

# THE FAMILY HOTLINE

A Road to Empowerment, Gender Justice and Social Change in Afghanistan



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This report has been compiled for British and Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group by a consultancy team from the London School of Economics and Political Science. The authors are students of the MSc programme in International Development and Humanitarian Emergencies:

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### Disclaimer

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### Acronyms

<b>6464</b>	- The Family Support Hotline
<b>ACA</b>	- American Counselling Association
<b>ACDEO</b>	- Afghanistan Capacity Development and Educational Organisation
<b>BAAG</b>	- British & Irish Agencies Afghanistan Group
<b>CSO</b>	- Central Statistics Organization in Afghanistan
<b>EVAW</b>	- Elimination of Violence Against Women
<b>GPSF</b>	- Global Peace and Security Fund, Canada
<b>IDLO</b>	- International Development Law Organisation
<b>NGOs</b>	- Non-Governmental Organisations
<b>SMS</b>	- Short Message Service (text messages)
<b>UN</b>	- United Nations
<b>UNAMA</b>	- United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan
<b>UNHCR</b>	- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>VAW</b>	- Violence Against Women
<b>WHO</b>	- World Health Organisation

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Hotlines have three main functions. First, they provide access to information and remote individual support, through services like social justice counselling and legal aid, that seek to inform and empower individuals. Secondly, hotlines act as a catalyst for civil society, by linking networks of physical services with individuals in need, which helps to create and sustain communities dedicated to social justice. Lastly, hotlines maintain caller databases that can map out caller issues, locations, and needs across the hotline's area of operation. The Family Support Hotline is a 2013 initiative run by the NGO Afghanistan Capacity Development & Educational Organisation (ACDEO) to provide help and guidance to families in Afghanistan in the form of counselling, legal advice, and discussion of Sharia provisions. Operated out of Kabul, the hotline receives calls from all provinces in Afghanistan, from men and women, boys and girls. With the idea of expanding the Family Support Hotline at all levels in mind (Map 1), this report has found that there are a number of ways this might be achieved.

In providing individual support, the Family Support Hotline operates within the teachings of Sharia and Afghan Law, thus acting as a means for diffusing public knowledge of law and religion in Afghanistan. At the same time Family Hotline operators strive to provide relief through counselling. These services empower individuals who are marginalised within their homes or societies. Ongoing training is always needed for operators. As laws are changed, as Afghan society changes, as the issues operators must face change and develop, so too must their capacity to learn, adapt and deliver. Regular trainings, within their organisation and jointly with other organizations, can help to develop skills and further understanding of areas not already in the operators' expertise.

Equally important is the operators' ability to receive feedback on the services they provide. Currently all calls to the hotline are anonymous so no feedback mechanisms are in place, except for callers wanting to thank the hotline for its service.

While this report does not recommend the adoption of recording names or any specific caller information that could lead to a caller being identified, it does suggest that operators ask all

callers about how safe they feel calling into the hotline. This provides both an individual and a database service, as operators can potentially call those callers, who have agreed, for follow up information and feedback and the database can record and map areas and issues for which callers do and do not feel safe calling.

As a database, the hotline needs to adapt 'ticketing' (call categorization and data recording) measures that are more descriptive of the callers issues. Reasons for calling, such as engagement and marriage that could potentially cover a large number of issues, like forced marriage, underage marriage, nerves concerning marriage, unhappy marriages, arguments between spouses, etc. can be confusing to donors or national organisations that wish to use the database for information on targeted purposes. It is recommended that the Family Support Hotline use specific indicators of violence and abuse laid out by the World Health Organisation or Elimination of Violence Against Women (EVAW) to enhance understanding of data sets.

On the community level, media campaigns, in the form of community visits, radio or television broadcasts, are incredibly important for spreading the word about the hotline and its services and laying the initial framework of trust between the hotline and potential callers.

As access to media devices increases within Afghanistan so too can the ability of people to learn of and call into the Family Support Hotline. Additionally, regularly asking callers how they heard about the hotline can increase knowledge of successful advertising activities and map out future target areas for media campaigns.

