

*Report of the Training
Workshop on Leadership,
Media & Conflict Management
for Women in Afghanistan*

24-28 April 2004
Kabul, Afghanistan



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Management for Women in Afghanistan

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Ministry of Women's Affairs

Kabul, Afghanistan

United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)

Forward

There can be no long-term peace initiative without the active participation of women and girls in the planning, decision making and policy making. There also cannot be success in formal and non-formal peace processes without taking gender perspectives into account.

Women suffer most in conflict situations and bear the added burden for rebuilding societies that have been uprooted by conflict. When women's voices are heard and taken into account, critical priorities that would otherwise be left out of peace-building processes are often reflected in these operations.

Sustainable peace is contingent on the increasing presence of women in civilian and security components of peace keeping operations, as well as women's participation in community based involvement and ownership of reconstruction efforts. Support at all levels for women's participation in peace building contributes to society's efforts to recover from violent conflict.

UNFPA has responded in several ways to the Security Council resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security, adopted on 31 October 2000. UNFPA participated in the United Nations study on the impact of conflict on women and girls, the role of women in peace building, and the gender dimension of peace process and conflict resolution.

UNFPA organized a consultative group meeting in Bratislava in November 2001, to examine the impact of conflict on women and girls, and to formulate strategies and tools to ensure that reproductive health programmes accurately reflect the needs of this population segment, specifically by addressing them through a comprehensive, gender sensitive approach.

One of the important recommendations from the Bratislava meeting was the need for capacity building and empowerment of women's NGOs in peace building and conflict resolution. UNFPA organized a training workshop for participants from 18 conflict and post conflict situations. The workshop had two main objectives: to empower participants through skills development training, thereby enabling them to contribute more effectively to their conflict torn societies; and to formulate strategies and tools to ensure strong UNFPA to their empowerment.

The workshop on "Leadership and Media Training for Women", held in Afghanistan, was aimed at building the capacity of Afghan women, particularly in leadership and media skills and conflict resolution. This was a follow up to the Bratislava workshop.

It was a collaborative effort among the Culture, Gender and Human Rights Branch, the Humanitarian Response Unit, Asia and Pacific Division, and the UNFPA Country Office in Afghanistan. In their evaluation of the five-day training workshop, participants noted the importance and relevance of the training to their needs and requested more in-depth training in the future on the application of mainstreaming gender issues into policy and development programmes.

Kunio Waki
Deputy Executive Director
United Nations Population Fund
New York, September, 2004

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

ADRS	Afghanistan Development and Rehabilitation Services
AIL	Afghan Institute of Learning
CEDAW	United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women
GBTF	Gender Balance Task Force
IHRC	Independent Human Rights Commission
KEGME	Mediterranean Women's Studies Centre
NGO	Non-governmental organization
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund

I. INTRODUCTION

This report highlights activities of the “Training Workshop on Leadership, Media and Conflict Management for Women in Afghanistan”, held in Kabul, Afghanistan, 24-28 April 2004. The workshop was sponsored by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and organized by the Government of Afghanistan, Ministry of Women’s Affairs, and the local UNFPA office. Coordination was provided by the Mediterranean Women’s Studies Centre (KEGME), based in Athens, an organization that undertakes capacity-building training for women in conflict and post-conflict situations.

The workshop was the first follow-up to a workshop held in Bratislava, Slovakia, in November 2002. The current workshop was designed to address the challenges, noted at the earlier meeting, to helping women become leaders and finding solutions to the problems of their societies. The workshop was held over a five-day period to ensure sufficient time to explore issues raised earlier and to take account of new approaches emerging from discussions at this meeting. Three international consultants conducted the training: Lesley Abdela, Senior Partner, Eyecatcher Associates/Shevolution; Maria Hadjipavlou Trigeorgi, Cyprus University; and Candida Piercy, Director, Midas Training Solutions Ltd. The Programme for the workshop appears as annex 1.

The more than two dozen participants (including four men), included gender trainers, field workers on health issues and gender issues, nursing administrators and policy makers from the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and also from non-governmental organizations (NGOs): the Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL), the Afghanistan Development and Rehabilitation Services (ADRS) and the Independent Human Rights Commission (IHRC). The list of participants appears as annex 2.

II. OPENING SESSION

Keynote Speakers

The speakers at the opening session were the UNFPA Chief of Operations in Afghanistan, Ms. Maria Pia Dradi; UNFPA Gender Specialist, Culture, Gender and Human Rights Branch, Ms. Sahir Abdul Hadi; Trainer/facilitator Lesley Abdela, Senior Partner, Eyecatcher Associates/Shevolution; and, from the Government of Afghanistan, Her Excellency, the Minister of Women's Affairs, Habiba Sarabi; and Mr. Ghaznawi, Ministry of Education.

Ms. Maria Pia Dradi UNFPA Chief of Operations, Afghanistan

In her opening remarks, Ms. Dradi noted the workshop's purpose, that it was aimed at supporting women, especially in conflict and post-conflict situations. The event was held in Afghanistan as the first follow-up to a workshop, "Global Training on Capacity-Building for NGOs in Conflict and Reconstruction Situations", held in Bratislava, Slovakia, in November 2002.

