



# AFGA Newsletter

Issue 1 - December 2021







### Vision

An Afghanistan in which all people are empowered to exercise their rights for ensuring wellbeing without any discrimination.

### Mission

To strive to ensure stigma and discrimination free reproductive health and rights for all people to ensure quality health care services, education and information.

### Core Values

- Accountability
- Equal Access
- Passion
- Commitment
- Equality/Dignity
- Shared Ownership
- Transparency
- Volunteerism
- Humanitarian

### Message from the CEO

Dear readers,

This is the first edition of the Afghan Family Guidance Association (AFGA) newsletter. Through this quarterly newsletter, we would like to keep you informed on the progresses, news, developments and new initiatives of AFGA.

During the 4th quarter of 2021, AFGA implemented various activities under the program as well as support departments. Despite the challenges – recent political changes in the country, all AFGA service delivery points were operational and continued with the provision of service delivery, however lack of enough fund/cash and banking crises interrupted the operations to some extent.

AFGA was able to raise fund for two projects; Stream-III and a BMZ fund, and launched the projects in October and December respectively. AFGA also signed a partnership agreement with Nove Onlus- an Italian NGO registered in Afghanistan, for provision of health services through one of AFGA's mobile clinics in Kabul.

AFGA is one of the oldest non-governmental organizations in Afghanistan. AFGA was set up in 1968, with the aim of providing families, especially women, with the reproductive health counselling and contraceptives. AFGA works alongside the Ministry of Public Health to deliver reproductive and sexual health counselling and services to the Afghan people. Additionally, AFGA initiate and implements activities empowering women and youth to learn



*Najibullah Samim - Chief Executive Officer*

more about and take decisions regarding their reproductive health. AFGA is a member association of the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF). This gives AFGA the access to its core funding from the IPPF, as well as obtaining technical support and collaboration opportunities from the network of IPPF member associations in South Asia and beyond.

Your valuable feedback, suggestions and comments certainly help us to improve our newsletter and will be highly appreciated.



### AFGA Celebrated the World Humanitarian Day

AFGA celebrated the World Humanitarian Day along with the Afghan Japan Hospital and MoPH. The event aimed to appreciate the relentless efforts of humanitarians and medical service providers in Afghanistan who have made the ultimate sacrifices in relieving the suffering of victims in need.

During the opening session, AFGA's CEO Mr. Najibullah Samim, praised all the humanitarian personnel who have made the ultimate sacrifices to make the world a better place. In particular, he praised the AFGA service providers, Afghan Japan Hospital and MoPH for their contributions during the difficult times of COVID-19 and other humanitarian crises.

Afterwards, Dr. Zalmay Rishtin, Director of Afghan Japan Hospital, appreciated AFGA's efforts for celebrating this day, and admired the hard work of humanitarians, in particular the Afghan Japan Hospital - an active hospital for treatment of the COVID-19 patients in the country.

Lastly, AFGA disseminated Certificate of Appreciations to RMNCAH, MoPH, Afghan Japan Hospital, and some of AFGA service providers who had the highest performance and achievements during the past years.

### Basic Emergency Obstetric & New-born Care Training

In line with its capacity development activities, AFGA conducted a three days training on Basic Emergency Obstetric & New-born Care (BEONC) for 15 Community Outreach Midwives in Bamyan province. The training aimed to enhance the skills and knowledge of COMs in bimanual compression of uterus, administration of loading dose of MgSo4, and helping babies' breath.

The training was conducted in Bamyan for the first

time and thus the participants actively and enthusiastically participated in the training.

*"The training was effective and enlightening for my professional background. This was the first time I enrolled in such a practical and vital training. I am looking forward for such useful trainings to be conducted in the future as well."* Rahila Hussaini - Community Outreach Midwife in Bamyan

### BMZ Project Updates

The BMZ project addresses the acute SRH needs of mothers and girls in Afghanistan. It is implemented in five provinces- Herat, Balkh, Logar, Parwan and Kabul. Under this project, a total of 60 Family Health Houses (FHHs) will be established in three districts of each mentioned four provinces, however in Kabul, the project will have three Mobile Health Clinics (MHCs).

It is a five months pilot project started on December 1, 2021. AFGA will deliver a series of interventions designed to respond to the acute SRH needs of women and girls in vulnerable communities in the mentioned provinces through FHHs and MHCs.

