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WHERE WE WORK

Women for Afghan Women’s (WAW’s) expansive programs now extend to 24 of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces, with WAW operating 32 protection centers in 16 of these provinces. In the United States, WAW runs a bustling community center in New York City, with concerted advocacy efforts in Washington, DC, and phone and online services provided to clients across the continent.
AFGHANISTAN

Provinces with centers (and other programs)

Provinces with programs

THE UNITED STATES

States where WAW assisted clients in 2019
Dear WAW Friends,

2019 was a challenging year for Afghanistan and for Women for Afghan Women (WAW). It seemed like every day, Afghanistan was making headlines. Many communities are less safe now than they have been for years—making our work even more difficult to do. **In spite of it all, we persevere.**

In fact, WAW launched new programs and served more women and families than ever before. Some of our cases continue to be extreme. Clients come to WAW with their lives in danger and suffering the most severe injuries due to violence.

But, our staff amazes me everyday. They show up even when their own lives are at risk.

Because of the urgency and challenges this year, we added peacebuilding work to our already very full plates. We conducted an awareness campaign around the inclusion of women in peacebuilding that reached 22,000+ people. We surveyed 6,000+ people with fascinating results (see why in this report).

Afghans want peace—and they want women’s rights. We will continue to do what we can to help Afghanistan achieve the kind of peace it envisions.

Most importantly, we will continue to lift women and girls out of violent and oppressive situations, and provide them with all they need to achieve the lives they deserve.

Thank you for staying with us through this very difficult yet rewarding journey. **Afghan women are strong—and we will never go back.**

Please continue to engage and support us in any way you can. We need and appreciate you.

In solidarity,

Nafia Nasim

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“WAW launched new programs and served more women and families than ever before. Some of our cases continue to be extreme. Clients come to us with their lives in danger and suffering the most severe injuries due to violence.”
We saw more survivors coming forward, showing women are increasingly aware of their rights and overcoming stigma. For the first time in NY, WAW received cases of sexual assault, an issue that is a major taboo in the community and typically silenced.

In Afghanistan, we saw greater acceptance of women’s rights and WAW as an organization. We received positive reception and increased attendance in WAW public activities and referrals from government agencies and community members.

We successfully assisted our clients to secure jobs and start their own small businesses.

There were less cases of gender-based violence in Afghanistan, including forced and underage marriages and domestic violence, based on WAW cases and Afghan government data. And less Afghan children nationwide suffered psychologically, based on a Ministry of Public Health survey.

In Afghanistan, WAW’s advocacy and counseling services help female survivors of gender-based violence to seek justice. Our clients can request WAW’s mediation with their immediate and extended family members. In cases where mediation is not a viable option, WAW’s lawyers help our clients pursue their grievances through the Afghan judicial system, where they can apply for divorce, seek legal protection, and/or hold their perpetuator(s) accountable under the law for their acts of violence.

In collaboration with other women’s rights organizations, WAW successfully helped to stop the practice of virginity tests in every clinic and hospital in Afghanistan without the authorization of a competent court. The Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission, WAW, and other women’s rights organizations continue to advocate for the unconditional ban of virginity tests in the country.
Since WAW’s founding in 2001, we have positively impacted the lives of OVER 1.3 MILLION women, children, refugees, immigrants, and families.

In addition to this, we launched new programs in 2019 thanks to you!

In Afghanistan, we now have:

• A peacebuilding program to help ensure women’s voices are included in Afghanistan’s peace process,
• #ByHerSide, providing medical assistance for survivors of violence and low-income pregnant women,
• Mobile WAW centers to reach displaced persons and refugees, and
• Full undergraduate scholarships for Afghan students to attend the American University in Beirut (AUB), in partnership with the AUB’s Education for Leadership in Crisis Scholarship program (ELC).

In the United States, our New York Community Center launched:

• A senior program for older Afghan women to find community and healing, and
• Family Nights held in partnership with local mosques to promote healthy families and prevent domestic violence.
Women for Afghan Women will work to protect women’s rights—no matter what. We are proud of what we achieved this year and what’s to come, and it is all possible because of YOUR commitment to our mission of #AfghanWomenStrong.

Please read on to share in this success and learn more about your life-saving impact.
“Imagine that you are a seven-year-old girl and you are being made to do things that you don’t want to do. This was my situation eleven long years ago… Let me tell you my story.”

My name is Laila. I am from Afghanistan.

I was seven years old when my real mother put me into prostitution for money. I could not spend my childhood like other children. I was not allowed to go to school. I could not wear a school uniform, and there was no one to give me a pen. Instead of a pen, my mother, brother, and stepfather slapped and forced me to go out and be with strange men so that I could bring back money for them. I was beaten very badly if I did not obey them. There was no one to support me or to help me get out of the terrible life I was living.

