



WOMEN FOR
AFGHAN WOMEN

AFGHAN WOMEN RISING



“Women for Afghan Women is not just a place we go to for services—it is a lifeline. It is family.”

—Women for Afghan Women New York client

MISSION

Women for Afghan Women is a grassroots, civil society organization dedicated to securing and protecting the rights of disenfranchised Afghan women and girls in Afghanistan and New York, particularly their rights to develop their individual potential, to self-determination, and to be represented in all areas of life: political, social, cultural, and economic. Women for Afghan Women advocates for women's rights and challenges the norms that underpin gender-based violence wherever opportunities arise to influence attitudes and bring about change.

VISION

Women for Afghan Women is committed to working towards a world in which Afghan women and girls enjoy peace, justice, equality, and the freedoms to participate in all spheres of life and live without fear. Women for Afghan Women envisions a world in which all women and their families thrive and prosper.

Women for Afghan Women (WAW) was founded in New York in April 2001 in response to the brutal conditions Afghan women and girls were suffering under Taliban rule. After the September 2011 attacks in the United States and the ousting of the Taliban in Afghanistan, the organization has evolved from a small network of volunteers assisting Afghan refugee women in New York into an over 700-member team that today operates 32 facilities across 14 provinces in Afghanistan, a community center in New York, and an advocacy office in Washington, DC.

Today, Women for Afghan Women is the largest women's organization in Afghanistan providing mediation, protection, and life-saving services to women, girls, children, and their families. We are constantly expanding, adapting, and improving the scope of our services to meet ever-changing needs and constantly-shifting conditions in Afghan society.

In the United States, Women for Afghan Women's New York Community Center (NYCC) has become a lifeline and second home to the Afghan immigrant and Afghan-American community. The NYCC's language proficiency in six languages - Dari/Farsi, Pashto, Urdu, Hindi, Arabic, and English - has allowed us to extend services to the South Asian, Arabic, and Muslim communities in New York. Supported by our advocacy efforts in Washington, DC, we serve the direct needs of this underserved population in the United States by providing culturally sensitive, holistic, and immediate support.



WAW client with her children after a luncheon at the NYCC celebrating the first time she and ten other NY clients voted, for the first time in their lives, in the 2016 U.S. Presidential elections.

