afghanistan and relevant policies for the support to civil society actors; it is also recommended to include discussions on the policy development within [Name Protected] in this dialogue;
- Stress the need for greater attention to organisational development and the building of internal capacities in areas such as M&E, RBA, risk and conflict management;
- A more explicit support is recommended to the advocacy and awareness raising work, but it needs to be accompanied by human resources and technical support; for this purpose Sida could explore the possibilities to support [Name Protected] through a technical intermediary (other Afghan women's organisations or external consultant);
- Facilitate strategic contacts with other Sida partners working for women's rights, child rights and gender equality.

Finally, Sida is recommended to translate the final report of the evaluation into Dari.

7 Appendices

7.1 APPENDIX 1 - CONSULTED DOCUMENTS

[Name Protected] related documents

- Civil Rights & Respect Policy Statement, Draft June 2013, [Name Protected]
- Family Guidance Centre and Shelter, Mazar, Afghanistan, Project Proposal [Name Protected]
- Final Narrative Report, May 1, 2008 – February 28, 2011, [Name Protected]
- Final report on follow up assessment of internal management and controls of [Name Protected], Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency ('Sida'), Ernst & Young November 12, 2013 (updated)
- Financial Report Sida, Family Guidance Center –Mazar-E-Sharif, March 01, 2008 – February 28, 2011
- Financial Report Sida, Family Guidance Center March 01, 2009 - Feb. 28, 2010
- Financial Report Sida, March 31, 2013
- First year narrative report, Family Guidance Center Mazar, May, 2008 -February 28, 2009, [Name Protected]
- Log frame, [Name Protected], Social and Legal Protection of Women/Girls at Risk, Family Guidance Center, Mazar Afghanistan, 2011-2013
- Management Letter 2012, [Name Protected], May 30, 2013
- Management Report (2011), [Name Protected], Alliot Gulf Ltd
- Management Response, [Name Protected], July 20, 2011
- 2012 Report, Report Period 4/1/2011 to 3/31/2012,[Name Protected], May 2012
- Sida Annual Report, Family Guiding Centre Mazar, Report Period 4/1/2012 to 3/31/2013, [Name Protected], April 2013
- Second year report, Family Guidance Center Mazar, March 1st 2009 – 28th February, 2010, [Name Protected]
- [Name Protected] Audit Report 2011

Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Sweden

- Strategy for development cooperation with Afghanistan, July 2009 – December 2013, Government Offices of Sweden
- Strategirapport för Afghanistan 2010, Sida, 2010-10-15
- Strategirapport för Afghanistan, september 2010 – augusti 2011, Promemoria, Sida Strategirapport för Afghanistan, september 2011 – september 2012, Sida
- Ingångsvärden för Sidas framtagande av resultatförslag för Sveriges bistånd till Afghanistan för perioden 2015-2019, Bilaga till Uppdrag att ta fram underlag till

Sveriges bistånd till Afghanistan, Regeringsbeslut, Utrikesdepartementet, Regeringskansliet, 2013-08-08

Sida

- Assessment Memo (of [Name Protected] and their project “Family Guidance Center in Mazar-e-Sharif” (FGC)), Mette Sunnergren, Sida, 20 April, 2008
- Assessment Memo, Continuation of "[Name Protected] 's Family Guidance Center/Women's Shelter project- Balkh, Sida, revised 4 of July, 2011
- Agreement between Sida and [Name Protected] on continuation support to family guidance centre/women shelter in Mazar-e-sharif during 2011-2014 Sida Contribution No: 52050019-11

Other consulted documents

- Missing the target, A report on the Swedish commitment to women, peace, and security in Afghanistan, Ann Wilkens, November 2012, report commissioned by Kvinna till Kvinna, Operation 1325 and Swedish Committee for Afghanistan
- Like a bird with broken wings, Afghan Women Oral History 1978 - 2008, UN Women, Kabul December 2013

Violence against Women in Afghanistan (The first six months of the year- 1392), Mohammad Hussain Saramad and Latifa Sultani, AIHCR, 2013/Muslim year 1392

7.2 APPENDIX 2 - CONSULTED STAKEHOLDERS

Names of girls and women rights-holders and their family members and relatives are not mentioned in the report, data on the respondents is listed below.