I felt hopeless. I thought everything in my life was finished and there was nothing to look forward to. But I was wrong. After my mother went to prison, Women for Afghan Women (WAW) took me to one of their Children’s Support Centers. I was scared of men and women. I was scared of men because of my brother and stepfather, and I was scared of women because of my own mother.

But at WAW, the staff and counsellors helped me. They helped me go to school, taught me how to love people, and how to smile. WAW adopted me and gave me the love of a mother and family that I never got from my own. They helped me with my studies, sent me to English classes, and helped me stand on my own feet.”

When Laila’s mother was released from prison, she no longer felt safe. She was constantly afraid that her mother would come after her and bring her harm. For her safety, WAW successfully enrolled Laila at a top high school in India where she went on to receive a full scholarship and graduated with honors.

In pursuit of her dreams of becoming a journalist, Laila recently completed her undergraduate journalism degree at one of the best universities in India.

Today, this daughter of WAW is applying for internships and plans to complete another year of studies.
3,013 people who suffered a human rights violation received legal representation, family counseling, and mediation through one of our 12 Family Guidance Centers (FGCs). Those who needed more intensive support were served through WAW’s safe shelters.

We launched our first FGC in 2007 after a needs assessment, conducted by WAW staff, showed the incredible number of Afghan women and girls who endured violence and abuse. They did not have anywhere to turn to, and the Afghan government did not have the capacity to address these cases.

WAW, in partnership with the Afghan Ministry of Women’s Affairs, continues this FGC program to provide survivors of abuse and violence with safe havens. In all the provinces where WAW has FGCs, we are the only safe refuge for women and girls.

VISION FORWARD: We want to further increase the number of community leaders, law enforcement professionals, and family members who consider WAW a trusted resource for responding to cases of violence against women.
Women who are in danger are admitted to WAW’s women’s centers (Women Protection Centers and Transitional Houses). A second background check is conducted before they are transferred to protect the safety of other clients and the confidential location of our women’s centers.

At our women’s centers, they are provided with safe shelter, protection, and can participate in literacy classes, life skills courses, and vocational skills training.

Cases are resolved through family mediation and counseling and/or through legal intervention. We often provide both to clients.

When cases need to involve family members, through interviews and family mediations, these proceedings are all conducted in the FGC to keep the location of our women’s centers confidential and ensure our clients’ safety.

Clients are referred to our FGCs by government and law enforcement agencies, family or community members, and self-referrals.

At the FGC, a primary investigation is conducted to obtain more information about clients and their case.

WAW’s Family Guidance Center (FGC) System

Provinces with Family Guidance Centers

AFGHANISTAN

WAW’S FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTER (FGC) SYSTEM

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1,904 women and 578 of their children (2,482 in total) received safe shelter, legal support, group and individual counseling, family mediation, courses on life skills, literacy, and vocational training, and assistance to safely go back and live in their communities.

Recognizing that women and girls who come to our FGCs are often escaping life-threatening and dangerous situations and have nowhere safe to go—WAW opened 12 Women’s Protection Centers (WPCs) to provide confidential, safe shelter to endangered clients and their children until their cases are resolved.

While at the WPCs, WAW provides opportunities for women to improve their overall well-being and to create opportunities. We make sure that they are physically and mentally healthy and are able to live the lives they choose after they leave the center. They attend skills-building classes that will allow them to become self-sufficient.

Women who do choose to go back to their families are reintegrated only after their families sign a legally binding contract to protect our clients’ rights and ensure no harm falls to them. **WAW follows-up with every woman for up to one year after she leaves the center to make sure she is safe.**

**VISION FORWARD:** We want to provide financial assistance to women and girls who leave our WPCs to further support their self-sufficiency. Most women who leave the centers face great obstacles in rebuilding their lives.
A few years ago, FARAH’S family married off her sister to a member of the Taliban. Not long after, they promised Farah to his brother. The idea of the marriage terrified her, and she ran away. Soon after, she was connected to WAW and one of our Women’s Protection Centers. She received safe shelter, clean clothes, and bedding. She was also enrolled in regular counseling, literacy classes, vocational classes, and life skills instruction. The goal was to prepare her for independent living and self-reliance.

At first, she felt uncomfortable. She was from a very remote area living under Taliban rule. New places and freedoms made her panic.

However, with attentive services, Farah was able to reimagine life. She tried mediation and counseling with her family, but never felt assured they would protect and support her. Instead, now, she is focused on a bright future. Farah will stay at WAW’s Women’s Protection Center until she can stand strong on her own.
387 girls and boys, ages 5 to 18, received safe shelter, nurturing care, stability, skills-building workshops, and education while their mothers were in prison. They regularly visited their mothers (when safe/feasible) and participated in cultural and recreational activities. Our psychologists provided counseling sessions for all children, most of whom had past trauma.