Ms. Sahir Abdul-Hadi UNFPA Gender Specialist, Culture, Gender and Human Rights Branch

Ms. Abdul-Hadi said that cooperation between NGOs and government ministries is a cornerstone of modern democracy. NGOs are not just service providers; they play a crucial advocacy role, voicing the concerns and the needs of citizens to Governments. Working on issues such as reproductive health and education or on peace-building initiatives, NGOs can also provide Governments with valuable briefings on their activities, especially because they are usually working with the grass roots. Ms. Abdul-Hadi noted that UNFPA is a firm believer that cooperation and coordination between Government and civil society are essential to meet several challenges in a war-torn society. These include reaching the most vulnerable groups, ensuring a smooth transition from emergency services to long-term development and promoting the active participation of local men and women. For UNFPA, a top priority is saving women's lives and fostering their participation and empowerment.

Ms. Lesley Abdela
Senior Partner, Eyecatcher Associates/Shevolution
Trainer/facilitator

Ms. Abdela touched on topics to be dealt with in the workshop. She noted that mainstreaming gender was one of several highly practical topics to be covered in the five days of the workshop. She said that gender mainstreaming means the participation of women and men, both qualitatively and quantitatively, at every stage. Key words and concepts in gender mainstreaming are: representation; participation; access; distribution of resources; human rights; and norms, values and perceptions. Women are not a homogeneous category; the issues impinging on women are cross-cut by other factors affecting their status: marital status, including widowhood; parental background; religious group; ethnic minority/race; class and economic ranking; urban/rural residence and so on.

Her Excellency Habiba Sarabi
Minister of Women's Affairs, Government of Afghanistan

Her Excellency Habiba Sarabi, the Minister of Women's Affairs, in her opening remarks noted that "the workshop had underlined the problems and challenges of raising women to leadership positions and ways of tackling those problems." She identified two major challenges: that women's qualifications are lower than men's and that a male-dominated society cannot accept a women in a leadership position. The Minister added that the Government was creating a specific budget for gender in the Ministry. Over the next three years, she said, "we will be working to create gender units in every Ministry to maintain gender mainstreaming in every policy and strategy."

The Minister noted that she had been attending in the past few days one of the most important meetings for development in Afghanistan, the Afghanistan Development Forum. Strong commitments had been received from various donors at Forum. She remarked that these kinds of commitments, like this workshop, strengthen women, and that there was a need to conduct many capacity-building workshops like this one to empower Afghan women and achieve their goals and objectives.

The Minister thanked UNFPA for organizing the workshop and noted that this was a great opportunity for Afghan women to build their capacity. She remarked that UNFPA had assisted the Ministry of Women's Affairs through support for the rehabilitation of the Women's Vocational School and Centres and the building which is home for the Ministry now. Such support has an important impact on women's lives, she noted. The Constitution mentions that the upcoming Loya Jirga should include at least two women delegates from each province. This type of training workshop can play a constructive role in building the capacity of women to lead.

Mr. A. Ghaznawi
Ministry of Education

Mr. A. Ghaznawi illustrated the evolution of the educational status of women in Afghanistan by relating his experience. Some 50 years ago, when he was working in the Ghazni Department of Education, his youngest sister wanted to go to school, as did the family. But he soon realized that there were many girls like her who also wanted to go to school. He wrote an article for the press asking for the opening of a school for girls. It was very difficult to write about this at that time, because of the nature of the conservative society. Fortunately, the Government agreed to establish a school for girls, and the graduates of that school are now doctors, engineers, teachers and so on, serving in societies all over the world.

Mr. A. Ghaznawi remarked that much has to be done for women's education, to empower them. The new Constitution notes that 50 per cent of the society are women, and they must play their role in the society and take part in all areas, like men. When a woman is educated, a family is educated.

III. WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES

Day One

Aims of the Training and Introduction of Participants

The trainers introduced participants to the aims of the training and to the workshop values. The trainers invited participants to form a community for the five days in which they would be working together, emphasizing the impact of participation and interaction as well as sharing experiences. The trainers explained the benefits of learning from one another's experiences as well as creating new ideas and solutions together to guide the work.

Before participants introduced themselves, they were given tips on how to prepare a succinct introduction. Participants, who ranged in age from a 17-year-old young woman to a woman with 25 years of work experience, then introduced themselves and revealed the diversity of their experience, talents and resources. (See List of Participants, annex 2.)

Setting the Workshop Agenda

The participants worked together, in groups of about six, to define their expectations of the workshop and their personal objectives. This exercise highlighted the priority given by participants to exploring an understanding of gender issues and how to present those issues in the Afghan context. Gender was one of the leading issues identified by the participants in a pre-workshop questionnaire they had been asked to complete. The questions raised were along the lines of:

- What is gender?
- What is the role of gender?
- How can we introduce gender to the people in our country and small communities?
- How can we bring about changes in our culture with regard to gender?

Participants noted that they expected to obtain at the workshop some positive points about conflict resolution and its relation to their problems.

