

WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

Alternative Development Programme, Afghanistan, 2016-2020

Afghanistan ranking 168 in both gender development and gender inequality indices is a testament to the social isolation, economic marginalisation, and limited influence of women in public and family domains. This severely limits women's ability to contribute to the welfare of their families and communities.

One of the adverse consequences of these limitations is women's increased reliance and participation in opium poppy cultivation and production. Women are often unpaid or work as daily wage earners despite the associated risks. However, women are drawn to this work because they can use income generated from opium poppy cultivation and production to pay for household essentials and their children's education.

In Afghanistan, opium poppy is cultivated in areas with a very strong culture of gender inequality and is more likely to occur in villages where girls have no access to schools, which is in line with the strong correlation observed between gender equality, the empowerment of women, and peaceful societies. The Alternative Development Programme laid special focus on empowering women through initiatives such as - but not limited to - promoting and supporting alternative crop cultivation in poppy producing areas; employment of women recovering from drug addiction; women's capacity development for income generation; self-employment; and entrepreneurship. The programme also trained women through workshops and exposure visits to enhance marketing skills of select entrepreneurs who are committed to mainstreaming counter narcotics in their operations.

The programme goes beyond the concept of subsistence, and empowered women to have agency over their income and take decisions so that they are change agents in their own lives, households, and communities.



Achievements*

Out 60,312 project beneficiaries, 28,800 are women.

Direct recipients have largely moved away from narcotics cultivation, while their neighbours, who were not project beneficiaries, also reduced narcotics cultivation by 80%.

28,000 women have been supported in their recovery from drug addiction and have built their income generation capacity. As a result, they have increased their income from zero to AFN 3000-5000 (USD 40-65) per month.

With the new skills, each woman can earn AFN 3000 per month from selling eggs; AFN 4,544 from selling dairy products; and AFN 5000 from selling handicraft.

Exhibitions organised by UNODC and Afghanistan Women Chamber of Commerce and Industry allowed women beneficiaries to earn a total of AFN 101,500 (USD 0.1 million). These exhibitions linked them to direct market access, interaction with customers, and long-term orders.



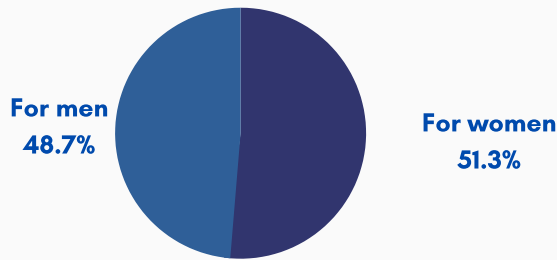
"I sold most of the pickles that the women's group I work with produced. It makes me happy that foreigners like our products."

Bibi Hasina,
Women Entrepreneur,
UNOCA Exhibition

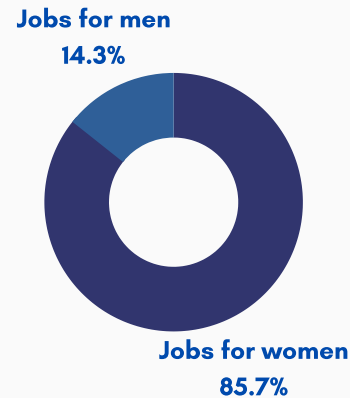
*Based on endline survey conducted by implementing partner

The endline survey found that Alternative Development Programme initiatives for women such as backyard poultry, vegetable production, dairy processing and handicraft highly contributed to their household's economy.

76 large greenhouses established



1306 jobs created under vegetable cultivation and production



Animal Husbandry Support

- 5,829 women trained on dairy processing
- 290 dairy processing groups formed
- 23,323 tons of fresh milk produced
- 5,963 jobs created
- USD 6.7 million net income generated

Poultry Production & Management

- 5,000 women trained on backyard poultry management
- 19.76 million eggs produced
- 5,020 jobs created
- USD 4.6 million net income generated

Vocational Training & Handicraft Creation

- 640 women trained on handicraft making
- 340 women received tailoring machine and extension supports
- 20 women trained on hair design and beauty parlour services
- 300 women received training on business management skills

Support to Entrepreneur

- 39 entrepreneurs supported
- 30 entrepreneurs provided with exposure visit to neighbouring countries.
- 13 exhibitions conducted at national level
- 671 exhibitions conducted at provincial level
- 200 jobs created

"Before joining the project, I felt bad that I could not help my family. There was no money to spend on basic day-to-day needs. I never thought I will have my own vegetable garden and would be capable of earning money to take care of my children's education, clothes, and food."

Roshan, a vegetable cultivation entrepreneur from Zaranj district.

"I was not allowed to work outside of the home, and we were in a bad condition financially. Now I'm happy to have my own poultry farm. I will sell eggs to pay for my children's education. I want to be a model of success and change for the women in my village"

Mahgul, a poultry farm entrepreneur from Behsood district.

"In two years, I earned AFN 40,000 (approx. USD 526) from the first rose harvest. With that income, I was able to invest in a cow and started selling milk and yogurt to the villagers worth AFN 10,000 (approx. USD 131) per month. I never thought I would have my own cow and farm. I'm not longer known as 'the widowed Gulpari', but the villages now refer to me as 'The rich Gulpari'."

Gulpari, a rose and dairy entrepreneur from Dara-e-Noor district.

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