WAW’s 4 Children’s Support Centers (CSCs) are the only program of its kind in Afghanistan. We created this program after finding out that children were forced to live with their mothers in prison because there was nowhere else for them to go. Children in WAW’s CSCs are enrolled at the request of their mothers or guardians.

Though most children have never been to school before arriving at WAW’s CSCs, many quickly rise to the top of their class.

WAW also advocates for children who remain with their mothers in prison to improve their living conditions, and supports reunification of families. We conduct education sessions for prison officials and imprisoned mothers to educate them about children’s rights and our services. We also offer parenting classes to prepare mothers for visits with their children and their eventual reunification.

VISION FORWARD: We are working toward a day when no child over the age of 5 is in prison. WAW is working with Afghan government officials to expand the CSC program and reach all of Afghanistan’s prisons. We are also working to create a scholarship program for CSC children who pursue college.
BECAUSE OF WAW

95%

of children of Afghan women prisoners are no longer incarcerated with their mothers.

We are working towards a day when no child is in prison with their mothers.

**BAREEN** has seven siblings. They were all living in a poor and remote district. Her father was mentally challenged and her mother cleaned homes for a living. One day, her father arranged for Bareen’s older sister to marry a man in the community, against her will, in exchange for money.

For two years, Bareen’s sister endured abuse from her husband. Eventually she ran away. She was found, arrested, and imprisoned. The family accused Bareen’s mother of helping her daughter run away, and she too was imprisoned.

At that time, the children were sent to prison with their mother because no one else was willing or capable of caring for them. The prison was awful. There was violence between the women, little food to eat, and nothing for the children to do.

WAW came and shared information about our Children’s Support Centers, and that is when Bareen’s life changed. Her mother enrolled her and her younger sisters, and they were relieved to have access to new clothes, comfortable beds, a playground, delicious food, and computer classes. The children were enrolled in school and tutored with accelerated classes within the center.

Bareen is now in fourth grade and flourishing. Her family, before the Children’s Support Centers, was illiterate. Now, she and her sisters can read. Bareen wants to continue her education for many years and has dreams of becoming a doctor.
137 women and girls who were previously in prison, and their children, received safe shelter, legal support, family mediation, counseling, skill-building courses, and assistance to safely live in their communities.

Upon leaving prison, most women end up on the street, unable to return to their families for fear of violence and without any job prospects. Many are forced to turn to begging or prostitution to survive. They become the victims of even more violence and exploitation.

WAW’s 3 Transitional Houses aim to restore dignity and safety to one of the most marginalized and underserved segments of the Afghan population, previously imprisoned women.

We have provided hundreds of women and their children with a safe place and opportunities for a fresh start. At the Transitional House, women have individualized plans to prepare them for life outside of prison, including making sure all legal obstacles are cleared. They take courses to learn a vocation so that they may live a dignified, independent life.

Many successfully learn a skill and start earning income while at the Transitional Houses. WAW provides supplies and connects them with local businesses to buy their products or provide employment—not only while at the Transitional House but also when they leave for up to a year.
DAMSA was forced by her family to marry a man who, along with her in-laws, constantly abused her. Damsa went to her family for help, but they ignored her pleas in order to safeguard their standing in the community, as having a divorced daughter would “shame” them. One night, after a particularly violent altercation, Damsa’s in-laws called the police, blaming her for the incident. She was taken into custody for eight days. After an investigation, however, the police concluded that Damsa was the victim, not the perpetrator, and referred her case to WAW.

After arriving at WAW, Damsa was given a clean bed and new clothes. Because of the abuse she had experienced, this gesture of respect meant so much to her. She was then enrolled in vocational, life-skills, and literacy classes, as well as education about women’s rights in Islam.

With support from one of WAW’s defense lawyers, Damsa also succeeded in obtaining a legal separation from her husband. She received medical care and counseling sessions to provide her with comprehensive physical, emotional, and psychological support. Today, Damsa is on a path of recovery with hope for a brighter future.

VISION FORWARD:
We want to create additional partnerships to sell women-made products and employ formerly imprisoned women. We believe this will go a long way to ensure their safety as they rebuild new lives after prison.
23 women and 11 children (34 in total) received long-term shelter, legal support, family mediation, courses on life skills, literacy, and vocational training, and assistance to safely go back to their communities at our **Halfway House in Kabul**.