Several participants wanted to know about the methodology of training. The trainers encouraged participants who needed additional information about the training methodology to raise questions at any time during the five days of the training

Setting Ground Rules

As a next step, the participants drew up a list of ground rules for the meeting. Working in small groups, the participants suggested a variety of useful rules. The rules could be practical or deal with the attitude of participants. Their suggestions included the following:

- Listening to what each person had to say and not talking to others when someone was speaking to the group;
- Turning off mobile phones;
- Speaking concisely and refraining from making speeches;
- Starting on time in the morning and returning promptly from tea and lunch breaks; and
- Respecting participants with views different from their own.

Sex versus Gender

The module on sex versus gender was designed to ensure that participants learned the concepts of “gender” versus “sex” in modern usage. Many participants had stated that one of their objectives was to gain a clear understanding of what is meant by gender and what the difference is between gender and sex in current usage. At the end of the module, as a way of reinforcing the learning points, participants were quizzed on various statements and asked to identify which referred to gender and which referred to sex.

Gender Awareness

The module on gender awareness explored the differences in the experiences of men and women, with the trainer citing examples of her experience in Cyprus. At the end of this session, one of the participants said: “Until now, I had thought that inequality between men and women existed only in Afghanistan.”

Concepts introduced during this session covered many aspects of inequality between men and women, such as divisions of power, labour and decision-making. The trainer explained that because gender is a social construct, changes take place over time, from place to place and from generation to generation. The trainer emphasized the important influence of socialization, including the roles of family, education, peer group, media, culture and tradition, on gender identities.

At the end of the first day, homework was assigned, including three hand-outs to be completed by participants. One hand-out dealt with values and another with the multiple-identity concept; the third was a daily diary which participants were asked to complete for each day of the workshop.

Day Two

Recapitulation of Learning Points from the Previous Day's Work

On the second day, the trainer asked a few participants to remind the group about key points they had learned the previous day. The feedback on the three homework exercises set off an enthusiastic and rich discussion.

Values

One of the exercises that generated a great deal of discussion concerned the values each participant would wish to adopt in this workshop and later on in their ministry or community work. Most participants chose "patience" as the most useful value, then "cooperation" and "respect", followed by "partnership" and "care". Participants discussed their rationales for choosing a particular value.

Multiple-Identity Concept

The next exercise, which dealt with the concept of "multiple-identities", aimed at raising the participants' awareness of their multiple identities, their individual strengths and multiple roles in their social, professional and community lives. The point was made that in conflict situations, parts of one's identities become frozen, such as ethnicity, and this often leads to disempowerment. In normal peace conditions, a broad range of a person's identities emerges and is given the space in which to function creatively. This exercise was also connected to the previous day's concept of "building a community" over the five-day workshop period in which participants would share their talents, experiences and human resources.

Diary Homework

The third exercise was the Learning Diary Homework. Participants had been asked to complete a daily diary to help them reflect on each day's work and to note what they personally found the most important learning points of the day. They were also asked to indicate how they planned to apply this learning to their core activities on health and gender issues in Afghanistan. All participants had made diary entries and shared their notes with the group and the trainers. A number of them said that the most significant learning from the previous day was gaining a clear understanding of the distinction between sex and gender, and that, as gender is cultural and a social construct, roles and the way things are done can change. Several were so excited that they had shared the information that evening with their friends and family. Participants said they planned to use what they had learned in their own training, in their NGOs and at the Ministry of Women's Affairs.

Gender Perceptions across Generations and Cultures

The main objective of the module on gender perceptions across generations and cultures was for participants to understand the ways in which men's and women's roles change over time. This module covered more in-depth work on the topic of how gender perceptions and gender roles change across class, time, place, generations and culture. Gender equality refers to equal opportunities for both men and women. Achieving equal opportunities for women and men has now become one of the main goals for Governments and NGOs, especially in post conflict-societies, like Afghanistan. This is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and United Nations resolutions such as United Nations Security Council Resolution 1325 (31 October 2000), which deals with the need for a gender perspective and the inclusion of women in peace-building activities and post-conflict reconstruction of societies.

An exercise titled "Gender Roles Across Generations" was given to each participant to do, first alone, and then to share with the small group. The purpose of the exercise was to reinforce points learned in this module. The exercise triggered a discussion about gender and generational changes that have taken place in Afghanistan concerning the home, education, workplace, health, sex and politics.

Gender Mainstreaming

The module on gender mainstreaming covered the concepts and practical application of mainstreaming gender considerations into the participants' work, planning and policy-making in ministries and NGOs. This topic had been identified by participants as one of their key learning objectives. The presentation covered important aspects of the subject linked with a number of illuminating case-studies.

Six vital areas were identified:

- Visibility;
- Participation;
- Access;
- Norms, stereotypes and assumptions;
- Values and human rights; and
- Distribution of power and resources.

One case-study involved the British Council Office in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The office had set up an Internet Café open to everyone who was interested, with free courses on

computer and Internet use. The office discovered that, compared with the number of men, few women were taking advantage of the service and the training. After a discussion with a female gender consultant, the office set up a special Women's Afternoon at the Internet Café once a week. The numbers of women attending steadily increased from that time.

