ZONTA INTERNATIONAL

2026-2028 INTERNATIONAL SERVICE PROJECT

DELEGATES' CHOICE

FUNDING: US$750,000 TO UN WOMEN

STANDING WITH AFGHAN WOMEN: EXPANDING COMMUNITY-LED SOLUTIONS TO END GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

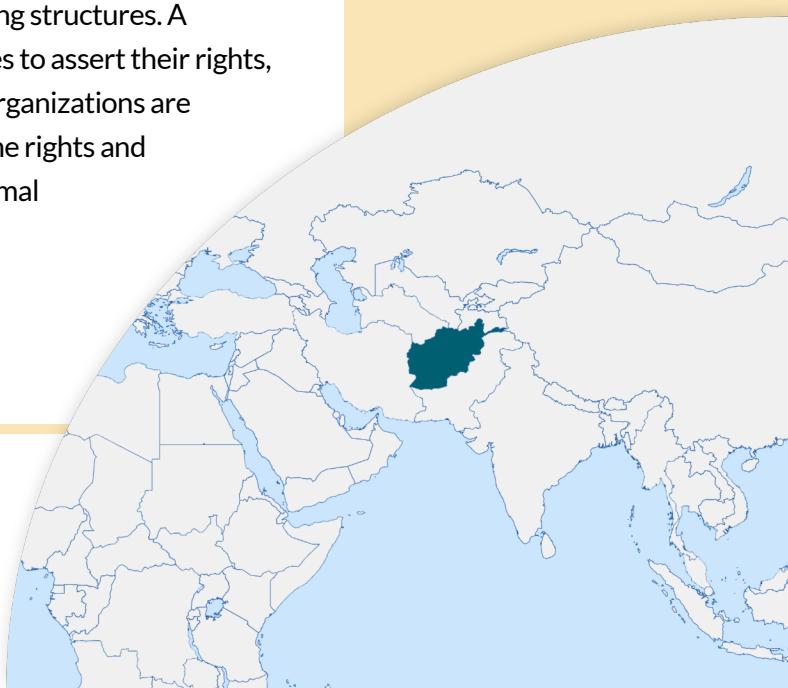
GOAL

This two-year project partners with two Afghan women-led organizations (WLOs) to deliver survivor-centered gender-based violence (GBV) services to women and girls and strengthen local capacity to sustain protection and norm-change efforts beyond the grant period.

Afghanistan remains the world's most severe women's rights crisis. Women face a growing risk of violence compounded by the added pressure on families, which is often caused by climate humanitarian and economic crisis. Since the Taliban takeover in 2021, laws and institutions protecting women have been dismantled, barring girls from high schools and universities, most jobs, public life, and decision-making structures. A widening justice gap is leaving many women without safe avenues to assert their rights, seek protection or challenge abuse. In this context, women-led organizations are essential, providing trusted, life-saving services and protecting the rights and wellbeing of women and girls in an environment where many formal protection mechanisms have been dismantled.

WHO WILL BENEFIT

The project will directly serve about 25,000 women and girls and engage roughly 10,000 community members to support prevention and response efforts for GBV survivors across up to six high-need provinces in Afghanistan.



UN WOMEN

FOR ALL WOMEN AND GIRLS

STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Survivor-centered services (response):

WLO-operated frontline responders provide GBV case management, shelter and accommodation (when feasible), psychosocial counselling, health referrals, and livelihood skills (including vocational training and access to enterprise and business support).

Community-led prevention (social norms change):

The project will adopt community-led programs, including the Zendagi Shaista and Transforming Masculinities models, to the Afghanistan context, to engage trusted peers and faith leaders in changing social norms and attitudes, promoting non-violent conflict resolution, and strengthening community support systems. Prevention activities will be linked to support services, helping lower gender-based violence over time while keeping women and girls safe.

Strengthening women-led frontline response (women-led organizations):

The project will support two women-led organizations in Afghanistan to strengthen their capacity to provide gender-based violence services, manage data safely, advocate effectively, and operate despite the challenging conditions. This approach builds long-term sustainability, empowers women leaders, and ensures that frontline organizations can continue delivering critical, women-centered support beyond the grant period.

SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES

Support two frontline WLOs to operate approximately 20 community service points (fixed and mobile) delivering GBV case management, psychosocial counselling, health referrals and safety planning; integrate remote/phone-based psychosocial support when access is restricted.

Deliver a capacity pathway for two WLOs in GBV service provision, governance, safeguarding, finance, audit and project management.

Implement structured prevention activities, engaging families, male allies and religious leaders; embed help-seeking information in all sessions.

Provide risk-aware visibility activities (e.g. anonymized stories; symbolic imagery; diaspora/virtual events) that recognize Zonta while protecting survivors and staff.

Conduct baseline and endline studies; quarterly monitoring; and co-produce learning with WLOs.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

- Strengthen awareness, promote non-violent conflict resolution, and link survivors to integrated services while following do-no-harm principles.
- Use discreet, mobile, and remote modalities to maintain access to services despite security or mobility constraints.
- Link services, prevention, and institutional strengthening for sustainable impact and to avoid stand-alone interventions.