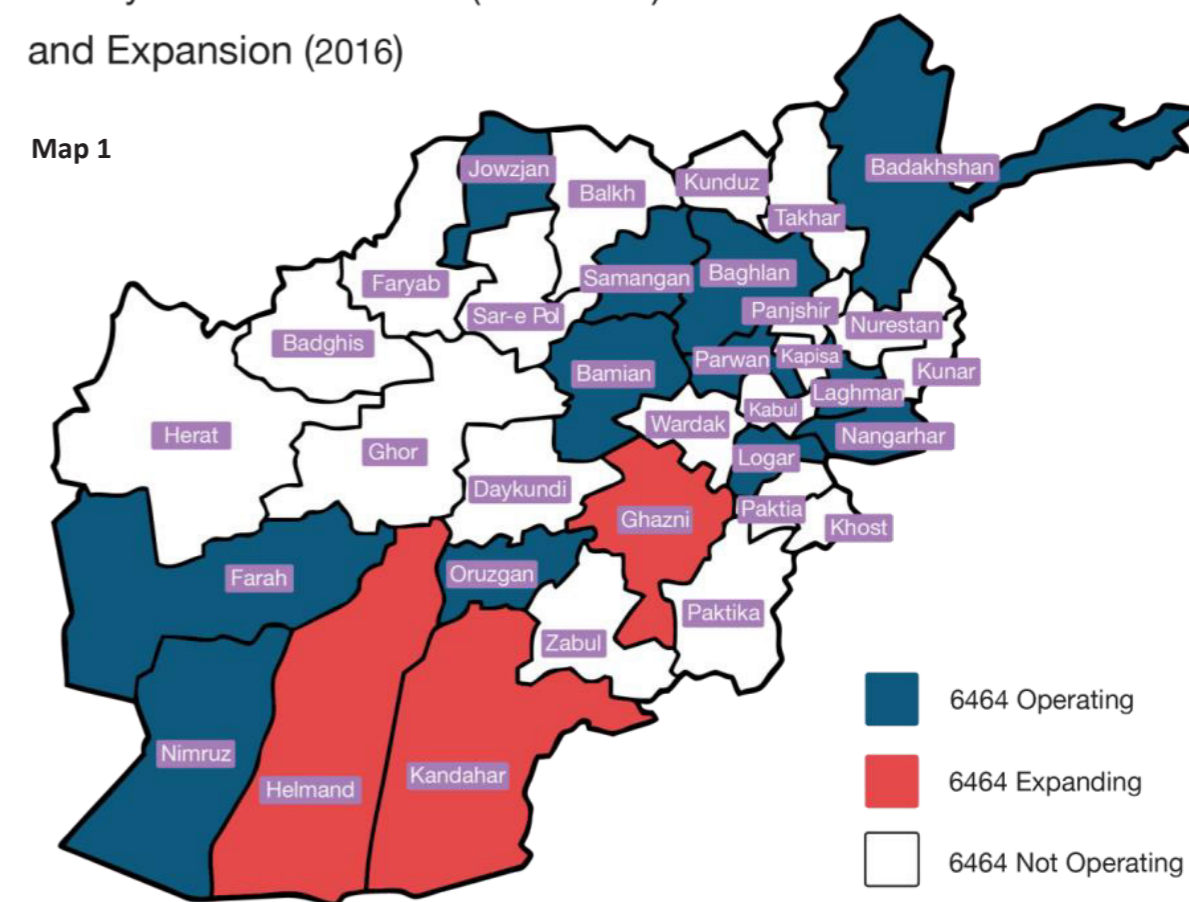
The Family Support Hotline also provides vital physical support through its referral mechanisms. The link between the remote support of the hotline and the face-to-face support of organisations on the ground cannot be underplayed, as both are necessary in remote areas where safety is not guaranteed. The hotline provides a way for people to anonymously call and learn about nearby services to help them in their situations. The continued mapping of services, the upkeep of relationships with local organisations through

training, visits, and phone calls, and the possible creation of face-to-face programmes through the Family Support Hotline are all ways in which networks within civil society can be maintained and strengthened.