This case-study illustrated several aspects of the issue, principally that of participation, assumption, access and division of power and resources, plus the fact that when one group of people (in this case, women) is underrepresented, it is sometimes necessary to take affirmative action in order to reach equality.

The Balloon Game

The session ended with the “Balloon Game” exercise. The purpose of this exercise was two-fold: to help participants identify and think about the roots and origins of culturally sensitive gender issues in Afghanistan that may conflict with human rights; and to meet participants’ requests for tools they can use in rural areas. The balloon game is an ideal method to use with people who are illiterate as well as with formally educated people.

Participants were divided into two circles. Each group was given a balloon. One group described the life-cycle of a girl in Afghanistan from birth to death. The other group described the life-cycle of a boy. Each participant called out the next event in the life cycle as the balloon was thrown from person to person. Note-takers recorded what was said. Once the two life-cycles were completed, the note-takers read out their notes to the plenary session. Their notes acted as the basis for a discussion of the historic and cultural roots concerning the differences between the life-cycle of an Afghan male and that of an Afghan female. A number of female participants felt that in the 1960s and early 1970s, before the era of the Russians and the Taliban, women in Afghanistan had more freedom of choice about how they dressed and conducted their lives than they have had in subsequent years. One conclusion from the discussion was that government policies from any Government have an impact on the lives of women in many ways – education, matrimonial rights, economic rights, property rights, rights and access to mobility and to employment, safety and security, and even to choice in the way women dress.

Communication Skills—Part One

The session on communication skills gave participants a communication context for the gender work covered earlier in the day.

The first theory covered was Transactional Analysis. A lively debate ensued as participants identified emotions and behaviours associated with the Ego States of *Parent*, *Adult* and *Child*. Participants said they felt engaged because this gave them insight into difficult situations they had met in their work environment in Afghanistan. The discussion then turned to the implications of the theory for women and the need for them to use the *Adult* Ego State to gain respect from their colleagues and the community.

The next theory to be introduced was Assertiveness. Recognizing the difference between assertive, aggressive and passive behaviour was seen as vital for women and for men. Participants quickly identified the need for women to use assertive behaviour. A key aspect of this was the need to respect the rights and opinions of others while standing up for oneself. Two exercises were employed:

- The “No Game” exercise produced laughter as well as positive learning as the participants tried saying “No!”. They identified their feelings about this and related them to the impact of socialization and tradition; and
- The “Push-Push” exercise alerted them to the dangers of being too forceful. Trainers asked participants to place their right hands palm to palm and balance the level of force used. Then one participant in each pair was asked to push harder. This was quickly followed by the other partner spontaneously returning the pressure. This graphic example of the dangers of imposing one’s views made a great impact on the group as a whole.

Feedback from participants after the Communication session was enthusiastic. They had enjoyed both the theoretical impact and the challenge of relating the material to their real-life situations.

Participants were asked to complete their diaries as homework.

Day 3

Recapitulation of Learning Points from the Previous Day's Work

To remind everyone of key points learned in Day Two, a couple of participants were invited to present their homework notes from the diary. One participant said: “When I went home, I played the ‘Balloon Game’ with my sister, and this led us to discussing the differences between the lives of women and men in Afghanistan.” Another participant highlighted the communication session and how it had helped her to understand difficult situations she had experienced.

Communication Skills -- Part Two

The trainer asked participants to describe what types of communication problems they had encountered in their workplace. The trainer addressed these problems in the material covered in the module.

The trainer described the importance for a speaker to build a bridge of mutual understanding with her audience. The trainer stressed that the first thing anyone should do when communicating with an audience -- whether that audience is a group of elders in a village or women or anybody else -- is to place herself metaphorically in the seat of the audience and to think carefully about what issues are important to that audience.

Participants debated about which aspect of personal communication mattered most in getting one's message across. Many participants were convinced that it was words which carried the most weight. The trainer explained that when somebody is speaking in public, the audience receives at least 55 per cent of the message visually and at least another 37 per cent through the tone of the voice; the actual words count for only about 7 per cent.

The way that a speaker can motivate and inspire an audience to take action on a particular issue, such as registering women to vote in elections, formed a significant part of the discussion. The trainer and participants shared ideas about alternative ways to communicate with the population as a whole. The trainer said that radio is a useful and friendly tool in many countries for reaching illiterate people – especially women. One participant described the important role of radio in remote communities in Afghanistan.

The trainer suggested several ideas for reaching women in rural communities, including the following:

- Writing some gender issues into the scripts of radio soap operas. A member of the UNFPA team said that UNFPA is collaborating on a BBC soap opera being broadcast in the Pashto regions;
- Use of village children performing plays on key issues, such as why girls should be allowed to go to school;
- Use of radio listening circles with a neighbourhood facilitator and cassette recorder to empower women in villages to send their opinions to the local radio station. The trainer said this is a version of a radio call-in programme already successfully adapted for rural areas in other parts of the world; and
- Distribution of wind-up radios which do not require electricity or batteries. A participant said the Ministry of Women's Affairs is planning to distribute some solar radios to the provinces.