[Name Protected]

[Name Protected], Case worker FGC Mazar
 [Name Protected], Trainer
 [Name Protected], Case Worker
 [Name Protected], Supervisor, FGC Mazar, [Name Protected]
 [Name Protected], Legal Advisor FGC Mazar, [Name Protected]
 [Name Protected], Legal Advisor FGC Mazar, [Name Protected]
 [Name Protected], Provincial Manager, [Name Protected]
 [Name Protected], Secretary of the [Name Protected] Board
 [Name Protected], Literacy Teacher
 [Name Protected], Vocational Trainer
 [Name Protected], Executive Director, [Name Protected]
 [Name Protected], Country Director, [Name Protected]
 [Name Protected], Case worker FGC Mazar
 [Name Protected], Shelter Supervisor
 [Name Protected], Caretaker at Shelter, FGC Mazar
 [Name Protected], [Name Protected] Database Officer
 [Name Protected], Legal Advisor FGC Mazar, [Name Protected]
 [Name Protected], Chair of [Name Protected] Board (founding member of [Name Protected])

Participants in FGC training and other community representatives, including community leaders

[Name Protected], illiterate participant, had participated at FGC awareness raising training
 [Name Protected], community leader, Mzr district 1
 [Name Protected], student, had participated at FGC awareness raising training
 [Name Protected] high school student, had participated at FGC awareness raising training
 [Name Protected], community leader, Mzr district 2
 [Name Protected], high school student, had participated at FGC awareness raising training
 [Name Protected], community leader, Mzr district 7, had participated at FGC awareness raising training
 [Name Protected], Kaldar Community Leader
 [Name Protected] Community Elder
 [Name Protected], high school student, had participated at FGC awareness raising training
 [Name Protected], Adult Learning Center (ALC) 3rd Zone, Mazar, supervisor, had participated at FGC awareness raising training
 [Name Protected], ALC literacy teacher, had participated at FGC awareness raising training
 [Name Protected], English teacher at ALC, member of ANAF AE, Mazar, had participated at FGC awareness raising training
 [Name Protected], IT Teacher at ALC, member of ANAF AE, Mazar, had participated at FGC awareness raising training

[Name Protected], ALC literacy teacher, 3rd Zone, Mazar, had participated at FGC awareness raising training

[Name Protected], ALC literacy teacher, 3rd Zone, Mazar, had participated at FGC awareness raising training

Local duty-bearers

[Name Protected], Section of Family Affairs, Justice Department, Mazar-e-Sharif, Balkh Province

[Name Protected], Head of General Attorney, Violence against Women Department, Mazar-e-Sharif, Balkh Province

[Name Protected], Department of Women Affairs (DoWA)

[Name Protected], Family Affairs Office, Police force, Mazar,

Head of the Criminal Court, Mazar-e-Sharif, Balkh Province

Head of the Family Court, Mazar-e-Sharif, Balkh Province

Six Mullahs, [Name Protected]

Commissions and civil society organisations in Mazar

[Name Protected], Women Rights Support Officer, Afghan Independent Human Rights Commission

[Name Protected], Director of Northern zone responsible of Balkh regional office & Defence Lawyer, The International Legal Foundation/ILF-Afghanistan

Kajsa Johansson, former Civil Society Programme Manager, Swedish Afghanistan Committee, Kabul, Afghanistan (interviewed in Stockholm)

[Name Protected] Office Manager of Afghanistan Independent Bar Association (AIBA) in Balkh Province

[Name Protected], Programme Support Officer, Global Rights

[Name Protected], ICLA Project Coordinator, Norwegian Refugee Council

[Name Protected], Regional Manager in Balkh Province, Medica Afghanistan, Mazar-e-Sharif