The future of the hotline is self-determining, as ACDEO has to decide in which services it would like to become more specialised. This report realizes limitations to the hotline such as continued threat from civil unrest and instability, as well as limited funding, and resources. That is why the recommendations are to be looked at for their individual value, and not as a whole. The future of the Family Support Hotline could be largely as a database, with tracking and evaluation mechanisms

of referral services and rights violations in the news and from callers. It could also develop its own face-to-face and community building initiatives focused on reaching multiple communities within Afghan society; or it could focus more on individual capacity building through training programmes and conferences for operators to continue to help individual empowerment. This report has found a number of ways hotlines can contribute to access to justice and empowerment; it is up to individual hotlines to determine which areas they will focus on and expand into to provide these services.

Family Hotline Presence (2014-2015) and Expansion (2016)





# INTRODUCTION

**This project seeks to answer the question “Can hotlines designed to support families and women contribute to access to justice, human rights and services in Afghanistan? If so how, and in what ways can responses in Afghanistan be improved?” In order to answer this question, this report will look specifically at the Family Support Hotline in Afghanistan and evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, and limitations of current operations. The report will inform BAAG on the importance of hotlines in Afghanistan, through the legal and Sharia information and advice they provide, counselling services, and referral mechanisms. The report will explore how the hotline can extend its capacity and reach. In order to understand the potential for its development, two hotlines in Pakistan will be similarly evaluated and compared. The report will highlight the necessity of the hotline’s expansion in order to reach more Afghan women and families and bring about social change.**

The Family Support Hotline (toll-free 6464) run by ACDEO has operated out of Kabul since 2013. The Family Support Hotline has received more than 50,000 calls (BAAG) since the beginning of the project, from which 13,511, collected over a 10-month period from August 2014 to August 2015 (during which time the Hotline was closed for two months), were processed and analysed for the purposes of this report. The hotline employs 12 call operators and two religious advisers trained on legal advice, social work and rights. They offer counseling on engagement and marriage, domestic abuse, education issues, physical or mental health and legal issues, among others.<sup>1</sup> 6464 operates formally in 12 provinces (Uruzgan, Farah, Laghman, Logar, Bamyan, Badakhshan, Nimroz, Parwan, Jawzjan, Samangan, Baghlan and Nangarhar).

Nevertheless, 6464 receives calls from all the 34 Afghan provinces. For this reason, in late 2015 it received funding from the Canadian government to expand the project into three additional provinces: Ghazni, Kandahar, and Helmand. ACDEO has partnered with BAAG in order to manage that expansion and to enhance the quality of services.

The Family Support Hotline has an important impact on the following stakeholders;

**Callers** - Members of the Afghan community, including women and girls, men and boys, who call 6464 are able to receive counselling and advice

on problems they may have, seek information about the operations of the hotline, or information regarding their rights. Callers are given options and are guided to make informed decisions to plan the best course of action. These operations facilitate change through individual empowerment.

**Government of Afghanistan** - On paper the Afghan state have laws that protect women’s rights. In practice, however, these rights are not always known or protected. The Family Support Hotline informs callers of their rights set out in the Constitution of Afghanistan, and promotes connections between Afghan institutions and civil society organisations to secure this protection. Furthermore, whilst insurgent groups try to reinforce patriarchal interpretations of Islam within communities, 6464 strives to provide a safe medium for people to learn about their rights according to Afghan laws.<sup>3</sup>

**Civil Society and NGOs** - The Family Support Hotline, through referral mechanisms, can increase individuals’ access to services and thus increase the impact of civil society efforts to create social change.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, the Family Support Hotline collects information on Afghan civilians’ everyday lives and the issues they face. By continuously collecting anonymous data from callers, expanding full capabilities into more provinces and reaching more people, the hotline database could provide a huge amount of demographic information for the benefit of national and international organisations that deal with gender relations and civilians’ access to justice.<sup>5</sup>

By using the theory of gender justice through citizenship (Kabeer, 2012), this report highlights the importance of hotlines as a way to promote social change. Women’s understanding of their rights is hindered for different reasons such as illiteracy or a lack of access to information sources. Access to justice is therefore constrained by: 1) cultural practices that prevent women from accessing

<sup>1</sup> See Annex 2: Description of Ticketing Categories.