The project goal is to save lives of women and girls through timely provision of quality SRH services through a multi-pronged, community led approach in four conflict prone rural provinces of Afghanistan, and in capital through three MHCs with poor access to these services.

During the project life cycle, the following main activities will take place:

- Improved availability, accessibility and quality of Maternal, New-born and Child Health (MNCH) care.
- Increased human resource capacity in terms of numbers and competencies to deliver quality MNCH.
- Increased community knowledge, support and action to demand quality reproductive services.

The project activities are going on well and are implemented as per the project plan. Staff recruitment is going on, the project coordination unit and the provincial offices are established, and a good coordination and communication maintained with the Provincial Public Health Directorates (PPHDs) and the Ministry of Public Health (MoPH).

Mapping of villages and white areas for the establishment of FHHs are completed in all four provinces. In addition, procurement process of goods, equipment, medical/non medical supplies have been started.

### Stream-III Project Initiation

Stream-III Emergency Response Project (ERP) is an IPPF humanitarian internal fund, initiated and implemented after the recent political changes in Afghanistan. With this project, AFGA expanded Sexual Reproductive Health (SRH) services to Khost province, particularly in three remote districts of Bak, Alisher and Sabari.

Stream-III project is for six months, starting on October 15, 2021. Through this project, 78,000 beneficiaries in remote areas in five provinces- Kabul, Nangarhar, Khost, Balkh, and Herat will receive SRH services through 65 COMs. COMs are providing counselling on Gender Based Violence (GBV), Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI), Family Planning (FP), Antenatal Care/Postnatal Care (ANC/PNC), Urology, Subfertility, and referral services to poor and marginalized people who might not be able to prioritize SRH services due to economic issues.

Under Stream-III project, AFGA procured and supplied Clean Delivery Kits to COMs for onward distribution among the visibly pregnant women. The

kits will be distributed among the pregnant women of third trimester.

The project will also support the women and girls in learning more about the SRH and take right decisions accordingly.







### UNFPA - AFGA Partnership

AFGA has a long-term partnership with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) to implement the latter's family planning and reproductive health program in Afghanistan. AFGA and UNFPA renew the mutual contract annually to implement the program on improving access and utilizing high-quality Reproductive (including family planning), Maternal, Neonatal, Child and Adolescent Health (RMNCAH) preventive and curative services.

Despite the challenges of COVID-19 and recent political upheaval in the country, AFGA successfully completed the project for the year 2021. As a result, AFGA trained 108 midwives from Bamyan, Parwan, Panjshir, and Kapisa provinces on Long-Acting Reversible Contraceptives (LARC). AFGA also provided a ToT to 18 Community Health Workers (CHWs) trainers of Bamyan, Daikundi, Parwan, Panjshir, and Kabul provinces on SC-DMPA where the trainers delivered the training to targeted CHWs in the mentioned provinces.

AFGA provided technical assistance to Family Planning Department of MoPH to develop the eLMIS system, where the system is now finalized and used

by the MoPH for tracking and follow up of the FP commodities logistic supply across Afghanistan.

Moreover, AFGA conducted three sessions of RHCS training; two in Kabul for the central and southern region and one in Herat for the western region. Furthermore, Midwifery Helpline (MHL) was established and during the year received over 13,000 calls for SRH complicated, COVID-19, and other health services.

In addition, AFGA hired two National Technical Advisors (NTAs) for FP Department of MoPH, two for eastern and southern regions to follow and monitor the FHH project in the mentioned regions, and one for National Statistic & Information Authority (NSIA). The NTAs provided technical support for developing policies and strategies, and implementation of the projects.

AFGA distributed 156 various types of Emergency Reproductive Health (ERH) kits to health facilities in Kabul, Laghman, Nangarhar and Kunar provinces. This will help the hospitals to provide SRH services to more than 49,000 child bearing aged women and girls.



### The SPRINT-III Project

Under the SPRINT-III Project, AFGA has perceptible achievements so far. AFGA communicated with the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA) to add the Minimum Initial Service Package (MISP) in to ADNMA's emergency plan. ANDMA accepted the idea and will consider it for the next solar year.