Our Halfway House is a safe haven that serves women and girls transitioning out of our women’s centers with nowhere to go. Many of these women and girls—even if their cases have been resolved—often carry the stigma associated with divorce, abuse, or running away. They have persistent threats to their lives and are at risk of being murdered as their relatives often vow to kill them for allegedly “shaming their family honor.”

Without a safe home or prospects for their future, these vulnerable women and girls would be forced to live on the streets and survive on their own. Instead, at our Halfway House, they participate in continued education, life skills and vocational training, and assistance with employment. They learn how to manage their finances and build their self-sufficiency. They leave the Halfway House when they are ready to live independent lives.

**VISION FORWARD:** We want to create more job opportunities for women leaving the Halfway House. We are building partnerships with private companies and local businesses. We also want to provide them with a financial package when they leave the Halfway House to ensure they have the resources to stay safe and work towards a fulfilling life.
In her teens, **ELAHA** was forced to marry a man who was addicted to drugs and emotionally and physically abusive. When she tried to leave him, he would threaten to kill her father.

For ten years, Elaha endured his humiliating and violent behavior. She also had three children with him, and felt she had to stay for them.

When she could take no more, she ran away and was referred to WAW. She started at our Women’s Protection Center where she received medical services, psychosocial support, literacy and vocational skills, and safe, comfortable living conditions. Additionally, WAW’s lawyers successfully obtained her legal separation from her husband.

Her family, however, would not accept her back or agree to protect and support her. Instead, Elaha stayed with WAW for several years, taking classes and building her self-reliance skills.

Although she continues to feel unsafe outside of WAW’s doors, she has now transitioned to our Halfway House with the goal of increasing her skills and independence.

Elaha is enrolled in school and is currently in the 8th grade. She is also taking intensive English, computer, and vocational training classes. She has dreams of one day being a defense lawyer and helping women just like her.
WOMEN’S RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS TRAININGS

34,463 Afghans, including the general public, religious leaders, government officials, police and other law enforcement personnel, students, and other community members, leaders, and stakeholders were educated about women’s rights through 1,046 trainings conducted across the country. 969 of these trainings reached 14,481 men.

Our Women’s Rights ARE Human Rights Training program started as a response to low referrals to our women’s centers (despite very high need) at the beginning of our work. WAW sent staff members to speak at schools and with community leaders to raise awareness about the challenges and abuse that women and girls face, and the services we provide. Early results showed that after this training program was launched, referrals increased by 160%.

WAW has since replicated the program within 10 provinces across Afghanistan, which has doubled our impact in these provinces and planted the seeds for cultural change.

Our trainings are tailored to address specific community concerns. Each of WAW’s provincial offices develops its own training materials to address the unique needs of their local communities.

Because most of our participants have little to no education, trainings materials are visual and easy to understand. They focus on women’s rights under Islam, the Elimination of Violence Against Women law, early/forced marriage, child marriage, and children’s rights.
WINNING SUPPORT FOR WOMEN’S RIGHTS

In Kabul, WAW conducted a women’s rights training for local leaders and community residents. At the beginning of the training, one leader shared that he used to shelter women and girls who were victims of violence in his home until their cases were resolved through jirga (community/family councils). When they left his home, he always felt worried about what would happen to them.

Once he learned about WAW and its women’s centers, he began bringing women and girls in need to WAW. He shared that he knew their cases would be carefully and properly handled—and this gave him peace of mind. He no longer has the sole responsibility of protecting his community. He now has a resource he knows and trusts.

Sharing this in front of the community was a positive change—it was an endorsement and a significant step forward in building community trust.

WAW also conducts trainings for law enforcement and social service professionals on how to assist women and families in need.

Before our trainings, police would take 5-6 hours to respond and investigate a report of gender-based violence. Sometimes they would keep survivors in the police station overnight before responding. During WAW’s trainings, law enforcement officials learn better ways to respond to cases and they become familiar with WAW’s programs, which increases referrals.

VISION FORWARD: We plan to continue trainings in hard-to-reach communities that often have more cases of gender-based violence. There are many security risks but WAW continues this important work.
Refugee returnees and internally displaced families often end up in camps or make-shift communities where conditions are volatile and women are at great risk of abuse, harassment, and assault. WAW is present in these areas to provide women’s rights training and access to basic needs.
When Larmina was 16 years old, she was forced by her brother to marry a 40 year old man. She had to move where her husband lived, a very remote district with difficult living conditions. Over time, she had four children.

In late 2019, the Afghan National Army came into her district for a “clean-up operation,” which, unfortunately, led to Larmina and her family’s displacement to a small remote village.

Now 26 years old, and with a sick, bedridden husband, Larmina and her family pitched a tent in desert conditions without any water, electricity, and limited supplies.