The Persuasion Game

This module concluded with a "Persuasion Game". Three participants each made a three-minute talk that could be given to elders in a village to encourage them to get local women to register to vote. Each participant was given a ballot to vote for the speaker who made the most convincing talk. Participants posted their votes into a ballot box.

While the vote was counted in secrecy, the trainers gave constructive feedback to the three contestants. The winner was presented with a prize. The trainers were impressed with the overall high standard of presentation skills and by the wholehearted support given by the participants to one another throughout this challenging module.

Conflict Analysis

The session on conflict analysis began with brainstorming on the concept of conflict. One of the participants said: “When I hear the word ‘conflict’, I am not happy because communication and conflict are very different from each other. One word is positive and the other is negative and this makes me unhappy.” Another participant said: “When I hear the word ‘conflict’ I imagine that all goodness can disappear.”

The trainer described the different types of conflicts using a “Cycle of Conflict” chart. These types included: data conflicts, relationship conflicts, interest conflicts, structural conflicts and value conflicts. Each type was analysed and examples were given.

The Causes of Conflict and War

The trainer and participants discussed the main roots of conflict, which include the following:

- Foreign interference;
- Economic inequalities (poverty);
- Social-psychological factors, such as prejudices, misperceptions, stereotyping, misunderstandings and traumas; and
- Historical factors, such as colonialism, nationalism and unaddressed grievances.

The trainer explained the complexity of conflicts and their multi-layered dimensions. She also presented the main theories about conflict. This led to a valuable discussion among participants and the trainer.

Leadership

The session on leadership began with a graphics-based exercise, “The Best and Worst Leaders”. Participants formed four groups and were each given a sheet of flip chart paper and coloured pens. Two groups drew a picture of the best leader they could imagine and the other two groups drew a picture of the worst leader they could imagine. The aim was to represent both behaviour and appearance without using words. This type of exercise is designed to tap into the creative visual skills of the participants. It is also an excellent example of a graphics exercise that can be used with participants from any background, including those with low literacy.

The resulting large pictures produced much laughter and fun, as well as a high degree of insight into what characteristics were needed in a successful leader in Afghanistan. This gave the trainers an understanding of the high quality of the participants in the programme. For example, all four drawings highlighted the need for a leader to listen.

Following this exercise, the trainer discussed the necessity for a leader to balance the needs of the task, the team and the individual. Participants then identified their own personal default positions in this respect.

Participants considered the impact of group dynamics on teams. The trainer asked the group to consider how a successful leader changes the proportion of directive and delegative leadership behaviour in relation to the team and the individual team member at different times. Participants found this a new concept and were fascinated by the ideas presented to them.

The next session focused on the “Six Styles of Leadership”, as follows:

- Visionary;
- Coaching;
- Affiliative;
- Democratic;
- Pace-setting; and
- Commanding.

The trainer described how top leaders use four or more of these styles. Failing leaders usually only use one – rather like a car being driven in only one gear and burning out the engine as a result. Participants discussed the implications of this theory for their personal leadership skills.

Gender Communication

The day ended with an energetic discussion about gender communication. Participants debated the various ways in which men and women process information and communicate. Participants quickly realized that there was an overlap between male and female communication styles. The biological and sociological aspects of these differences were explored. The participants’ initial skepticism evaporated as they related the theoretical information to their own experience.

The concepts of “Serial and Parallel Processing”, drawn from Neuro Linguistic Programming, were of particular interest. These concepts gave a practical explanation of why women often have problems getting in to speak at meetings. When relating this back to Assertive Behaviour, the participants could see a solution to the problem.

This discussion showed that participants had begun to link the various aspects of the programme into an overall approach to leadership, behaviour and communication skills.

Day 4

Recapitulation of Learning Points from the Previous Day's Work

Participants referred to their diaries and picked out the following key points from the previous day's discussion:

- Gender views;
- Gender awareness;
- Gender communication;
- Time management;
- Communication in group;
- The difference between sex and gender;
- How to overcome obstacles; and
- How to prepare a talk in four minutes.

Conflict Resolution – The Iceberg

As an aid to assisting in the understanding of how groups draw different conclusions in a conflict situation, the trainer introduced the concept of the iceberg.

The part of an iceberg visible above the waterline symbolizes those conclusions. They may be firmly held and lead to the adoption of intractable positions. To resolve a conflict, it is important to understand how each group has arrived at its particular set of conclusions. The part of the iceberg below the waterline symbolizes the factors contributing towards the formation of each group's conclusions. Such factors include the following:

- Assumptions and beliefs, about oneself and about others;
- Values, one's own and others';
- Basic needs, in terms of physical and personal dignity and of human rights;
- Feelings, including those of exclusion, anger and revenge; and
- Wounds, actual and imagined.

Human Rights versus Cultural Traditions

The session on human rights versus cultural traditions addressed some of the sensitivities participants may face in Afghanistan, where human rights sometimes challenge cultural traditions. Participants were asked to think about the types of arguments against changing cultural traditions they should expect to encounter and about how they would counter these arguments. Two examples are the right for girls to attend school and the attitudes towards women who have been raped.