Furthermore, AFGA translated the revised MISP package into two local languages. That made several batches of MISP and MISP refresher training possible to be conducted during 2021. Apart from that, AFGA created MISP Dari video that easily explains MISP package and its importance during a crisis. AFGA created a Pashto version of MISP video too.

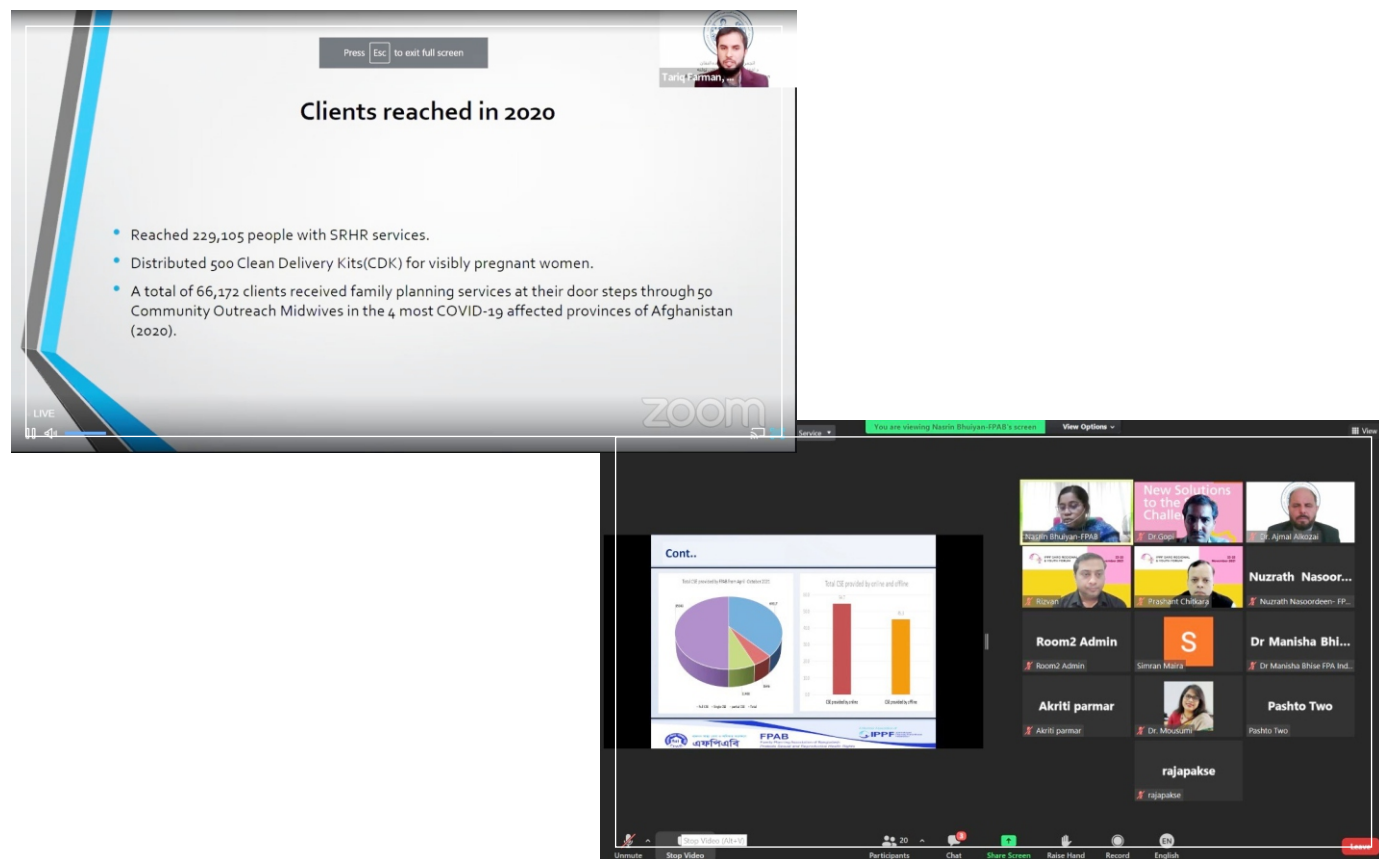
Under the SPRINT III project, AFGA conducted many capacity building trainings for AFGA, MoPH, INGOs, NGOs and CSOs staff during 2021. Firstly conducted a Training of Trainers (ToT) on revised package of MISP for AFGA, MoPH, CARE Afghanistan, and Save the Children staff. Secondly, AFGA oriented its main office staff on disability inclusion, Preventing Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) and MISP. Thirdly, AFGA facilitated the ToT of Comprehensive Sexuality Education (CSE) for AFGA Youth Network (AYN) and other local youth networks. As a result, several CSE trainees from those trainings are the current active CSE trainers in Afghanistan.