After conducting monitoring services to identify internally displaced persons, WAW found Larmina and brought her case to the UNHCR. Through our project, she received cash assistance and used the money to start a shop in the village.

She is now the only shopkeeper in the village and earns enough to provide for her entire family. Larmina is relied on by the whole community for the goods she sells because the next closest market is nine miles away.

“I am so happy for the chance to lead a decent life while at the same time being able to take care of my family and provide a critical service to my community.” - Larmina
2,682 women and girls received critical health services, including maternity healthcare, medical treatment and surgery for survivors of violence, and protection and shelter for survivors whose lives were at risk. **WAW’s new #ByHerSide program is offered in 14 provinces in Afghanistan.**

Over the years, WAW has received cases where women and girls were abused so horribly that they needed lifesaving, emergency, and extensive medical care. We also had pregnant women in our women’s centers that needed maternity care. We responded to these cases as they came to our attention.

Thanks to generous funders, in 2019, WAW formalized this service as the #ByHerSide program. Women, girls, and unborn children who are most at risk received proper medical care. WAW also arranged shelter, rescue, transportation, and accompanied clients to medical appointments or surgeries to ensure their safety and recovery. We conducted a wide public awareness campaign throughout the 14 provinces to make sure we reached even the remotest areas.

**Lives are saved everyday thanks to this program.**

**VISION FORWARD:** We want to fully fund this program so it can continue to ensure women and girls receive the critical care they require. We continue to strengthen our partnerships and public awareness campaign to reach all Afghan women and girls in the country.
ADEELA was a 17-year-old young woman given to a man in baad (transactional) marriage to compensate for a family member’s crime. In her forced marriage, Adeela was routinely starved, tortured, and beaten. She was burned with a hot iron and boiling water, and beaten with sticks.

As a result of her torture and physical abuse, she developed an infection in her skin and muscles. By the time Adeela reached WAW, her injuries were so grave that she needed life-saving medical services and surgery to stabilize her condition.

Initial assessments indicated she may need to amputate her legs to survive. But, the care she received through our #ByHerSide program saved her limbs and she has begun to heal.

However, Adeela still suffers from posttraumatic stress disorder from the torture she endured. WAW caseworkers are providing intensive support services and staying by her side as she recovers.

Currently, the Afghan government has partnered with WAW to fully cover Adeela’s treatment. Her doctors are hopeful she will walk again and will be stronger than before.

16 young Afghan women received full-ride undergraduate scholarships to the American University of Beirut (AUB) through the Education for Leadership in Crisis program. These gifted young women are now in Beirut getting their undergraduate degrees.

WAW works closely with AUB to raise awareness and assist accomplished students from underprivileged and marginalized backgrounds all over Afghanistan to apply to this program.

This life-changing, merit-based program is designed around AUB’s strong liberal arts foundation, with an emphasis on developing the leadership skills of students who live and are expected to return to areas in long-term crises. AUB is known for its high academic standards and the high demand for its graduates in all disciplines.

“My parents never dreamed that they could send me to university, much less that I would go abroad to study at a world-class university like the AUB. For me, it is a dream come true. This program has changed my life.” – ELC 2019 scholar
More than **22,000** Afghans and **297** WAW staff participated in training workshops and awareness activities on Afghanistan’s peace process and the importance of including women in all stages of peacebuilding. We also conducted **6,000+ surveys** to really understand what kind of peace Afghans want and shared the results with high-level Afghan government officials. Importantly, **500 Afghan women leaders** received in-depth training on amplifying and including Afghan women’s voices in the country’s ongoing peace process with the Taliban.

WAW made sure that this program’s participants were diverse and strategic stakeholders. We believe that sustainable peace is only possible with the meaningful inclusion of women and recognition of the tremendous gains made by the Afghan people.

**WE WILL NEVER GO BACK.**

**VISION FORWARD:** We will conduct a nationwide public awareness campaign on peace in Afghanistan with peacebuilding trainings and public forums with diverse groups. In-depth trainings will be offered to **500 additional Afghan women leaders**. Our goal is to reach all provinces and gather diverse Afghans’ views on the peace they desire. We will continue our advocacy and outreach with the Afghan government to ensure they are responsive to the Afghan people, including marginalized groups.

**WOMEN AND PEACEBUILDING PROGRAM STAKEHOLDERS**

- Officials from Afghan government ministries • The Afghan Parliament • Provincial Councils
- Local and International Charities • Ulamas (organization of Islamic scholars) • Human Rights Defenders • Elders • Youth • Community Leaders
WHAT KIND OF PEACE DO AFGHANS WANT?

We surveyed **6,014 Afghans across 10 provinces** about the prospect of peace with the Taliban. **2,944 women** and **3,070 men** participated from the provinces of Badakhshan, Takhar, Kunduz, Balkh, Saripul, Faryab, Kabul, Nangarhar, Kunar, and Kapisa.