The session included a discussion about attitudes towards women who had been raped in war. One participant said:

“Before I came to training workshops at the Ministry of Women’s Affairs, I used to think that a woman who had been raped had sinned. Now I know this is not so. I know that a woman who has been raped has not sinned.”

The Ministry of Women’s Affairs agreed to provide each participant with a copy of CEDAW in the Dari language.

The ‘Why?’ Exercise

The purpose of the “Why?” exercise is to empower participants to practise challenging accepted tradition. Participants worked in pairs. One person had to keep asking “why?” The other person had to defend the statement: “I do not want the girls in my community to attend school.”

Each pair then switched. This time they had to use the word “why” to challenge the statement: “Men who are wounded in war are considered heroes by society. Women who are raped in war are viewed by society as shamed and sullied.”

Decision-making and Problem-solving

The session began with an outline of the Four Basic Stages of the Problem-solving Process:

- Identify and analyse;
- Decide on a solution;
- Do it!; and
- Monitor and evaluate.

The T-Shirt Exercise and Case-Study

The trainer described a case-study from the United Kingdom. A large multinational company had placed an advertisement in the programme for the conference of a major political party. The advertisement showed two stick people, both characterized as male candidates in an election. One stick man was shown asking “Who is the best man for the job?” The second replied “YOU are!” Two thousand copies of the programme containing the advertisement had already been distributed when the Gender Balance Task Force (GBTF) organization for the political party concerned decided it needed to be addressed urgently. The task force saw the advertisement as presenting a significant problem, creating a negative image for women.

At this point, the trainer paused in the story and asked participants to discuss how they might have approached the problem, bearing in mind the Problem-Solving Process already described. A plenary discussion followed which suggested the problem could be solved by approaching the multinational company.

The trainer then completed the story of the case-study. She described how the GBTF approached the marketing director of the offending company. The problem was described to the marketing director, who was a woman. She was apologetic and immediately agreed to help correct the negative impression given of women by the original advertisement.

As a result, the GBTF were given a grant to buy a thousand T-shirts with a new cartoon on them. On the front of the T-shirts was a male figure asking “Who is the best man for the job?” being answered by a female figure who replies “A woman!”. These T-shirts became a major talking point at the conference and had a positive reception.

The participants discussed this case-study and were especially interested that a positive, assertive and imaginative approach had resulted in a successful solution to the original problem. They also enjoyed the humorous but powerful impact of the words on the T-shirts.

The trainer then introduced the concept of the Four Styles of Decision-making:

- Decisive;
- Flexible;
- Hierarchic; and
- Integrative.

The participants analysed their own decision-making style. The majority of the women saw themselves as integrative – with a high degree of consultation involved in the process. All three men present believed their primary style was hierarchical.

The session continued with a presentation of decision-making tools such as the Johari Window and the Brainstorming technique.

Participants tried out the tools in a comprehensive practical exercise. They worked in four groups to solve a personnel problem. All four groups succeeded in reaching a decision and in using the tools effectively.

Day 5

Feedback and Reflections on Day 4

Selected participants presented the notes from their diaries. A number of participants had found the module on Human Rights versus Cultural Traditions helpful. It related directly to the context of their work with groups such as family patriarchs and village elders, who are reluctant to allow girls to attend school, and to the problems in communities where women who have been raped are victimized.

One woman said: “We face problems with religious leaders in villages in Badakshan, and I’ll use what I learned yesterday to discuss our cultural traditions versus human rights. I also learned that first I have to gain their trust; then I can share ideas.”

Another participant remarked: “It is important to know that it is possible to convince a person to change his or her attitude. It is important to learn that women who are raped in war are heroes, too, just like men who are wounded in war.”

A number mentioned that they had found the leadership skills and decision-making sessions useful. One participant said: “ We can use the different leadership styles in our daily work to address problems we face in our offices.”

Participants also mentioned the T-shirt exercise and “iceberg approach” to conflict resolution. The role of international intervention had a strong resonance with participants in the Afghanistan context. They reiterated that it is important to change mind-sets in order to resolve conflict.

Media

More than half the participants said they had had the experience of giving interviews on TV and radio. The trainer asked participants to describe any problems they had met when appearing in the media and incorporated the issues raised in her presentation, giving tips and advice for effective TV and radio interviews.

Participants divided up into three rooms to practise giving TV interviews on issues on which they are working in real life with the Ministry of Women’s Affairs and in their NGOs. In each room, there was a TV camera and a play-back TV monitor. Trainers were able to give each participant constructive feedback and coaching.

Participants said they found the practical nature of this exercise a boost to their confidence to carry out their work, and it also helped them to improve their communication skills.

The Minister of Women's Affairs brought American guests to visit the workshop during this exercise.

Looking Forward –Vision

The participants worked in three groups, producing a collective vision statement concerning the significant changes they desired to see occur in Afghanistan. These statements are summarized below:

Desired changes:

Group 1:

- Human rights for all citizens of Afghanistan;
- Respect for law and order; and
- Independence in all aspects of life.

Group 2:

- Lower rate of pregnancies.

Group 3:

- Gender equality in all aspects of life;
- Economic empowerment;
- Political participation; and
- Cultural and social equality.

