

The Activities of Balkh Province's Women Affairs Directorate in 1388

Contents:

- Introduction to Balkh Province
- Introduction to Department of Women Affairs
- Current year activity report
- Women's presence percentage in local organs
- Achievements
- Challenges for women

Introduction to Balkh Province:

The city of Mazar-e-Sharif is the center of Balkh province and one of the biggest and most secure provinces in Afghanistan.

Population: 1,700,000

Area: 15000

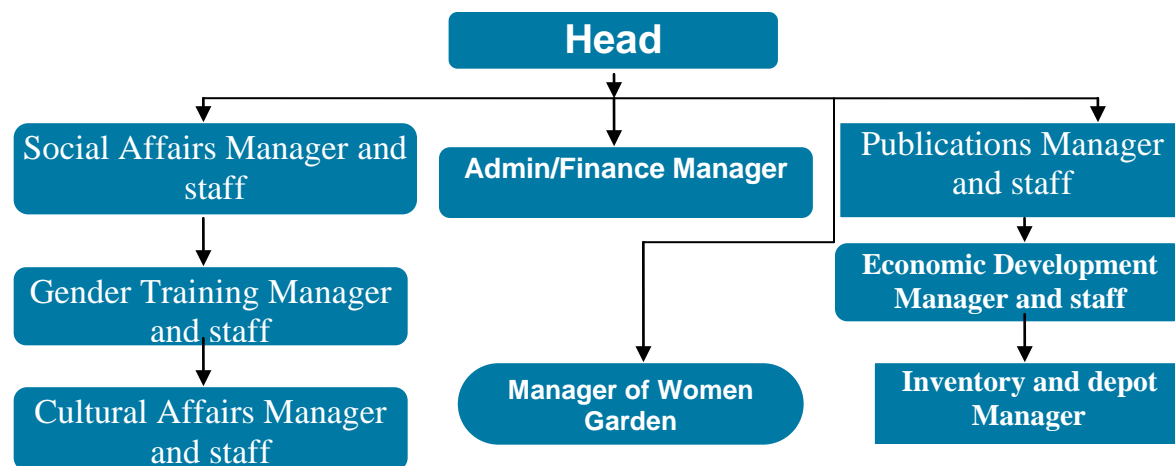
Districts: 15 and 10 municipality districts

Balkh Province is under central government and administered by the governor. The provincial council comprising 19 members (5 women) supervises the province. In Balkh province all secondary units of the ministries and independent departments are active based on their policy and procedures.

Introduction of Department of Women Affairs as Implementing Body of Gender Issues in Balkh Province:

The department is a secondary unit of ministry of women affairs and works as a policy making organ. The main duty of this department is to support and provide facilities as well as supervise them at the government and non-government level.

Organizational Chart



8 Practical Roles of Balkh Province Department:

1. Coordination and representation role in decisions and plans

2. Public relations
3. Planning
4. Awareness campaigns
5. Data collection and supervision
6. Cooperation with foreign donors and implementing organizations
7. Administration, procurement and maintenance
8. Management and coordination between ministry of women affairs and department

Activities in Current Year:

- **Economy**

- The project of distribution of 1000 chickens in districts of Kholm and 1000 chickens in 20 villages of Dehdadi district for women with the help of World Bank and HLP.
- Construction of Women Garden, Women park and educational building for women as well as children park and Golf court with complete equipments by Sweden PRT and from Women Affairs' development budget in the Women Garden area.
- Construction of two shops and one restaurants in Women Garden with the help of GTZ
- Gardening project by women in the area of Women Garden by Mercy Corps in 10 city districts.
- One month economic project of blanket and school uniforms for boys and girls for 2000 women with cooperation of Mercy Corps and help of neighborhood elders. The products of the projects were distributed for poor women in schools and neighborhoods. About 1000 school uniforms have been distributed among poor students.
- Cooperation in implementation of engraving project for 29 women through Afghan Business Association in the village of Baba Yadegar, Nahr Shahi district run by PRT.
- Supervising diary factory in Dehdadi district.
- Helping gardening (producing Quriya) project by women in Sholgar and Marmal districts.
- Distribution of more than 400 blankets for poor families in Mazar-e-Sharif by through Mercis Corps.
- Introducing 7 women from private sector for business trip and exchange of views to Mashhad, Iran with cooperation of Chambers of Commerce and Iran Consulate in Mazar.
- Surveying women economic status in 5 districts (Nahr Shahi, Kholm, Marmal, Charkent, Sholgar) in each districts 3 villages were surveyed.
- Holding handicraft exhibition in Kefayat Hotel with cooperation of CCA.
- Introducing two women through official letter to Work and Social Affairs' department and one NGO to Mercy Corps for getting one moth economic projects and one woman to nursing home.
- Introducing two women as carpet weaving instructors to Carpet weaving union.
- Jam making project by Green Women Association and GTZ's financial support.
- Weaving project by Business Women Association and GTZ's help.