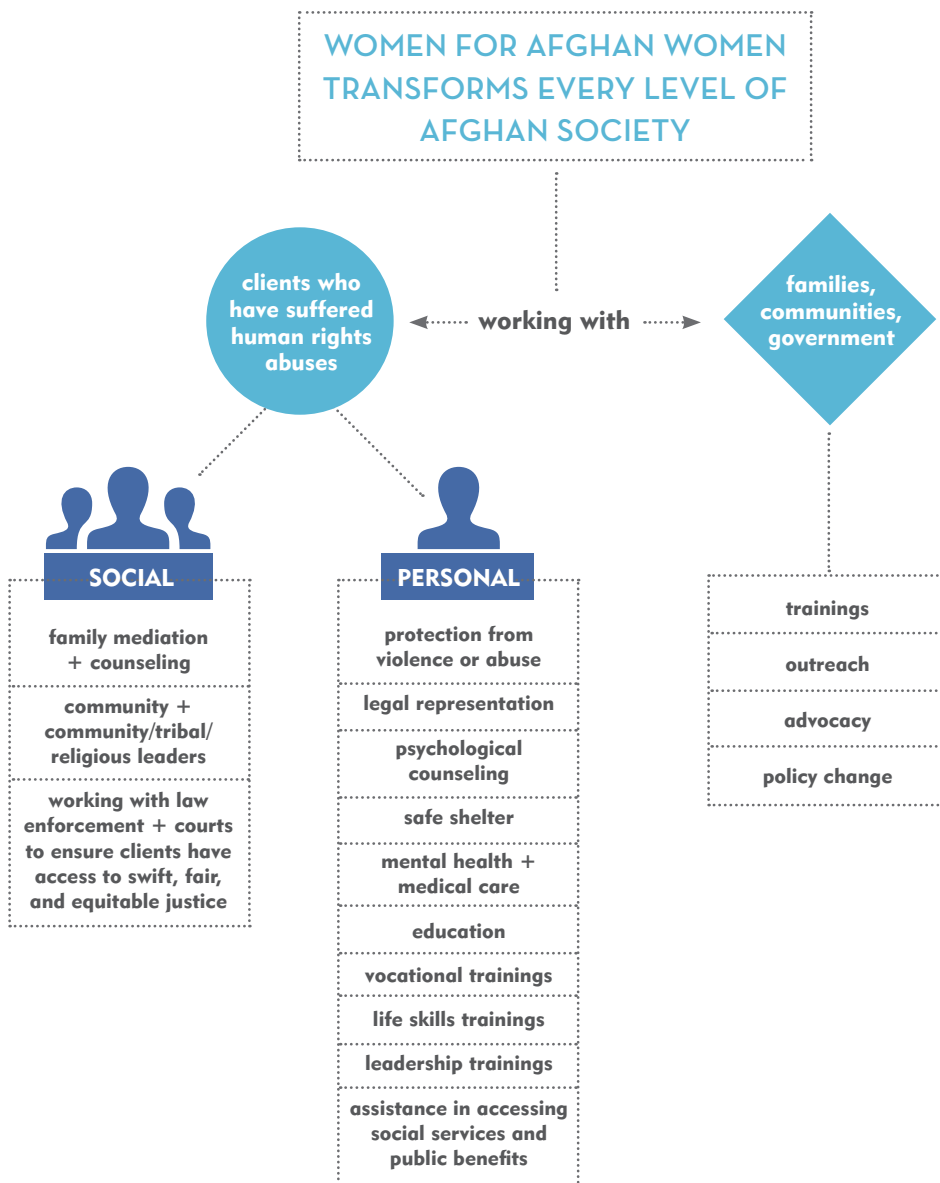
POWERFUL

By strengthening individuals, families, and communities and by promoting, upholding, and advocating that women's rights ARE human rights, we work to create long-lasting change at every level of Afghan society.

Women for Afghan Women provides a safe and caring environment that offers tools, support, and guidance to individuals so that they have the independence and confidence to follow their dreams, make decisions, and make life choices that are free of fear and of duress.

This empowerment process at Women for Afghan Women permeates every aspect of our services, so that we provide holistic, direct, and flexible support that addresses specific individual and interpersonal needs.

This comprehensive approach enables the women and children that come to us to transform their attitudes and approach to life. Our operations model and staff embrace this theory of change at every level of our work.



DYNAMIC

“When I returned to Afghanistan for the first time since leaving as a child, I truly learned how strong and resilient my Afghan sisters are. After hearing their stories, I vowed to go back and commit my life to advocating for change for all Afghan women.” – *Manizha Naderi, ED, Women for Afghan Women*



WAW client is helped with her studies by a staff member at one of our women's shelters (photo courtesy of Leslie Knott, 2015).

In 2006, Manizha Naderi, WAW's Executive Director (ED), moved from New York to Kabul to launch our programs in Afghanistan. She conducted a four-month feasibility study to determine the unmet needs of women and girls in order to ensure that our programming enhanced and complimented existing work on the ground. The Kabul Family Guidance Center, our flagship model, emerged from this study in March 2007.

The vast majority of Women for Afghan Women's clients are women and girls who have suffered abuse and human rights violations, including:

- forced and/or underage (child) marriage;
- so-called "honor" killing attempts;
- domestic violence;
- *ba'ad* (custom of females exchanged in compensation for a crime);
- beatings amounting to torture;
- forced prostitution;
- limited access to healthcare; and
- denial of education.

In 2016, Women for Afghan Women served **4,470 new individual clients** in Afghanistan and New York, with **26,829 family members** benefiting from our work. In addition, we trained a total of **27,342 individuals** across different programs. With these accomplishments, Women for Afghan Women has served over **25,479 clients** and **trained over 304,550 individuals** since 2001.

BEFORE WAW

- 90% of WAW clients had been victims of violence

- 50% never had access to education

- 70% had faced forced or child marriage

AFGHANISTAN

In Afghanistan, Women for Afghan Women is deeply rooted in the communities in which it works. No one in need is ever turned away. Every facility and program operated by WAW employs Afghans from the local community, who are trained to provide the same protection, mediation, counseling, training, and educational services across the 32 centers and 14 provinces in which we operate, including:

Province	FGC	WPC	CSC	TH	HH	WRT	MMP	PMP
Badakhshan	1	1	1			1		1
Baghlan								1
Balkh	1		1	1		1		1
Faryab	2	1				1		1
Herat			1	1				
Jawzjan	1	1						1
Kabul	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	
Kapisa	1	1				1		
Kunduz	1	1				1		
Kunar	1					1		
Nangarhar	1	1				1		
Samangan	1	1						1
Sari Pul	1	1				1		1
Takhar	1	1				1		1
Totals	13	10	4	3	1	10	1	8