AFGA also conducted a Building Advocacy Skills training for AYN and other local youth networks. As AYN is a youth led network run by youth volunteers from AFGA that shares the core values of AFGA and is committed to contribute to achievement of AFGA's vision and mission. Therefore, AFGA can use the potential of these youths during an advocacy work.

Moreover, AFGA conducted several other capacity building trainings for more than 100 AFGA and MoPH health staff such as MISP trainings, MISP refresher training, Pre-Marriage Counseling (PMC) training, and Post Abortion Care (PAC) training. These trainings are part of the capacity building activities that AFGA is willing to provide for AFGA and MoPH health staff. Despite AFGA's static clinics services, AFGA's community outreach midwives work in the field in remote areas of Afghanistan and AFGA want them to have essential knowledge of key components of MISP, PMC and PAC so that AFGA can utilize their capabilities during emergency situations.

Furthermore, AFGA procured and stocked clean delivery and dignity Kits. The kits will be distributed to most needed vulnerable women and girls in the project areas by AFGA or Governmental service providers under the supervision of AFGA program department.





### AFGA's Active Participation in IPPF SARO's Regional and Youth Forum

23- 25 November, 2021: AFGA actively participated in the IPPF South Asia Regional Organization's (SARO) Regional and Youth Forum that was held virtually. The forum was held under the overarching theme "Delivering No Matter What". The Forum was a platform for learning and strategic reflection where ideas, perspectives and experiences were exchanged, trends shared and accomplishments celebrated. The interactive forum was designed to enable active discussion, exchange ideas, share experience and provide learning opportunities. The focus was more on:

1. Strategy and innovation.
2. Policy and advocacy.
3. Peer-to-Peer Learning.
4. Movement solidarity.

The forums included plenary sessions, seminars, workshops and closed discussion groups. It embraced innovative and digital methodologies

including video links, live streams and opportunities for participation of a wider group of regional/global attendees. It also offered exposure by way of highlighting individual MA stalls in a virtual exhibition gallery as well as virtual spaces for networking.

AFGA's participation was outstanding in the forum. AFGA's CEO delivered speeches in the inaugural and closing sessions and other representatives from AFGA delivered presentations on:

- Delivering Under Changing Political Landscape- A case from Afghanistan.
- Delivering in COVID Times- AFGA's Emergency SPRINT-III Project.
- AFGA's JSF Project.
- AFGA and Y-Peer Partnership on Delivering CSE Training.

Moreover, for wider audience, videos and stories on AFGA's activities were posted on the forum's online platform in the exhibition area.

### Japan Trust Fund (JTF) Project Completed Despite Challenges

In 2020, AFGA was awarded with a two years project to increase access to quality SRH-HIV integrated services to vulnerable, marginalized and underserved population, especially young women and girls in four provinces (Kabul, Kapisa, Parwan, and Herat) aimed at reducing the unmet sexual reproductive health needs of the vulnerable, especially poor, marginalized and underserved population through a multi-pronged approach of enhancing access to quality integrated SRH services.

The overall objective of the project was to increase access of 94,500 vulnerable population, especially young women and girls, to SRH services and information in the stated provinces to raise awareness on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR) and engage with community leaders to ensure supportive environment for women and girl's access to SRH services.

AFGA provided the services through five outreach midwives in Kapisa, one static clinic and five outreach midwives in Parwan, and one Mobile Health Clinic in Kabul.

During the initial implementation of the project, the working environment for project implementation was almost normal, however with Covid 19 pandemic and the political and regime change, the operation was slowed down but still AFGA was able to achieve the project targets.

To maintain and establish sustainable working relationships with previous and new Provincial Public Health Directorates (PPHD), officials and other stakeholders, AFGA attended relevant coordination meetings at the provincial level and provided information on the project activities, progress and challenges. This has made AFGA's activities visible to PPHD and other stakeholders.