The second part of the exercise invited each individual participant to undertake a personal commitment to use one of the topics covered in the meeting. Ideally, it should be something that made a difference in the way she or he viewed what had been learned in the five-day workshop. The commitments made by participants are summarized as follows:

- Leadership practised in the workshop; the leadership traits, what makes a good and a bad leader; the visionary style of leadership in health issues, particularly reproductive health issues; decision-making, especially the integrative leadership

style; leadership and election, how to use in the villages to persuade people to vote voluntarily;

- Gender and conflict management; the use of the “iceberg” in understanding conflict analysis and resolution; conflict resolution and decision-making; to bring about conflict resolution of problems we need to change our mentality; conflict resolution – to help solve problems, we need to involve all parties concerned;
- Flexibility;
- Communication; the media and interview part, particularly that which focused on the issue of communication and the tone of voice;
- The use of election exercises in their groups and in the village group; allowing all people to vote;
- The four steps in problem-solving;
- Assertiveness on an individual level;
- The decision-making steps and the need to talk to people and consult with them before making a decision; the use of heart and mind when making a decision -- balance, emotional intelligence; and
- The push/push exercise, being careful not to push too much, so that the other does not push back.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Participants were energetic, articulate and motivated. They were so keen to attend the entire workshop that on Day 4, a national holiday, they all arrived at the workshop at 7.30 a.m. so as not to be delayed by road-blocks. Participants were eager to absorb new concepts, skills and knowledge. The diverse age range and the mix of male and female Ministry personnel and NGO activists worked extremely well in terms of promoting the ability to share experiences and ideas.

The workshop provided a solid foundation course in which female and male participants from across Afghanistan were introduced to a balance of knowledge, information, and skills for: gender training, conflict resolution, leadership, media, communication and management, and how to apply these lessons to their core work activities in the Ministry of Women's Affairs and their NGOs.

The logical next step is to go into more depth on selected topics. One issue especially requested by participants was more in-depth work on human rights versus culture. They wanted a greater understanding for themselves of the various human rights instruments. They also requested more information and training on techniques for persuading other sectors in Afghan society to accept that women's human rights may sometimes need to supersede tradition. Such training would include how to run public awareness education campaigns and how to communicate in diverse ways on the highly sensitive issue of human rights versus cultural traditions with target groups such as elders, mullahs, governors and officials in other government departments as well as women and men across society.

Training on campaigning and lobbying would prove valuable to this group. Participants were keen to understand how to present their message to the public at large in order to promote positive change regarding the status of women in their societies.

Violence against women is an issue on which participants said they wanted much more information, knowledge and public and personal advocacy skills training. Some participants said that this workshop was the first occasion on which they had heard of violence against women in other countries.

A future workshop could include more in-depth training on how to present these issues to the media in ways that are interesting and accessible to the public. For example, radio is a useful tool for accessing illiterate women. Participants also wanted more in-depth work on the application of mainstreaming gender into policy and on gender training.

It became apparent that the majority of participants had experienced little exposure to examples of work done by people in other countries on advocacy concerning such topics as violence against women and women's human rights versus cultural traditions. An important component of any follow-up training should be to show examples from other countries, such as women's networks and men's networks.

More than half the participants said they were unaware of how to use the Internet to access information on issues such as human rights, health issues and HIV/AIDS. A useful extra module in any future training would be to show participants how to use the Internet to access information on issues such as human rights and health, and information about what is happening on these issues in other parts of the world.

Participants raised the issue that, in future, in the interests of gender balance, one member of the future training team should be male.

ANNEX 1

PROGRAMME

TRAINING WORKSHOP ON LEADERSHIP, MEDIA AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT FOR WOMEN IN AFGHANISTAN

Kabul, Afghanistan

Opening Ceremony

Welcome Addresses by:

- UNFPA Representatives
- Minister of Women's Affairs
- KEGME team

○ WORKSHOP

Day 1

Session 1

09:30 – 10:45 **Introduction to the Workshop, Trainers, and Programme**
Aims, objectives, outcomes.
Facilitators: *Lesley Abdela, Candy Piercy and
Maria Hadjipavlou*

Introduction to participants

Presentation skills Exercise on *how to introduce yourself:*
'30 seconds technique'

Coffee Break

Session 2

11:00 – 13:00 **Workshop community building**
Hopes, expectations, concerns from and about the
Workshop
Team exercise: *Workshop values*

Gender awareness:

What is gender, gender role construction, gender and culture?

Facilitator: *Maria Hadjipavlou*

Multiple identity exercise: *Who am I?*

Team exercise: Culture across generations

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch Break

Session 2

14:00 – 18:00 Focus on leadership

Facilitators: *Lesley Abdela and Candy Piercy*

Different styles of leadership

Self test exercise: *Sharing our experiences*

Tea break

Time management

Facilitator: *Lesley Abdela*

Presentation on time management

Game on *how I manage my time*

Handout: Learn, Plan Diary:

Key points and personal observations of the day.

Evaluation of self and team performance-to be repeated

Every day

Day 2

Session 3

09:30 – 09:40 Recap of key points from previous day

Two-three participants read the notes from the Learn – Plan Diary

09:40 – 12:00 Chairing meetings effectively and setting an agenda

Facilitator: *Lesley Abdela*

Presentation and role play exercise.