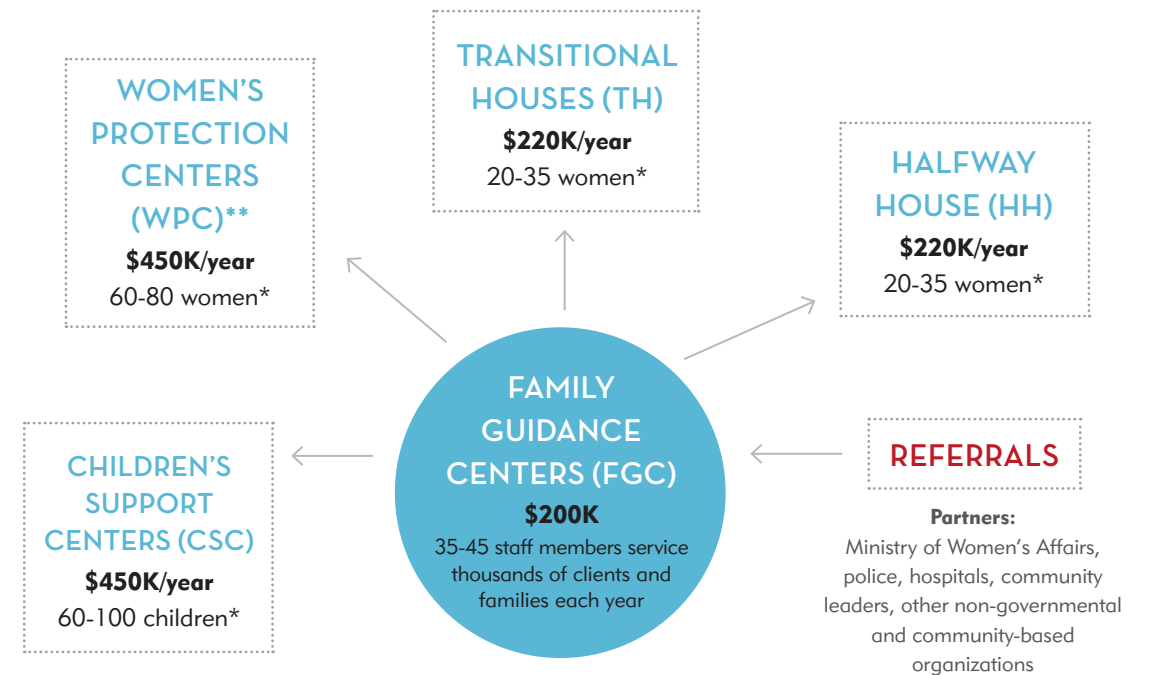
- **13 FAMILY GUIDANCE CENTERS (FGCs)** providing family counseling, mediation, legal representation, and psychological support to persons who are at risk or have suffered any form of abuse and human rights violations;
- **10 WOMEN'S PROTECTION CENTERS (WPCs)** [also known as women's shelters] providing women and girls safe homes and support services, legal support and life skills, empowerment, and vocational training until their legal cases are resolved;
- **4 CHILDREN'S SUPPORT CENTERS (CSCs)** providing safe homes, stability, loving care, and education for orphans and children whose mothers are in prison;
- **3 TRANSITIONAL HOUSES (THs)** providing women transitioning out of prison with safe homes, legal support, psychological support, and life skills, empowerment, and vocational training;
- **1 HALFWAY HOUSE (HH)** providing shelter, legal support, psychological support, and life

skills, empowerment, and vocational training to women transitioning out of WAW shelters and who cannot safely return home;

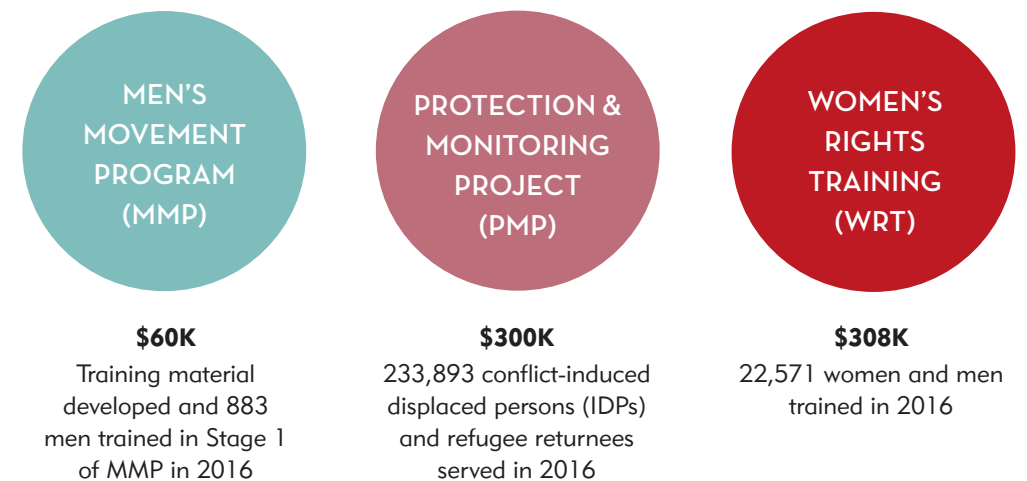
- **"WOMEN'S RIGHTS ARE HUMAN RIGHTS" Training Program (WRT)** providing training on women's rights under Islam and Afghan civil law for individuals at every level of Afghan society. Trainings aim to transform cultural norms and traditions that perpetuate violence against women, and are conducted in all the provinces where WAW operates.
- **PROTECTION AND MONITORING PROJECT (PMP)** supporting local community reintegration efforts for conflict-induced displaced persons (IDPs) and refugee returnees in Afghanistan, by strengthening the monitoring and efficacy of protection environments.
- **MEN'S MOVEMENT PROGRAM (MMP)** develops training material and trainings for men that challenge detrimental norms and attitudes towards women and girls, while remaining culturally sensitive so that support for women's rights is enduring and gains wide support.