<sup>2</sup> Having presence in a province means that the Family Support Hotline has assessed each province and has identified the services available in that region in order to establish the necessary referral mechanisms.

<sup>3</sup> Operators have received some threatening calls, but respond by stating that they are operating within Afghanistan’s legally recognised laws (Interview with ACDEO Director, 2016).

<sup>4</sup> The term of civil society has been used in Afghanistan since 2001 with the Bonn peace process. Organised groups started to call themselves ‘Civil Society Organisations’ and the concept was separated from ‘Non-Governmental Organisations’ (Winter, 2010, p. 17). In Muslim contexts it has been argued that it is not possible to apply the concept of civil society (Sajoo, A.B. et. al., 2002, p. 214), nevertheless, it is possible to state that civil society emerges in contexts where groups organise themselves with an objective (Sajoo, A.B. et. al. 2001, p. 35). For the purpose of this report we will keep this political definition of civil society as it is the necessary stakeholder for linking institutional change with everyday lives.

<sup>5</sup> NGOs are part of the Civil Society Organisations but differentiated in the sense that they just run programmes, whereas the former work with a wider range covering social, cultural and professional groups (Winter, 2010, p. 17).

advice or counselling; 2) the fact that most family disputes are resolved privately. This leads to a limitation in the understanding and ability of women to enforce their legal and human rights. Hotlines function simultaneously as a database, as individual support and as a community builder in order to better inform women of their rights and empower them through better access to social justice. With expansion in mind, this report will further analyse possible ways 6464 can increase capacity in three areas:

**As a database** - Hotlines store caller data indicative of demographic information as well as family life. Information gathering is important for further and improved understanding of Afghan life.

With continuous updates over long periods of time, hotline data can give a unique overall perspective of everyday issues, complementary to the information traditional survey mechanisms reveal. In determining the scope of issues Afghan families face and ways in which 6464 seeks to advise and assist, databases can be used to determine target locations for assistance, aspects of caller issues that need to be addressed, and demographics of callers most in need. For this reason, the expansion of 6464 into new provinces should include an in-depth analysis of population density and people’s needs so as to provide targeted services to as many people as possible. Furthermore, the database could provide information for international, national and local service providers to inform operations, research and public policy.

**As individual support** - Hotlines are a means for local populations to access information, support and justice. In some instances, hotlines offer the only means of access and connection for marginalized individuals, for people who are in remote areas or do not have access to appropriate transportation. Further, hotlines validate the problems locals face, offer options, and empower individuals to make their own choices in fixing and overcoming issues. The Family Hotline is a way for women, even those in remote areas, to reach out and learn about their rights as protected by the Afghanistan Constitution and under Sharia provisions. Even women who do not have access to phones can have access through the men that call in on their behalf. In this way, the hotlines engages in a dialogue with multiple family members and promotes women’s rights by informing and educating men and women in an attempt to change society harmoniously (Ritimo, 2010).

**As a community builder** - Hotlines act as a link between individuals and civil society in two ways. First, media campaigns raise awareness about the hotline and its services. Then secondly, operators

are able to refer callers to appropriate physical services, where available, for face-to-face support. The expansion and development of the Family Support Hotline plays a key role in strengthening civil society organisations in this post-conflict context as it establishes a link between institutional change framed in laws and individual change in everyday lives of the people.