- **Health and Social Affairs**

- awareness campaign about narcotics in 8 districts of Charkent, Balkh, Dawlatabad, and Kholm for 600 women
- AIDS workshop in 4 districts of Kholm, Dawlatabad, and Charkent for 120 literate and illiterate women.

- Introduction of poor women to department of public health for free of charge treatment.
- Visiting clinics in districts of Kholm, Balkh, Dawlatabad, and Charkent and inspecting clinic condition and women access to health care services in district of Balkh province.

- **Law**

- During the current year a total number of 149 cases has been referred to this directorate of that 35 cases have been resolved through family sessions and 5 cases of home run-away have been settled.
- A homeless girl living in secure house married with her consent to a man with cooperation of the court and CCA. Other cases have been referred to judicial authorities.
- Legal awareness workshop about international conventions for women with cooperation of CCA.
- Workshop about violence against women in Kholm district with cooperation of UNDP.
- For the purpose of close supervision on secure house residents and based on the decree of the president, a delegation comprising Amina Afzali, Fariba Majeed head of women Affairs Directorate and Nasrullah Hotak head of Balkh justice department visited and inspected one the secure houses.

- **Culture**

- Making native Balkh home from cane and straw for the purpose of introducing the culture of Balkh as well as cooking Samanak and preparing Haft Miwa for national and international guests in New Year ceremony.
- Establishing 3 literacy centers in Dehdadi and Nahr Shahi districts and Mazar city for 900 women
- Training the trainers for women rights in 5 districts of Balkh province by Hajj and endowments' scholars with cooperation of UNDP.
- Advertising the importance of literacy in 8 districts (Charkent, Kholm, Balkh, Dawlatabad) and supervising literacy projects in Mazar.
- Attending education sector sessions and talking about female students and teachers' problems
- Celebrating national and international events
- Preparing the ground for congregational prayers, in particulars Friday and Eid prayers for women in Balkh province.

- **Publication and Gender Training**

- Publication of 100 volumes of Barge Sabz journal for reflecting women activities.
- Holding round tables about unacceptable traditions
- Holding conferences about women and security in Mazar
- Holding Monitoring and evaluation workshop for female employees with help of UNDP
- Holding the ceremony for 25th of November (international day of elimination of violence against women) with cooperation of UNICEF, UNDP, UNHCR and participation of 300 people from government, private sector, council and Olama in Mazar.
- Two weeks campaign for elimination of violence against women at the level of districts.

- **Capacity Building for Women**

- Project management cycle, filing, monitoring, and work law training for department's staff.
- Holding educational meetings for the purpose of planning with directorates of education and gender.

- Cooperation in proposal writing training for department's staff with cooperation of Asia Foundation, USAID and UNDP.
- English and computer courses with cooperation of AIMZ.
- **Percentage of women in administrative offices**
 - The role and presence of women in Balkh province is good and women work without peacefully in offices
 - There are 4523 female teachers
 - 40% of girls are in the public university of Balkh
 - 42% of girls are in public schools
 - Clinics exist in remote areas and of each 5 health care staff two are female
 - Establishment of cultural centers of girls by the names of Partaw and Par
- **Achievements:**
 - election of female representatives in parliament and provincial council
 - establishment of women councils in all districts and villages
 - literacy courses for illiterate women
 - inclusion of gender issues in provincial development plan
 - construction of educational centers for women
 - implementation of economic projects for women
 - helpful activities of Human Rights Commission and Civil Society for women
 - active participation of women in society
 - capacity building projects for women
- **Challenges and Problems**
 - illiteracy
 - economic poverty
 - cultural poverty
 - women unemployment
 - lack of awareness of law
 - dominance of unacceptable traditions in society
 - Lack of coordination among government, NGOs and civil society.

It is hoped that both donors and civil society institutions pay attention to these problems and challenges.