Sida and other donors

[Name Protected], Programme Assistant, International Narcotic & Law Enforcement Affairs – INL, US Consulate Mazar-e-Sharif

Begoña Birath Barrientos, Development Advisor and Coordinator, Sida, Swedish Section in Mazar, Swedish Embassy Afghanistan

Bengt Ekman, Senior Programme Manager, Private Sector Development and Infra-structure, Afghanistan Unit, Department of Conflict and Post-conflict, Sida

Marianne von Malmberg, Programme Manager, Conflict and Post-conflict Department, Sida

John K. Moyer, International Narcotic & Law Enforcement Affairs – INL, US Consulate Mazar-e-Sharif

[Name Protected], National programme Officer, Sida, Swedish Section in Mazar, Swedish Embassy Afghanistan.

Interviewed girls and women provided with services from FGC in Mazar:

Respondent No/Type of interview		Description	Age*	Marital status Children		Type of abuse	Seeking support	Provided services
1	II	Adolescent girl staying at the shelter, from Mazar, High school graduate	19	Married since 7 month	No	Forced marriage	Divorce, security, return to studies	Shelter** Legal aid Family counselling Therapy
2	II	Adolescent girl staying at the shelter, from Balkh city, 7 th grade graduate	15	Married since 1 year	No	Forced marriage	Divorce, security, return to family and studies	Shelter, Legal aid, Husband mediation Family counselling Therapy
3	II	Adult woman leaving the T House***, case closed, from Jawzjan, illiterate	22	Divorced Married 3 yrs. ago	No	Spouse violence	Divorce To live with uncle Vocational work	2 yrs. at Shelter Legal aid Therapy
4	II	Adult woman staying at the shelter, from Mazar, illiterate, 5 daughters 1 at shelter	40	Married	Yes	Spouse's 2 nd wife violence	Divorce, basic needs coverage	Shelter Legal aid Therapy
5	II	Adolescent girl at the shelter, from Kabul, illiterate	17	Single	No	Rape	Safety Shelter Basic needs (No family)	Shelter Therapy
6	FGD	Adolescent girl at the shelter, from Mazar, illiterate	18	Married since 5 yrs.	No	Spouse violence	Divorce Security Return to family	Shelter Family counselling Legal aid Therapy
7	FGD	Young woman at the shelter, Balkh city, illiterate, 3 children, 1 at the shelter	20	Divorced since 4 months (Married 9 yrs.)	Yes	Spouse violence	Safety Vocational skills Shelter and basic needs	Shelter Family counselling Therapy
8	FGD	Adolescent girl at the shelter, from Shaalgar, illiterate	13	Single	No	Family member violence	Family reunion	Shelter Family counselling Therapy

9	II	Adult woman at T House, from Mazar, illiterate, 1 child	23	Married	Yes	Spouse violence	Reunion with husband at jail	Shelter Family counselling Legal aid Therapy
10	FGD	Adolescent girl at the shelter, from Mazar, illiterate	18	Single	No	Family issues	Reunion with family	Shelter Family counselling Therapy
11	FGD	Young Woman at the T House, from Mazar, illiterate, 2 children	22	Divorced	Yes	Spouse violence	Independence	Shelter Legal aid Therapy
12	FGD	Adult woman at the T House, from Badakhshan illiterate, 1 child	27	Married	Yes	Lack of 'protector' and breadwinner	Finding husband	Shelter Family counselling Therapy
13	FGD	Adult woman at the T House, from Mazar, illiterate, 5 children, 1 at the T house	28	Divorced	Yes	Spouse violence	Shelter and basic needs	Shelter Family counselling Legal aid Therapy
14	FGD	Adolescent girl at the shelter, from Takhar, illiterate	15	Married Since 4 months	No	Spouse violence and forced marriage	Divorce Reunion with family To study	Shelter Family counselling Legal aid Therapy
15	FGD	Adult woman Case closed, from Mazar, illiterate, 2 children	28	Separated (Married 13 yrs.)	Yes	Husband absent for 10 yrs.	Living with family Possibly remarriage	Legal aid Counselling
16	FGD	Young woman Case closed, from Mazar 5 th grade	20	Engaged	No	Risk of forced marriage	Safety	Shelter Legal aid Family Counselling Therapy
17	FGD	Adult woman Case closed, from Mazar, illiterate	30	Divorced	No	Spouse violence	Reunion with family	Legal aid family counselling
18	FGD	Young woman	20	Married	No	Escaping to marry	Marriage	Family counselling,