## Methodology

This study seeks to inform and analyse how hotlines designed to support families and women can improve women’s empowerment, gender justice and social change in Afghanistan. It further seeks to identify the importance of community services, and how callers can access these support systems through the hotline. The concept of citizenship is a work in progress, transiting between on one hand a fixed legal notion or status located in laws, and on another, an idea of citizenship as agency or an action of dissent and transformation (Kabeer, 2012, p. 220). 6464 can strengthen the idea of citizenship as agency by acting as a bridge between women’s empowerment at the individual level and access to social justice within the legal framework. The Family Support Hotline works as an important element for collective change, creating new social identities that laws and government mechanisms have not yet achieved themselves. The report

First, it will seek to understand 6464’s adherence to social justice counselling practices by examining the relationship between the operators and the people and the call centre’s relationship with community.

Second, it will develop an analysis for identifying the most frequent issues affecting callers. This includes demographics such as gender, location, reason for calling and service provided. This will be done using a ten-month data set of caller information provided by 6464, from August 2014 to August 2015, and a number of interviews conducted with 6464 phone operators and the ACDEO director.

Third, it will identify the different problems affecting callers and track the type of support and referral mechanisms provided by 6464. This will provide a basis for analysis of the variety and scope of services available, and needed, in the different provinces.

The information learned through the initial three stages of the report will provide a point of comparison when looking at two similar hotlines, Rozan and Madadgaar, which operate in Pakistan.





## HOW HOTLINES STIMULATE CHANGE: A THEORY

**Institutions and laws can act as a catalyst for change for gender justice in Afghanistan. However, access to knowledge and services that support change can be limited, especially in rural areas. To consider ways of affecting change, this section looks at the opportunities for female empowerment, presented by the progressive Afghan law, the trials still facing women from becoming empowered, and the theory behind individual change and civil society.**

### Women in Afghanistan: Hope and Trials

Afghanistan is one of the most challenging places in the world to be a woman (Trust in Education, 2015). Women face problems of forced or early marriage, domestic and sexual violence, lack of education, feelings of being hidden and isolated, and lack of economic opportunities and legal standing, among other things (UN Statistics, 2015). In the post-conflict environment in which 6464 operates, the Afghan government as well as international organisations are working towards promoting women's rights and putting an end to damaging patriarchal cultural traditions.

In Afghanistan, 70-80% of marriages are forced; settling debts or feuds and strengthening family status and security are some of the reasons why. 57% of girls are married before the legal marriage age of sixteen and some child brides are as young as nine. Child brides often experience psychological trauma, serious physical injuries such as tearing and bleeding, and an increased risk of complications and even death during labour. It is estimated that more than 87% of Afghan women suffer some form of domestic violence (Global Rights, 2008, p. 1). Women are especially vulnerable in Afghanistan and are in need of support and services.

The types of calls the operators receive at 6464 give a good indication of the actual situation for women and families today, and provide data on the problems mentioned above. As one case study explains:

"A girl called to tell us she was being forced into a marriage she had not agreed to. She was engaged to one of her cousins at a young age, but when she was in year 6 of her school, she informed her family that she did not want to marry her cousin as she did not love him.

However, her mum beat her and forced her into the marriage." (6464 call)

There are 22 different 'reasons for calls' that operators use to describe the callers' situation. The operators categorise each call by one or multiple reasons, depending on the complexity of the caller's situation. The most frequent reasons for women callers are domestic/family issues, legal issues, engagement/marriages, domestic violence, mental health issues and education issues. Women facing these issues have rights which have been put in place to protect them.

The Constitution of Afghanistan, the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and Sharia provisions recognise that in Afghanistan it is a crime to beat, rape or sexually abuse women. It is a crime to emotionally and psychologically abuse women, and it is a crime to force a woman into marriage, marry before the age of 16, or prohibit women to marry or choose a husband for herself (IDLO, 2010).

The Afghan government has taken steps towards protecting and improving women's rights. The Constitution states: 'To the citizens of Afghanistan, men and women, have equal rights and duties before the law' (Article 22) (IDLO, 2010). The Law on the Elimination of Violence against Women (EVAW) came into force on 1st August 2009 and seeks to reduce gender violence in its different forms. Some of the different types of violence mentioned in the EVAW law are domestic violence, forced marriage, underage marriage, and rape (EVAW, 2009).