AFGHANISTAN PROGRAMS

AVERAGE ANNUAL PROGRAM COSTS + AVERAGE NUMBER OF PERSONS SERVED



TRAINING/MONITORING & PROTECTION



*Average number of clients served at any given time in program, with facilities in different provinces having varied capacities.
 **Also known as women's shelters.



From left to right:
 1. Student hard at work during Homework Help. 2. WAW staff member and client outside a polling station on election day (2016 U.S. Presidential elections).



New York Community Center (NYCC)

Women for Afghan Women's New York Community Center (NYCC) is a bustling, one-stop shop of love and support, located in the heart of the Afghan immigrant and Afghan-American community in Queens, New York. The NYCC abides by the same tenets as our work in Afghanistan by ensuring that no one is turned away, and that our pro bono services are provided by women and men with close affiliations and relations to the community.

The NYCC also works with people who come from the city's five boroughs to access our services, often including individuals and families from Pakistan, Iran, India, and the Arab countries. We are the only local organization in New York to offer services in Dari and Pashtu; and members of NYCC staff speak Urdu, Hindi, Arabic, and English. Our main objective, through our NYCC programs and holistic approach to services, is the empowerment of women and girls, although we also welcome men and boys and often work with entire families.

The core services provided by this "home away from home" include:

CONFIDENTIAL CASE MANAGEMENT for individuals and families dealing with issues ranging from domestic violence and/or requiring assistance with immigration, public benefits, education, employment, interpretation, and any other need that may arise;

ADULT EMPOWERMENT CLASSES for women that include daily English as a Second Language (ESL), citizenship classes, driving test preparation, in addition to a special ESL and citizenship class for men on weekends;

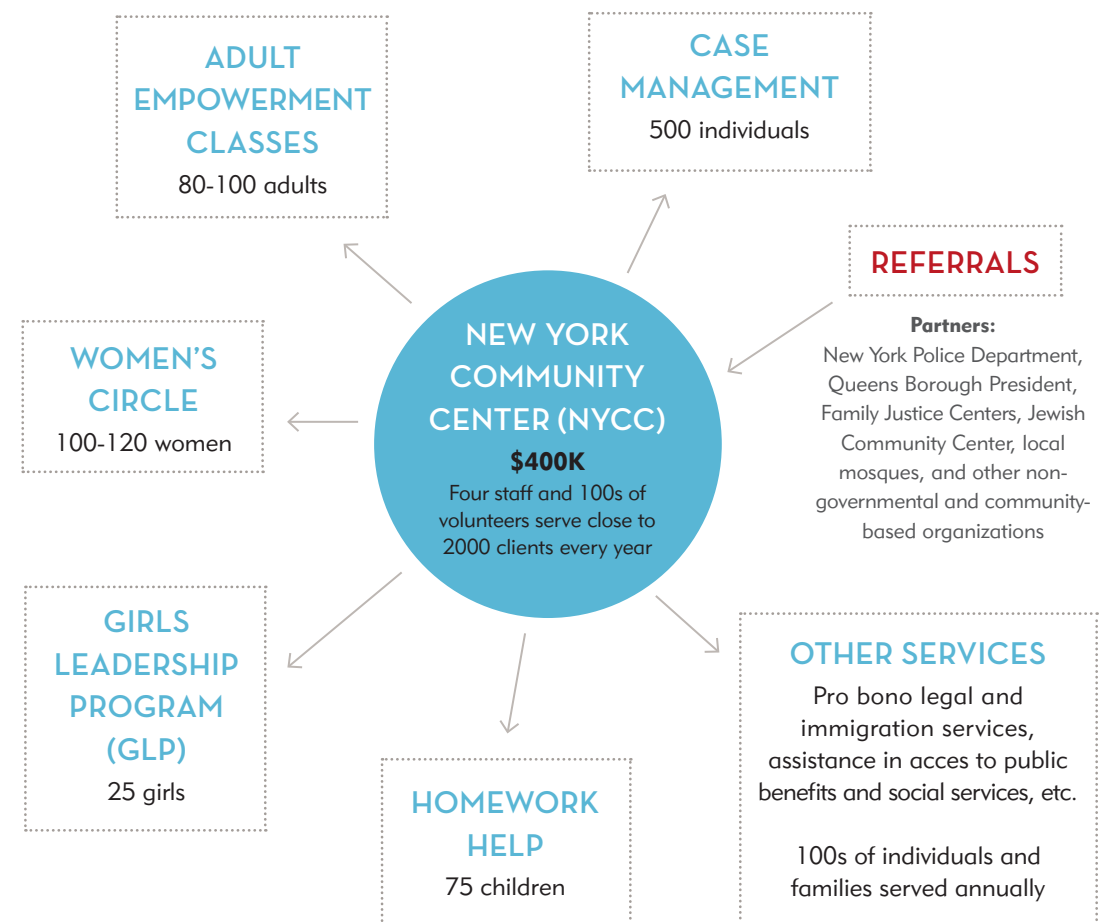
WOMEN'S CIRCLE is a monthly support group program that provides a safe and confidential space for discussions on topics relevant, but often taboo in the community, including domestic violence and women's rights;