During the project lifetime, a total of 853,296 SRHR services were provided to 120,167 clients through 12 service delivery points in the target provinces. Additionally, information on SRHR were provided to 1,399,711 people and all the required IEC/BCC materials were distributed to the Service Delivery Points (SDPs). Two of the AFGA's mobile health clinics were repaired and used during the project implementation that enables AFGA to use them in future such interventions too.





## Governance Strengthening Initiative Consultancy

To perform the in-depth analysis of the AFGA existing governance structures, systems, processes and its effectiveness against the set criteria, including the effectiveness of governance oversight, the cost of governance and other factors, AFGA, through financial support of IPPF, commissioned an independent consulting company.

The company analysed AFGA's existing governance structures, systems and processes against the international governance best practices, evaluating their cost-effectiveness, and the fulfilment of their governance roles, including but not limited to setting the strategic direction, approving policy frameworks, managing risks, mobilising resources and overseeing the financial situation of the organization. As a result of the study, the consulting company provided recommendations and an action plan to improve the AFGA governance.

## AFGA Partners with Nove Onlus

AFGA started expanding its health services outreach with the financial support of Nove Onlus, an Italian Non-profit organization, in Kabul province. AFGA provides SRHR services to ethnic minorities, Internally Displaced People (IDP), and people with disabilities in six locations of Kabul province through the mobile health team. On an average, the mobile health team provides SRHR services to 2,000 women and girls through a gynaecologist and a midwife in a month. The mentioned services are provided by the Mobile van that is designed for a clinic separated by four consultation rooms.

Through the partnership with Nove Onlus, AFGA expanded its outreach to provide health services (treatment to common diseases) and related medicines to a further 1,300 patients (men, women, and children) in six selected areas in a month. The mobile health team will provide health services to 3,300 clients on a monthly basis. The monthly target for the Medical Doctor supported by Nove Onlus is 1,300 patients.

It is a one year project started on November 1, 2021. As of January 2022, a total of 3,976 clients benefited from the services under the Nove Onlus project.

To strengthen the AFGA governance structure and performance, the consulting company provided 35 findings and 42 recommendations in 12 areas; 1) General Assembly, 2) Representativeness of Governing Board, 3) Induction of the Board Members, 4) Governing Body Election Process, 5) Governing Board Term and Tenure, 6) Governing Board Setting Direction, 7) Governing Board Competences, 8) Governing Body Policy Formulation, 9) Governing Board Selection and Performance Management of the CEO, 10) Governing Board Strategy and Planning, 11) Governing Board Meeting, and 12) General Points of Importance.

AFGA is closely working with the IPPF to implement the recommendations that will be completed during the year 2022.



## "Day or Night" - AFGA's Community Outreach Midwives are Dedicated to Serving Women in Need

Sajia\*, 26, is married with four children. Her husband has lost his job in August 2021. The family recently became displaced, and Sajia said they were "sad and afraid". When she was visited by AFGA Community Outreach Midwife, Sajia was pregnant, and she was advised on the services that were available to her free of charge, including pre-natal care, and was given information about a nearby hospital when it was time for her delivery. Sajia was worried about being away from her family. Marina, one of AFGA's COM who was trained as part of IPPF's humanitarian program, assured Sajia that she would be ready to support her as much as it takes, "no matter if it is day or night".

Marina continues, "When she was about to give birth, she called me and asked me for help. I made sure to reach to her on time and take her to the hospital. I was making sure to ask the patient about her health. I knew she was worried that her close relatives were away from her at that moment. Yet, I made sure to support her morally that I am at her service, and she was frequently thanking me for standing by her side".

Marina continued to stay in contact with Sajia through the birth of her baby and visited her at the hospital. Marina was trained through IPPF and AFGA's Stream-

line humanitarian response that is providing SRH services in remote areas in five provinces of Afghanistan (Kabul, Nangarhar, Khost, Balkh, and Herat). This project aims to provide SRH services after the political deterioration experienced in Afghanistan during 2021, which brought threats to sustainability of SRH service delivery due to the limitation of cash in the banking system. COMs provide HIV, STI, Family Planning, ANC, PNC, Urology, and subfertility counselling, and referral services for poor and marginalized people who might not be able to prioritize SRH health due to financial problems.

Note\*: The writer keeps anonymity and confidentiality in this success story by using pseudonyms for the client.





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