In 2010, a specialised prosecution Unit on Violence Against Women (VAW) was established, but as with many of the laws in Afghanistan, awareness is needed in order for the public to benefit from its protection and force (Hozyainova, 2014, p.3). 6464 provides information and awareness to callers about rights and the EVAW law. This can be incredibly empowering for both men and women, as cultural attitudes slowly change and women's rights are better protected. Imparting knowledge to women about their legal rights in Afghanistan is essential to better empower them, but imparting this knowledge to men is equally as important. Interpretation of these rights through Sharia provisions is more accessible and effective in Afghan communities where patriarchal and traditional views of women are dominant (Hozyainova, 2014, p.3).

Within patriarchal societies, men are subjected to homogenous and inflexible gender stereotypes. Boys are under immense pressure to behave according to social and cultural norms, which

objectives will look at three different aspects of 6464 that contribute to this change and compare with case studies in Pakistan.

The data set this report focuses on has its limitations, generally to do with documenting the information received from the calls. Missing or vague information makes it more challenging to avoid generalisations and assumptions; through this exercise, the report has made suggestions for improvement. This report will discuss these limitations and recommendations in detail.

The following sections look closely at how hotlines in Afghanistan can play an important role in promoting women's empowerment, gender justice and social change. The first section will talk specifically about women in Afghanistan, and theories regarding the role of civil society and social justice counseling, in order to understand the importance of hotlines for women's empowerment

and access to justice. The next section is based on data analysis, highlighting the importance of expansion of the hotline and addressing its limitations. The third section will look at two hotlines in Pakistan as case studies for comparison. The conclusions and recommendations will highlight what the author's find to be the most important points for consideration.

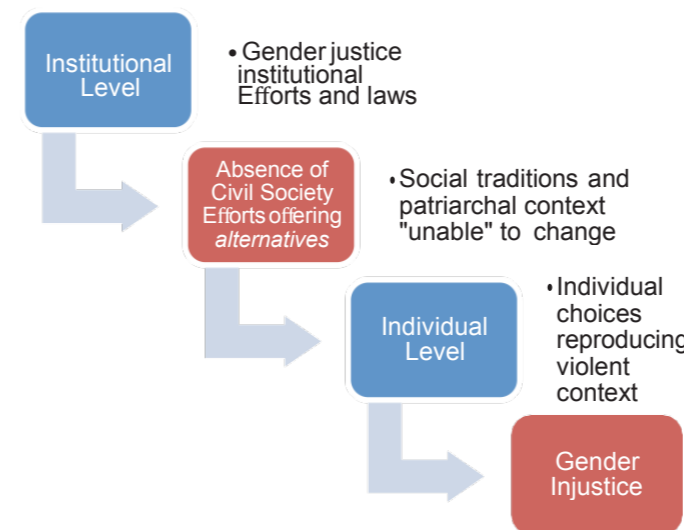




## 6464 ROLE WITHIN CIVIL SOCIETY

In this section we argue the importance of civil society and NGOs in the reconstruction of Afghanistan and the importance of a legal framework and context that allows for the sustainability of civil society. The Family Support Hotline, as part of Afghan civil society, has an important role in bringing changes at the legal and institutional level to the individual level. The Family Support Hotline facilitates the process of individual demand being referred to those groups that are supplying a specific service: government institutions or civil society organisations. In Figure 1 we notice how the absence of alternatives generally being offered by civil society limits women's empowerment and social change:

Figure 1



typically expect them to 'act strong', to be dominant and 'masculine', take the role of breadwinner and head of the household, and exercise authority over women and children (Rozan, 2011, Training Module, p. 3). The pressure to live up to this model of masculinity means that women remain subjected to existing levels of gender inequality. This report reveals that there is an encouraging potential for change in patriarchal attitudes; the majority of callers are male, inquiring about domestic or family issues, engagement/marriage, or legal issues. "Changing the male mindset is a key aspect to women's liberation. Men also need to be 'liberated' from the shackles of patriarchy" (Ritimo, 2010); it is critical to include male engagement as part of the solution to help liberate women. By encouraging men to think about gender in different ways, 6464 is empowering them to help women and themselves by challenging existing attitudes and the "false self-evidence" of particular practices (Keen, 2008, p. 154).