Here are the results that show what kind of peace Afghans really want:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Ratio of Surveyed Women &amp; Men</th>
<th>Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>20-29</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30-39</td>
<td></td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 &amp; Up</td>
<td></td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**91%** identified women's rights, women's education, and/or employment as the most important issues to address in the Afghan peace process. **78%** want either the Afghan government or the Afghan people to negotiate directly with the Taliban to end the current conflict. **74%** identified the Afghan national security forces as the legitimate defenders of Afghanistan's national security and its people. **65%** do not want the Taliban to serve in government and **72%** do not want the Taliban to serve in the security or defense forces.
WAW’s NYCC services also included assistance with public benefits, safety planning and support for domestic violence survivors and assault, immigration, education, job placement, interpretation/translation, accompaniment to appointments, and other needs.

These services are highly needed because many immigrant families are unable to access basic needs nor receive assistance due to language and cultural barriers. 80-90% of our clients have little to no education and do not speak English. This, in addition to a new culture and way of life, makes navigating daily life very difficult.

What’s more, immigrant women struggle with domestic violence and isolation, while living in poverty and limited opportunities to get out of these difficult circumstances.

We strive to get families out of poverty and to improve their quality of life.

WAW’s case management and legal support program remains the only culturally sensitive and linguistically competent program able to serve the needs of the NY Afghan population, in addition to South Asian, Muslim, and other immigrant groups. We provide services in 6 languages: Dari/Farsi, Pashto, Urdu, Hindi, Spanish, and English.

We want to increase the capacity of this program so we can fully meet community needs. We will continue our outreach to promote language access, women’s rights, healthy relationships, and change the community culture towards gender equity.
LIZA came to the United States (US) in 2019, already from a verbally and psychologically abusive marriage of two years. Her husband wanted her to stop going to college and live with his family in Afghanistan while he moved back to New York. He would send her videos of himself cutting his wrists and threatened to kill himself if she did not listen. He even threatened to never bring her to the US and harm her and her family.

Despite all the abuse and threats, she continued her studies and she and her family made a very brave decision to send her to the US. When she arrived in New York, she was afraid for her safety and reported her situation to the police at the airport. Liza was connected to WAW, and our caseworker began to find her a safe place to stay in the city.

Within three months, WAW’s case management and legal team obtained her permanent resident card, social security card, and ensured her address was secure to make sure none of her information is shared with her husband, who is her petitioner and abuser.

Additionally, WAW’s caseworker connected her to secure housing and employment opportunities. She is working with a lawyer to get a divorce and move on with her life. Liza wants to become a doctor.

Thanks to the assistance she received from WAW and partner organizations, Liza is happy to be free from her abusive relationship, and hopeful for her new life in NYC.

“I am so happy for the chance to lead a decent life while at the same time being able to take care of my family and provide a critical service to my community.” - Liza
Up to 90% of women who come to WAW have never been to school or held a job. They cannot read or write in their own language, and do not speak English. Many do not know how to take public transportation and cannot do daily transactions in English. This isolates and prevents them from participating in community life. For survivors of domestic violence, these limitations keep them from getting out of their abusive situations.

As a result of our education and economic empowerment programs, women we serve successfully and confidently lead more fulfilling lives—whether it is finding jobs for the first time, getting around and doing things on their own, understanding their worth, or finally getting out of their abusive situations.

117 women participated in our English as a Second Language (ESL) classes, US citizenship exam preparation, and driving exam preparation classes. 19 of these students applied for US citizenship with an 89% success rate.

85 women were connected to part-time and full-time jobs, paying minimum wage or better.

9 survivors of domestic violence participated in our new vocational sewing classes to build their self-sufficiency and be in community in a safe space.

66 women participated in Women’s Circle sessions and learned about affordable housing in NYC, 2020 Census, the new public charge rule for immigration, physical and mental health, medical emergencies and first aid basics, and addressing sexual assault in the home.
At WAW, ROYA found the strength and support to leave an abusive relationship and rebuild a better life for her and her children. Roya has been an ESL student for years but never disclosed her domestic violence situation to WAW.

However, in September, she was beaten so brutally by her husband that she had to go to the hospital. The hospital contacted WAW, and she was immediately taken to family court. WAW’s caseworker was by her side as she navigated through the court system to get a temporary order of protection and file a case of domestic violence against her husband.

Roya endured emotional, psychological, and financial abuse in front of her children for 30 years. She was isolated and not allowed to go to school or work, except for attending classes at WAW where she learned English.

