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.

After our trainings, poor responses from the police decrease by around 60%. Our team has even had direct requests from local police chiefs to provide the training to their stations and districts.

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.