		Case closed, from Mazar, High school grad						Nikah (legal marriage)
19	FGD	Adolescent girl, Case closed, from Mazar, 12 th grade student	19	Single	No	Engaged with an ab- sent fiancé (5 yrs.)	Annulment of engagement	Counselling Legal aid
20	FGD	Adolescent girl, Case solved, from Mazar, illit- erate	18	Married	No	Severe spouse vio- lence	Guarantee from husband who is in jail	Shelter Counselling legal aid and medical aid
21	FGD	Adolescent girl Case solved, from Kabul, Basic literacy	18	Married	No	Running away with a guy	Marriage and protection	Shelter Counselling legal aid
22	FGD	Adult woman Case solved, from Mazar, illit- erate	26	Divorced	No	Spouse vio- lence	Divorce	Shelter Legal aid Counselling Therapy
23	FGD	Girl child, at Child Protection Centre, Case closed, from Mazar, School attendant	11	Single	No	Forced mar- riage/ Selling by non-relatives	Protection	Shelter later CPC Therapy School Basic needs
24	FGD	Adolescent girl, at Child Protec- tion Centre, Case closed, from Mazar, 3 rd grade pupil	13	Single	No	Sexual as- sault by fam- ily member	Protection	Shelter later CPC Therapy School Basic needs
25	FGD	Adolescent girl, Case closed, from Kabul Basic literacy	17	Single	No	Escaped from parents	Marriage	Shelter Legal aid Therapy
26	FGD	Young woman at the shelter, from Dai Kondi, Basic literacy	20	Married	No	Not clear - Mental health	Not clear	Shelter Therapy
27	FGD	Adolescent girl at the shelter, from Tajghorghhan, 12th grade	19	Single	No	Raped when 12	Waiting for court verdict	Shelter Legal aid Therapy

28	FGD	Adult woman at the shelter, from Keshini, illiterate, 3 children	35	Widow	Yes	Fraud by fiancé	Waiting for fiancé to return	Shelter Therapy
29	II	Adolescent girl at the shelter, from Mazar/Balkh city Basic literacy	16	Married	No	Fraud into marriage to cousin	Divorce	Shelter Therapy
30	II	Adolescent girl at the shelter, from Kabul Illiterate	17	Single	No	Raped	Protection and shelter – no family	Shelter Therapy

II - individual interview

FGD – Focal group discussion

*Age is not always exact, based on both information from the woman and FGC staff

**Shelter – when not stated different includes different forms of training during their stay

***T House – Transition house/half way house

Focus group discussions with family members and relatives to women and girls

No	Family relationship	Sex	Status of case	Comments
1	Mother	F	Closed	Received family counselling, mediation. On-going follow up.
2	Mother	F	Closed	Daughter received legal aid, mediation and protection.
3	Husband	M	Closed	Disabled wife was brought by mother-in-law. Received counselling, mediation and protection.
4	Husband	M	Closed	Wife received protection, the couple was given counselling and mediation.
5	Brother	M	Closed	Sister received legal aid for divorce, counselling and therapy.
6	Mother	F	Closed	Daughter victim of severe violence.
7	Mother in-law	F	Closed	Daughter in-law - marriage
8	Mother in-law	F	Closed	Daughter in-law - marriage