GIRLS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM is an empowerment program designed for girls aged 10-14 that offers life skills training and education about leadership, human rights, and career choices, among other activities; and,

CHILDREN'S TUTORING provides a **Homework Help** program for students of all genders and ages with regular support with homework and preparation for state testing. Often, WAW staff attend parent-teacher conferences for students whose parents do not speak English. WAW staff also follow up with teachers and schools to ensure that students' progress is properly supported and monitored.

NEW YORK PROGRAMS

AVERAGE ANNUAL PROGRAM COST + AVERAGE NUMBER OF PERSONS SERVED YEARLY





Clockwise, from top left: 1. NY Client at the Women's March in Washinton, DC on January 21, 2017 (photo courtesy Zayira Ray, 2017); 2. Girls at an event at one of our CSCs in Afghanistan (photo courtesy of Leslie Knott, 2015); 3. "Selfie" by client with her children at one of our WPCs in Afghanistan (2016)

Washington, DC Advocacy Office

Our advocacy office, situated strategically in Washington, DC, raises awareness about the state of Afghan women and girls and advocates for their rights.

Established in 2014, Women for Afghan Women's advocacy office campaigns for continued international support for peace-building in Afghanistan and for Afghan women and girls' rights by engaging Washington-based officials, legislators, and government representatives in critical conversations.

WAW's advocacy office also works towards building coalitions and networking with allies to ensure that the hard-won social, political, and economic gains of Afghan women and girls are preserved, and to ensure Afghan women thinkers and leaders participate in policy-making at all levels of decision-making processes that impact their lives.

"I now realize that my life is as important as any other member of my family."

— Girls Leadership Program participant

YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS GO A LONG WAY TOWARDS EMPOWERING OUR CLIENTS!

For Example:

- \$500** = Emergency shelter for ten survivors of domestic violence in New York
- \$1,000** = Six-month stay for a client in a WAW center in Afghanistan
- \$2,500** = Medical care for a woman or child in Afghanistan
- \$5,000** = Legal aid for 150 women and girls in Afghanistan
- \$10,000** = One year of citizenship classes for immigrant women and men in New York
- \$25,000** = Vocational training for WAW centers in six provinces in Afghanistan
- \$50,000** = Women's Rights ARE Human Rights Training in one province in Afghanistan

With your support, Afghan women and girls are RISING and Women for Afghan Women's spirit is as indestructible as ever!



GHAZAL, 16

When Ghazal ran away with a man who was not her husband, her enraged brother pursued the couple. When the brother finally found them, he savagely attacked both with an axe. He hacked the man to death and tried to do the same to Ghazal.

Somehow, Ghazal survived more than 15 massive blows to her head, face, and neck. A hospital in the area kept Ghazal alive, but her family was afraid to lend her any support. The stigma of standing by an alleged “fallen” girl put them in danger of being targeted.

When Women for Afghan Women got news of Ghazal’s case, the organization stepped in immediately and took over her care. Women for Afghan Women flew Ghazal to a hospital in another province and made sure she received the urgent medical care and surgery that she required. After a lengthy medical recovery, WAW placed Ghazal in our Halfway House, where compassionate staff continue to care for her.

Today, Ghazal can walk, eat, and speak again. Although, she has suffered trauma-induced memory loss, she is aware that she was attacked by her own brother. But, she has also learned that many of the women that WAW cares for have been similarly abused and brutalized, and applies herself to her rehabilitation with the utmost dignity and courage.

ZARI, 22

In a settlement between families to compensate for the murder of a young man, Zari was only 11 years old when she was forced to become the child bride of the murdered man’s brother. Her husband despised her and was very abusive because she symbolized the crime committed against his brother. Six months after their marriage, Zari’s husband joined the army and left her alone with his family. With her husband absent, Zari’s father-in-law began to rape her on a daily basis. When she finally exposed what he was doing to her, her father-in-law locked her up in chains with a plan to kill her.