As Roya took additional actions to leave her husband, his family threatened to harm her family back in Afghanistan. Since his family could realize this threat easily, Roya decided not to go to court. However, she has refused to go back to him and has filed for divorce and child support.

Though Roya was kept isolated and disempowered, she found the strength to support her family. With WAW’s assistance, she is currently taking a course to become a certified home health aide and studying to get her driver’s license. Roya is getting counseling and shares that her focus now is to find healing for herself and her children.

VISION FORWARD:
We will continue our life-changing education and skills-building programs and find new ways to uplift survivors of domestic violence. We are especially focused on growing our economic empowerment work with the goal of connecting double the number of women to jobs so they can help their families live better.
Muslim youth participated in leadership development, college and career readiness, and workshops on racism, gender, self-expression, bullying, healthy relationships, and other programs at WAW’s NYCC in 2019.

- **40** girls aged 10-15 participated in the Girls Leadership Program.
- **23** boys aged 10-15 participated in the Boys Leadership Program.
- **26** young women and **17** young men aged 16-20 participated in Afghan Youth Rising.
- **41** children participated in our Homework Help program with 100% passing their state exams.

70% of participants were Afghan and 30% were from other Muslim immigrant groups.

Our youth programming started when parents asked us to help their children, most of whom were new to this country, because they were struggling in school. We also found that many of the newly arrived families were following practices harmful to young women, such as forced or underage marriage and being pulled out of school. Boys were raised to treat girls as inferior to them.

WAW launched its leadership programs to address these issues by educating youth on women’s and human rights and the impact of gender inequity. We also encourage youth to pursue their own paths in life by making sure they are ready for college and are aware of diverse career and life options.

Our culturally sensitive approach ensures none of our participants are taken out of our programs.

As a result, no youth have been pulled out of school and no girls have been forced to marry despite being at risk.
FARIHA, 19 years old, and SALMA, 21 years old, are sisters who recently came to the US from Afghanistan. When WAW was called to assist the family, we learned that the sisters were depressed and refused to leave their house. They were traumatized from witnessing their brother’s murder back in Afghanistan. In addition, they were fearful of being forcibly married as their family had arranged marriages for them without their consent.

We also found out that they were receiving counseling in English, however, neither of them spoke or understood English.

We enrolled Salma and Fariha to our Afghan Youth Rising program. A few days before starting the program, Salma attempted suicide—fortunately, she fully recovered.

Today, Fariha and Salma are learning English. They take public transportation. They are learning about their rights and new skills, like identifying healthy relationships, active communication, and building their resumes. They have never missed a day of programs at WAW.

We also connected them to an Urdu-speaking mental health professional to receive counseling in a language they speak and understand.

They have safety plans to prevent their arranged marriages. With our support, they are working on being financially independent, getting an education, and obtaining their US citizenships. Their parents have agreed to hold off on their marriages until Fariha and Salma have their US passports.

The sisters regularly tell WAW that they feel happy when they come to our programs because it is a place where they can make friends and build confidence in themselves.
15 women, ages 55 and above, participated in WAW’s new senior support and community program. Everyone had near-perfect attendance.

This program was created after seniors in the community shared that they feel lonely and isolated. They live with their families but are often alone at home during the day. Because they do not speak English well and are older, they are too intimidated and overwhelmed to travel far. And while they are curious and interested in NYC’s great landmarks and cultural offerings, they do not feel comfortable venturing out on their own.

Seniors also expressed the desire to have a safe space to be in community with each other. They also wanted to have information sessions and screenings related to their health issues and practice exercises appropriate for seniors, like yoga.

In addition, the program discusses women’s rights and mental health practices because many of the seniors who come to WAW face difficulty at home. Some still experience the trauma of obeying their families’ wishes when they were forced into marriage when they were girls. Many have little education because their families deemed that to be unimportant.

WAW’s seniors support program addresses all of these needs.

**WAW offers weekly sessions where senior program participants have:**

- Yoga and activities that promote an active lifestyle.
- Communal lunch to promote community.
- Movie screenings focused on cultural and social issues with discussions afterward to foster community and awareness of important issues.
- Health talks and screenings to promote healthy living.
- Trips to local institutions to promote community, connection with the larger NYC community, and decrease feelings of isolation.
As an 11-year old girl living in Afghanistan, AFROOZ’S parents forced her to marry an older man who paid a large dowry because he wanted a second wife to bear him a son (his first marriage produced no children). She was forced to drink “medicines” to make her fertile and even forced to lay down in her in-laws’ clay oven to keep her body temperature warm and optimal for bearing a son. In the end, she never did get pregnant (she later learned that a doctor had already diagnosed her husband to be infertile before they were married).