7.3 APPENDIX 3 - PROJECT OBJECTIVES 2008-2011/2011-2014

Objectives for the FGC in Mazar 2008-2011	
Overall goal	To fill the immense void in concrete services for individual women seeking relief from domestic violence and other violations of their human rights and for families in crisis.
Objectives	Provide counselling and mediation to solve family crises and improve family relations. Provide legal support, represent women in court, and to partner with organizations working to strengthen the rule of law.
Specific objectives	To provide individual women in danger with safety from chronic domestic violence. To treat children who have been victims of or witnesses to violence. To empower shelter clients and develop a cadre of progressive Islamic teachers, male and female to conduct classes in the FGC and elsewhere on family relationships, women's rights, and related topics.
Advocacy and awareness objectives	To educate the community on women's rights and publicize the benefits of [Name Protected] services including family counseling by using men (husbands, fathers, etc.) who have been treated in the FGC as well as women. To maintain detailed information to utilize as a data bank that can yield reliable statistics not currently available on women's rights violations.

Overall and specific objectives of the project for the ongoing period 2011-2014	
Overall Objective	To improve the rights, status and living conditions of vulnerable women and girls in conflict with conservative culture in Afghanistan
Specific Objective 1	Protection of Afghan women and girls from violence, sexual exploitation, and other human rights abuses through social protection services including professional family counseling and mediation with a goal of social or family reintegration.
Specific Objective 2	Enhanced access to justice for Afghan women in Mazar and surrounding areas through legal counseling and civil and criminal defense services.
Specific Objective 3	Access for women (and their accompanying children) and girls subjected to human rights abuses to safe living quarters where they may spend anywhere from a few weeks to 2 years.

Specific Objective 4	Awareness raising/advocacy programme reaching the widest possible range of Afghans in Balkh province and bordering areas on the subject of women's human rights in Islam, international conventions signed by Afghanistan, the Afghanistan constitution and civil law, and other Muslim countries. Information about [Name Protected] services and contact information will also be distributed.
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According to the application and the Result Assessment Framework (RAF) [Name Protected] expects to see the following results:

- By the end of the programme, the vulnerability of women and girls at risk from harmful cultural practices is addressed.
- The rights, status, and living conditions of extremely vulnerable women/girls are improved through re-established family relations, agreements to stop violence, and access to quality social protection networks and services in Mazar.
- Provision of legal services (civil and criminal representation) for women in Mazar lead to reduction of convictions, fair sentencing, elimination of bribery and corruption, ultimately to the enactment of civil laws protecting women
- Through counselling by caseworkers and legal advisors, women in shelter gain time to consider options to life of relentless domestic violence and other abuses.
- In shelters, women can find constructive ways to cope with situations that had seemed beyond their control.
- In shelters, women can develop self-esteem and self-confidence, set goals and keep track of personal progress.
- Existence of shelters means police, other gov't agencies and NGOs can refer cases to FGC rather than detention centres.

There are no explicit project specific expected results for Objective 4 concerning awareness raising and advocacy work. What is stated in the RAF is that the work can be used by the Government and international stakeholders and have relevance for their work for women's rights.

7.4 APPENDIX 4 - EXPECTED RESULTS ACCORDING TO SIDA ASSESSMENT MEMOS AND AGREEMENTS

The **Sida Assessment Memo dated 20 April, 2008**, on the [Name Protected] project application states the following regarding the expected results of the contribution:

Impact on a long term basis:

- Women's rights are fulfilled as granted them by Islam, the Afghan constitution, and the international conventions ratified by Afghanistan.
- Women engage fully in the political, economic and judicial life, and participate in human rights advocacy in local, national and international spheres.

Outcomes after three years in Mazar area:

- Reduction of domestic violence, forced/underage marriages, runaways, baad exchanges, and reduced amount of women in prison for being raped.
- Increased understanding of the benefits of counselling and mediation in solving family crises and rights abuse.
- More progressive attitudes toward women's social roles and basic rights on local and national levels.
- Clearer understanding on part of government and other public agencies of causes and social impacts of domestic violence and the benefits of gender equality.
- Fairer treatment and greater justice for women by the judiciary.
- Tangible support of women's rights from the Afghan government rather than lip service.
- Major headway toward peaceful transitioning of women re-entering society from prison and integrating women who live alone into business and the community.