Terrified, Zari’s sister-in-law went to a man in the village, who was known to care for Zari, to see if he could save Zari from this horrific fate. The man rushed to free Zari and her life was suddenly transformed. She fell in love with her rescuer and vowed never to be abused again. The couple ran away and sought refuge in Pakistan for five years. In Pakistan, they were married and had two sons. Zari was treated with love and as an equal by her new husband.

When Zari became pregnant for the third time, the couple decided to return to Afghanistan. Upon their return, Zari’s first husband had them both arrested for adultery and on a fabricated charge of terrorism. Zari’s second husband was convicted and imprisoned. The police referred Zari and her children to Women for Afghan Women. Today, Zari and her children live in one of our Women’s Protection Centers (WPCs) and remain under our love and care while they await the release of Zari’s second husband from prison.

MAHDIYA, 22

Mahdiya was 11 years old when her drug-addicted father married her off to a blind cleric three times her age. Mahdiya’s husband treated her like a slave, beating and raping her repeatedly for over a year. Mahdiya finally managed to run away and was referred to Women for Afghan Women. WAW kept her safe in one of our Women’s Protection Centers (WPCs) while we litigated Mahdiya’s case for divorce. However, Mahdiya’s husband is a very influential man and WAW lost the case in court. Tragically, Mahdiya was forced to return to her husband.

As soon as Mahdiya returned, her mother-in-law warned her to run away again because she knew her son was planning to kill her. After Mahdiya’s second escape, the cleric bribed a judge who then demanded \$2,000 in order for Mahdiya to obtain a divorce. WAW took Mahdiya’s case to court again, but this time we won! Mahdiya was granted a divorce and lived happily in one of WAW’s Women’s Protection Centers for over two years. While at the WPC, Mahdiya took literacy classes (and excelled!) while helping out in the kitchen.

While at the WPC and despite her terrible ordeal, Mahdiya was always full of smiles and brought joy to everyone she met. One of our guards told us that he liked Mahdiya’s cheerful manner and thought she was very sweet. He felt that she would be a great wife for his son. After visiting the guard’s family and conducting a thorough background check on his son, we told Mahdiya that the guard’s son was interested in her. The young man came to visit her repeatedly, and finally proposed to Mahdiya. Seven months after he proposed, Mahdiya accepted and today they are happily married!

QAMAR, 24

Qamar was 24 years old when she was referred to Women for Afghan Women by the Afghan Ministry of Women’s Affairs (MoWA). She was married to a man for five years and had two daughters. Qamar’s husband was a drug addict, and the couple often fought and as frequently, he beat her.

After trying repeatedly to convince her husband to stop taking drugs, she finally gave up and left him. She stayed at her parent’s home, hoping that the separation would give her husband the space to overcome his addiction. But he was unable to deal with his addiction and she was finally referred to Women for Afghan Women to explore her options about obtaining a divorce.

Before filing for divorce, Women for Afghan Women conducted mediation sessions with Qamar’s husband, working persistently with him until he finally agreed to seek treatment for his addiction. WAW assisted him in checking into a rehabilitation clinic and he has been drug-free since!

Convinced that her husband had turned a new page, Qamar agreed to return to him, and life improved rapidly after his rehabilitation and their reunification. Today, the couple and their daughters are living happily together!

MINA, 9

Mina was only 9 years old when she was promised to another man by her father so that he could have another wife. A few months later and before they were supposed to be married, her 29-year-old fiancé kidnapped her and began to brutally rape her. The fiancé's mother tried to protect Mina for as long as she could, but her son continued to rape the poor child for weeks.

Mina got to the point where she could no longer sit or walk, was bleeding heavily, and eventually contracted a severe infection. A local community leader was made aware of Mina's condition and he took her to the nearest clinic, and her case was immediately referred to Women for Afghan Women.

Women for Afghan Women immediately transferred Mina from the clinic to a local hospital that could better deal with the treatment needed for her condition. The child was in constant, agonizing pain and required surgery. But, she was too weak. After six months of medical care, her doctors were still too worried to operate because they feared she could die under anesthesia due to the frailty of her condition.

At that point, Women for Afghan Women, transferred Mina to a medical facility in Kabul to see if they could deal with her condition. She finally underwent the surgery she required and is now recovering in one of our Women's Protection Centers. Mina is finally recovering and doing much better. She is much healthier and happier. But, unfortunately, she will still have to undergo further surgery when she is older. Until then, WAW will take care of her and give her all the love and support she needs, and will continue to do so for as long as required.

MARZIA, 16

Sixteen-year-old Marzia was repeatedly raped by her own father. Her father did everything he could to cover up his crime. However, eventually, the inevitable happened and he impregnated her. When Marzia went into premature labor, her mother rushed her to the nearest hospital. When the doctors realized the young girl had no husband, they suspected she was the victim of incest and called the police immediately.