While in her late twenties, her husband died, and she remarried to an Afghan man living in the US. She did not experience much happiness in her new marriage either. Her stepchildren were abusive and her husband was controlling. Despite these difficulties, she began to make a name for herself locally as an excellent baker and started to sell her breads and treats regularly. Her family’s cruelty towards her decreased as her income increased, and as a result, her suffering waned. Many years later, her second husband passed away.

Now, Afrooz lives on her own and enjoys her independence. She continues to cater her treats. She attends WAW’s programs regularly and is making friends. Before WAW, she never spoke to anyone about her life and the many difficulties she has had to face. But at WAW, for the first time, Afrooz has found support, community, and now she is on her path to healing.

VISION FORWARD:
We want to expand this program to reach more seniors in the community, including separate sessions for men.
WHAT WE ACHIEVED IN 2019

Despite the many gains made and ongoing efforts, Afghan women’s rights remain at risk. We at WAW remain committed to fighting for the protection of Afghan women and girls.

WAW helps create and organize a coalition of civil society organizations, experts, diplomats, former officials from the U.S. Departments of State and Defense to advocate for and prepare women for participation in the Afghanistan peace process.

WAW is elected to serve as Chair of the US Civil Society Working Group (CSWG) on Women, Peace, and Security, and Co-chair of the Coalition of Gender Coalitions, enabling WAW to continue to position Afghanistan as a priority issue on Capitol Hill.

Along with Civil Society Coalition on the Afghan Peace Process, WAW successfully schedules a U.S. Senate hearing on women's inclusion in the Afghan peace process as a critical strategy to safeguarding advancements for women in the country.

WAW helps draft and advocate for the Accountability for Sexual and Gender-based Violence as a Tool in Conflict Act, introduced by the US Congress.
WAW presents recommendations to the Departments of Defense and State and USAID for their implementation plans for the U.S. National Strategy on Women, Peace, and Security. Afghanistan will be the test case for implementation of the new Strategy.

Worked with members of the US Armed Services and Appropriations Committees to ensure the defense budget includes funding specifically for Afghan Women, including for Afghan female security members, as well as peacebuilders.

WAW helped craft and attain support for Afghan women’s inclusion in the Negotiations Act, Global Fragility Act, the Safe from the Start Act—all legislation intended to empower and protect Afghan women and girls.
## WOMEN FOR AFGHAN WOMEN, INC
### COMBINED STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES (UNAUDITED)

**January 1 - December 31, 2019**

### Revenue Sources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>Amount ($)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>US Federal/State/City Government Grants (note 1)</td>
<td>1,533,683</td>
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<tr>
<td>International Development Agencies (note 2)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foundation Grants - Restricted (note 3)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Foundation Grants - Unrestricted (note 3)</td>
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<td>United Nations Agencies (note 4)</td>
<td>1,409,574</td>
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<tr>
<td>Non-US Government Aid (note 5)</td>
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<td>Contributions/Donations (note 6)</td>
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<td><strong>TOTAL REVENUE</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,505,847</strong></td>
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### Expenses

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<th>Category</th>
<th>Amount ($)</th>
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<tr>
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<td>Management &amp; General</td>
<td>1,058,887</td>
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<tr>
<td>Fundraising</td>
<td>529,443</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL EXPENSES</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,824,055</strong></td>
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</table>

**REVENUE LESS EXPENSES**  

**($318,208)**

### NOTES

1. Includes reimbursed grants from the Department of State (INL); Department of Justice Office on Violence Against Women (OVW); US Customs and Immigration Services (USCIS); New York City Council.
2. Includes reimbursed grants from Colombo Plan Secretariat; Oxfam.
3. Includes restricted and unrestricted grants from foundations.
4. Includes reimbursable grants from United Nations Women (UN Women) and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR).
5. Includes grants from the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA).
6. General donations, fundraisers, contributions.
WOMEN FOR AFGHAN WOMEN, INC  
COMBINED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION  
(BALANCE SHEET) - UNAUDITED  
January 1 - December 31, 2019  

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Account</th>
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<td>Receivable</td>
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<td>Prepaid Expenses</td>
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<td>Security Deposit - Occupancy 2</td>
<td>$13,290</td>
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<tr>
<td>Equipment &amp; Furniture - Net</td>
<td>$8,123</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL ASSETS</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,247,108</strong></td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Liabilities</th>
<th>Amount</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Payables/ Deferred Revenue</td>
<td>$819,273</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total Liabilities</strong></td>
<td><strong>$819,273</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| **TOTAL NET ASSETS**           | **$1,427,835** |

| **TOTAL PAYABLES & NET ASSETS**| **2,247,108** |
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WAW’s life-saving and life-changing work would not be possible without the generous support of our donors.

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