Outputs expected (numbers after one year of operations in Mazar):

- First year, minimum of 4 counsellors trained and at work in FGC.
- 2 lawyers representing women in court.
- 175 women/families in ongoing counselling.
- 100 women reintegrated safely in family. Terms of resolution worked out by FGC will be confirmed by signed contracts between family and the Attorney General's office. Verified also by follow-up visits by FGC staff.
- 12 cases resolved or active in court.
- 8 workshops on domestic violence.

The **Sida Assessment Memo dated 4 July, 2011**, on the [Name Protected] project application

(continuation) states that the continuation follows the same objectives and strategies as in the first project period. Expected results at impact, outcome and output level are however not listed as in the earlier assessment memo. The objectives and expected re-sults presented in chapter XX are included in the memo.

Overall Goal: To improve the rights, status and living conditions of extremely vulnerable women and girls in conflict with conservative culture in Afghanistan.

Objective 1: Protection of Afghan women and girls from violence, sexual exploitation, and other human rights abuses through social services including family counseling and mediation with a goal of social and/or family reintegration.

Objective 2: Enhanced access to justice for Afghan women in Mazar and surrounding areas through legal counselling and civil and criminal defines services.

Objective 3: Access for women (and their accompanying children) and girls subjected to human rights abuses to safety in [Name Protected] shelter, where they may spend any-where from a few weeks to 2 years.

Some lessons learned from the first period are also highlighted in the memo:

« The most valuable lesson learned during the three year reporting period has been the importance of holding awareness raising/advocacy campaigns about women's rights in local communities and offices such as schools, hospitals, mosques, etc. The ripple of effect means that these campaigns influence not only those present at the training also their families, neighbours, colleagues. Lack of education, ignorance about the world, illiteracy, and the false messages about women's rights disseminated by men with a vested interest in keeping women subjugated, all these factors disempowered women. The results of our advocacy programs suggest that women are ready to hear and internalize a new and far more progressive view of their social roles.

[Name Protected] is confident that awareness raising programme will continue to be an effective way to spread such understanding throughout the communities and encourage women to come forward and avail themselves of our services, including the shelters. Additionally, these projects provide much needed information on women's human rights that can encourage communities to support [Name Protected] work, especially the FGCs and shelters, in the face of possible government opposition.

AGREEMENT BETWEEN SWEDISH INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT COOPERATION AGENCY (SIDA) AND [Name Protected] ([Name Protected]) ON CONTINUATION SUPPORT OF FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER/ WOMEN SHELTER IN MAZAR-E-SHARIF DURING 2011-2014

The agreement signed in August 2011, states that the overall objectives of the project are to **empower women and fulfill their human rights by solving cases of violence against women and to reduce the number of cases**. The agreement further refers to the Result Assessment Framework, which has another overall goal and four specific objectives as presented above.



Evaluation of [Name Protected] - Family Guidance Center and Shelter in Mazar-e-Sharif

This is an assessment of the Swedish support to [Name Protected] Family Guiding Centre and Shelter (FGC) in Mazar-e-Sharif, Afghanistan during 2008-2014. The evaluation focuses on the effectiveness, relevance and sustainability of the work. The service delivery and the awareness raising activities at the FGC are analysed from a rights-based approach, gender and child perspectives. The FGC has managed to attend to a great number of cases and has contributed to an increased awareness among citizens and duty-bearers on women's rights.

The evaluation finds that the FGC provides a much needed service and that on an individual level the work promotes the rights of women and girls, but that the project promotes long term changes only to a limited degree. The conclusion is that the FGC is effective in finding solutions to the cases that are presented to the organisation, but that the project could benefit from a greater focus on violence prevention and the application of a rights-based approach and a child perspective.