The police referred her case to Women for Afghan Women, which took over Marzia's urgent medical care. After her recovery, Marzia was placed in one of our Women's Protection Centers (WPCs), where she now attends literacy classes for the first time in her life.

With Marzia finally safe under our care, Women for Afghan Women pursued her case until Marzia's father was arrested and sentenced for his crime. Today, Marzia is not only protected but also happy and eagerly learning how to read and write. She dreams of the day when she will obtain her university degree, and we will do everything in our power to make her dream come true!

AZIZA, 11

As a child, Aziza was loved and pampered. She dreamed of growing up to be a doctor. However, when Aziza turned seven, her life changed drastically when her mother died. After her mother's passing, Aziza's father remarried. Although the father was kind, the stepmother was extremely abusive, and Aziza's father felt he could do little to stop the abuse. Sometimes, he left Aziza with neighbors to protect her from her stepmother. But, one day, the neighbors sold Aziza to an Afghan woman.

Aziza was taken to Kabul and trafficked into prostitution. She was forced to dress up and spend nights with strange men. But, even in her darkest moments, Aziza never forgot her dreams and aspirations. She was determined to escape. Three years after arriving in Kabul, Aziza got her chance and ran away to the nearest police station. The police took her immediately to one of our Family Guidance Centers (FGCs).

The FGC staff transferred Aziza to one of our Women's Protection Centers (WPCs), where she fell in love with our literacy classes. But due to her young age, she was out of place among all the older women. Eventually, we moved her to our first Children's Support Center (CSC) when it opened in 2009.

Today, Aziza is thriving. She is intelligent and an academically-driven child. She is taking an accelerated course to prepare her for school entrance exams. She is eager to enroll in a good school and wants to start working towards her dream of becoming a doctor. Women for Afghan Women is doing everything it can to help Aziza succeed and achieve her dreams.

ZAINAB, 18

Zainab fell in love when she was 18 years old. The young man she was in love with eventually asked for Zainab's hand in marriage. But his proposal was rejected outright by Zainab's family because the young man came from a different sect. After repeated attempts to convince her family to change its mind, Zainab, desperate and in despair, escaped to another city where she was referred to Women for Afghan Women.

Zainab was terrified to return home after running away. She believed her family would either kill her or force her to marry someone she did not love or someone much older than her.

Women for Afghan Women reached out repeatedly to Zainab's family, until they finally agreed to meet. After much painstaking mediation, the family finally agreed to Zainab's marriage to the young man she loved! The wedding took place and the young couple's love triumphed against so many odds.

We are so proud that through our mediation, patience, and resolve, Zainab's wish came true. Even Zainab's father showed deep gratitude for our intervention. Thanking Women for Afghan Women, he said, "The end of Zainab's story would have been very different had tribal elders decided her fate."

MAHNAZ, 30

Thirty-year-old Mahnaz was married at the age of 15 and had five children with her husband. Unfortunately, her husband began to have issues with Mahnaz's father and he took it out on her, violently. Mahnaz's father interceded and forced her to leave her husband. Her father also would not allow Mahnaz's children to see their father. Very unhappy, Mahnaz was referred to one of Women for Afghan Women's Family Guidance Centers (FGCs).

At first, Mahnaz told Women for Afghan Women staff that her husband had divorced her. She later admitted that they were only separated, but thought her husband wanted a divorce, so WAW assigned her with a defense lawyer and a caseworker.

After several sessions between Mahnaz's case worker, lawyer, and husband, it became clear that the father was interfering between Mahnaz and her husband, and that the husband did not want to divorce her. After prolonged mediation sessions with the couple, Mahnaz eventually agreed to return with her children to live with her husband, and give their marriage another try. The couple has reconciled and they are now living much happier and in peace as a family!

GITA, 30

Gita is a 30-year-old client and the victim of extreme violence and abuse by her husband and her in-laws. She was eight months pregnant when her husband, sisters-in-law, and mother-in-law beat her to the point that she miscarried. Even after her full-term miscarriage, her in-laws did not take her to the hospital. She lost over half of her blood before she was finally taken to a hospital in Kunduz.

The hospital felt that Gita's case required medical attention that they could not provide in Kunduz and asked that she be transferred to Kabul for treatment. Women for Afghan Women was contacted and immediately admitted Gita to a hospital in Kabul.

Women for Afghan Women paid for her blood transfusions, but to survive, Gita required more blood than was available at the hospital. WAW's Kabul Family Guidance Center staff donated their own blood to make up for the shortfall. She soon recovered to full health and Women for Afghan Women has helped her move back to her parents' home. She is finally safe, thriving, and living in peace.

PARI, 23

At the age of 18, Pari was sent to the United States by herself to marry a second cousin she had never met. Upon her arrival, Pari's new husband decided he did not want her. They never consummated the marriage and he told her to return to Afghanistan. But Pari's family forbade her return as they believed it would be perceived as a disgrace. Instead, the man's parents offered to take care of Pari.