12:00 – 13:30 What it means to be a woman in Afghanistan

Facilitator: *Candy Piercy*

Assets, obstacles and how to overcome the obstacles.

13:30 – 14:30 Lunch

Session 4

14:30 – 16:15 Communication skills

Facilitator: *Maria Hadjipavlou*

Presentation: Means of communication, the listening process

Self-test exercise: *How do I feel in group discussions?*

16:15 – 16:30 Tea break

16:30 – 19:00 Public speaking

Facilitators: *Candy Piercy and Lesley Abdela*

Presentation and exercise on “*How to prepare a talk in 4 Minutes*”

Day 3

Session 5

09:30 – 09:40 Recap of key points from previous day

09:40 – 11:15 Debating skills

Facilitators: *Lesley Abdela and Candy Piercy*

Presentation and exercise: *The election game*.

11:15 – 11:30 Coffee break

11:30 – 13:30 Meeting with Officials

Presentation and role-play exercise

13:30 – 14:30 Lunch

Session 6 Media

14:30 – 16:30 Panel discussion with Afghanistan based media
chaired by *Lesley Abdela*

16:30 – 17:00 Tea break

17:00 – 19:00 Giving interviews to the media
Facilitators: *Lesley Abdela and Candy Piercy*
Presentation and exercise: *Writing press releases.*

Day 4

Session 7

09:30 – 09:40 Recap of key points from previous day

09:40 – 13:00 Influencing decision makers: Advocacy, lobbying,
motivating and mobilizing
Facilitators: *Lesley Abdela and Candy Piercy*

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch

Session 8

14:00 – 17:30 Women’s human rights

Facilitators: *Lesley Abdela and Maria Hadjipavlou*

Presentation: What are the elements that can bring about
change?

The “why” exercise: *Challenging the status quo.*

17:30 – 19:00 Gender Mainstreaming
Facilitator: *Lesley Abdela*

Day 5

Session 9

09:30 – 09:40 Recap of previous day from Work Plan Diaries

09:40 – 11:00 **Conflict Management**

Facilitator: *Maria Hadjipavlou*

Presentation: Analyzing and understanding conflict.

11:00 – 11:15 Coffee break

11:15 – 13:00 **Types of conflict the participants face**

13:00 – 14:00 Lunch

Session 10

14:00 – 15:45 **Mediation and negotiation skills**

Facilitators: *Maria Hadjipavlou and Candy Piercy*

15:45 – 16:00 Tea break

16:00 – 18:00 **Strategies for the future**

Facilitators: *Lesley Abdela, Candy Piercy and
Maria Hadjipavlou*

Where do we go from here? What kind of Afghanistan do we imagine for the next five years? The role of women in this process.

18:00 – 19:00 **Summing – up
Evaluation**

19:00 **Closing ceremony**

ANNEX 2

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

TRAINING WORKSHOP ON LEADERSHIP, MEDIA AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT FOR WOMEN IN AFGHANISTAN

No	Name	Organization	Province
1	Ms.Jamila Alokzai	AIL	Kabul
2	Ms.Karima Salik	MOWA	Kabul
3	Ms.Fatema Kazimyan	MOWA	Bamyan
4	Ms.Maria Shahabi	MOWA	Kabul
5	Ms.Nahid Wazin	MOWA	Kabul
6	Mr.M. Ismaial Nawabi	MOWA	Kabul
7	Ms.Arifa Samady	MOWA	Kabul
8	Ms.Shaima Mabboob	MOWA	Kabul
9	Ms.Salma Shariq	AIL	Jalalabad
10	Mr.Tamim Lomani	MOWA	Kabul
11	Ms.Khatema Arifi	MOWA	Kabul
12	Dr. Anis Akhgar	MOWA	Badakhshan
13	Ms.Shakila Afzalyar	MOWA	Kabul
14	Ms.Najia Shairzad	MOWA	Kabul
15	Ms.Fahima Noori	MOWA	Kabul
16	Ms.Meena	AIL	Kabul
17	Ms.Nooria Aaqhagar	MOWA	Kabul
18	Mr.Sayad Baqir Amiri	MOWA	Kabul
19	Ms.Malalai Safar	ADRS	Kabul
20	Ms.Parwin	ADRS	Kabul
21	Ms.Shoghafa	ADRS	Kabul
22	Ms.Hanifa Jamal	IHRC	Kabul
23	Dr. Mary Wida	ADRS	Kabul
24	Mr. Hameed	ADRS	Kabul
25	Dr.Khadij Aryan	UNFPA	Badakhshan
26	Dr.Farida Khoshdil	UNFPA	Badakhshan
27	Dr.Zibulnessa, Zeba, Alam	UNFPA Afghanistan	Kabul

ADRS = Afghanistan Development and Rehabilitation Services

AIL = Afghan Institute of Learning

IHRC = Independent Human Rights Commission

MOWA = Ministry of Women's Affairs



United Nations Population Fund

UNFPA
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New York, 10017
USA
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