As time passed, it became apparent to Pari that her so-called in-laws only kept her in order to exploit her. She was not permitted to leave their home unchaperoned. She was not allowed to get any type of education, and they began beating her. She became enslaved as their housekeeper and cook.

Several times, Pari accompanied her in-laws to the bank and eventually found out that they were using her to open accounts and take out loans under her name. Using some of that money, her in-laws opened a store in which Pari was forced to work full-time without pay. Pari soon discovered that bills in her name were arriving in the mail at her in-laws' home. When she finally confronted her in-laws, they beat her and kicked her out of the house. She was taken in by her husband's uncle, who helped her understand the extent of the fraud for which she was exploited.

Pari and her husband's uncle reached out to Women for Afghan Women's New York Community Center (NYCC). NYCC staff took on Pari's case immediately and appointed an attorney from the Queens Family Justice Center. The case was finally resolved and Pari has been safely resettled. She is now living a life of dignity, free of exploitation and abuse, with Women for Afghan Women continuing to follow up with her to ensure that she is doing well.

NADERA, 29

Nadera has a five-year-old daughter and an 18-month-old son. Nadera is originally from Pakistan and has been married to her 50-year-old husband for six years.

Nadera's husband was abusing her and was arrested twice by the New York Police Department in 2012 and again in 2016. After his last arrest, Nadera decided to seek help and was referred to Women for Afghan Women's New York Community Center (NYCC) by a friend.

Women for Afghan Women caseworkers talked at length with Nadera about her situation and learned that she did not want to get a divorce from her husband, because she was dependent upon him financially. Nadera does not work and does not speak English.

Women for Afghan Women's caseworkers referred Nadera to the New York City Family Justice Center (NYC FJC) for legal counseling. Nadera finally decided to separate from her husband for a month, but eventually gave her husband another chance. Her case is ongoing and both WAW and the NYC FJC are following up with her to ensure that she and her children remain safe and are doing well.

AMINA, 32

Amina has been a client of Women for Afghan Women's New York Community Center (NYCC) for the past two years. Women for Afghan Women helped Amina find employment and get access to Medicaid, food stamps, housing, and translation services for her family.

Amina, today, attends the English as a Second Language (ESL) and driving test preparation classes at the NYCC. Her three children attend the after-school tutoring program, Homework Help.

With the help of Women for Afghan Women's NYCC programs, Amina and her children, who did not speak English when they moved to the United States from Afghanistan, are now fluent in English.

Amina's children are thriving at school and she is enjoying the social life and network she has built at Women for Afghan Women. She doesn't feel alone and is feeling empowered and able to live a life she always dreamed of for her and her family!

CHAMAN, 42

Born and raised in Afghanistan, Chaman is a domestic violence survivor. When she became of marriageable age, her family arranged for her to marry an Afghan man living in New York. When Chaman arrived in the United States, her husband hid her identity papers, physically abused her, and refused to let her communicate with her family.

Chaman first came to Women for Afghan Women looking for support with accessing Medicaid. Within weeks, she felt safe enough to call a WAW staff member in the middle of a cold, spring night, where she and her children were stranded on a park bench. Her husband had beaten her and her two children and thrown them out of the house.

Women for Afghan Women took on Chaman's case and solicited legal help to assist Chaman in obtaining a divorce. The divorce was not only obtained successfully but she also won full custody of her children. With WAW's help, Chaman has relocated with her children to Canada, where they are living with extended family in a safe, thriving, and peaceful environment. Chaman remains in regular contact with Women for Afghan Women and remains grateful for the support she and her children received during their time of need.

AFIA, 45

Afia always dreamed of becoming a mother but was unable to get pregnant. She was also regularly beaten by her husband and in-laws. When she brought home an orphaned baby from a local hospital, her husband became enraged. Worried that her husband and in-laws would harm the baby, Afia fled Afghanistan and ended up in Pakistan. Years later, Afia and her adopted daughter, Meena, were granted asylum and resettlement in the United States.

When they arrived in New York, Women for Afghan Women welcomed the mother and daughter and helped them access the services and programs they needed to thrive in their new home. Women for Afghan Women supported Afia with securing cash assistance, food stamps, and Medicaid, and later helped her find employment.

Women for Afghan Women also enrolled Meena in public school and provided her with private tutoring sessions throughout the summer to help her prepare for her first year of elementary school. Despite years of abuse and sacrifice, Afia is flourishing and beams with pride and absolute joy when she sees how happy and how well her beloved daughter, Meena, is doing in school and in their new life in America!

Women for Afghan Women changes all client names and removes any identifying information, features, and characteristics when relaying their stories in order to protect their and their families' identities, privacy, and safety.



WAW NY clients, volunteers,
and staff at the Women's
March in Washington, DC
on January 21st, 2017.
(photo courtesy of Zayira
Ray, 2017).

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