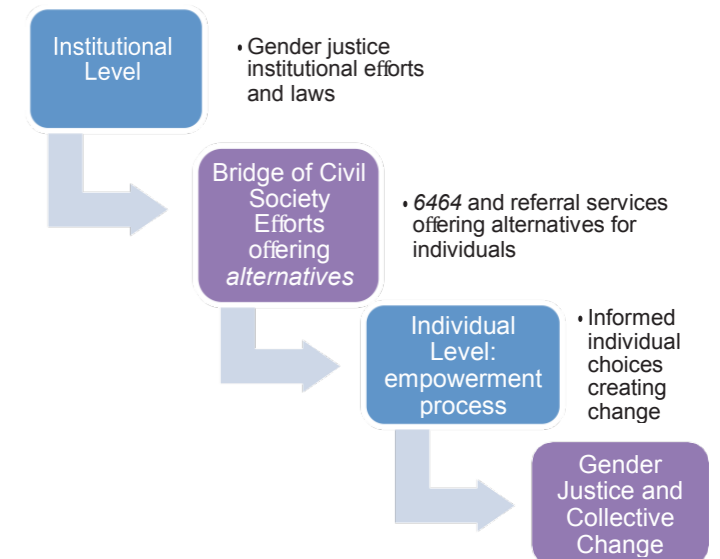
At both the national and local level there is movement focused on improving women's rights. However, there are certain groups within the

Afghan community who are opposed to the Afghan Government, and to their laws and regulations on the protection of women's rights. Operations such as the Family Support Hotline which actively try to engage both men and women in the discussion about rights and laws, and attempt to change patriarchal mindsets through Islamic provisions, are perceived by such groups as threatening and blasphemous. These groups have not actively targeted the office in Kabul from which 6464 is run, but threatening calls to operators have been made.<sup>6</sup>

6464 reveals many of the problems women and families deal with in their daily lives, and aims to respond with the necessary legal and religious advice. Although women are often victims in a patriarchal society, where human rights are abused and their freedom is limited, it is important that men are also engaged with the discussion in order to facilitate change. The Family Support Hotline can therefore play a critical role in informing and supporting these communities.

<sup>6</sup> Interview with ACDEO Director, January 16th 2016.

Figure 2



The services provided by the Family Hotline create a bridge between institutional change framed in laws and individual change:

- 1) Counselling for men and women who are suffering from violence, threats of violence, or persecution or are otherwise in need of psycho-social support; 2) Advice on self-protection, self-improvement and situational change; 3) Legal advice on rights and responsibilities on matters such as the death of a spouse and estate/inheritance management; 4) Information on service providers including social welfare services and further legal provision. (BAAG, 2015)

The Family Support Hotline creates alternatives by informing women of these institutional changes. Through opening informed decision channels, 6464 is creating new possibilities for people to become informed decision makers according to the Afghan Constitution and Sharia provisions (figure 2)

The 6464 project promotes the EAW law and establishes a direct link between individual callers and civil society efforts to improve the situation of Afghan women using national legislation. In this sense, it allows us to identify 6464 as an agent of change for empowering women, because it connects civil society and NGOs, and women's individual lives. Through informing women and men about their options, rights and others' rights, the Family Support Hotline links international efforts of gender justice and individual change.



# SOCIAL JUSTICE COUNSELLING



Female empowerment is related to individual change through choice. The service most provided by the Family Support Hotline is counselling. How this facilitates empowerment is seen in theories of social justice counselling, which emphasises counselling to empower and change rather than to cope in situations. Recognized by the American Counselling Association (ACA), “[...] social justice work in counselling includes the empowerment of individuals and family systems to better stand for their needs as well as advocacy with them and on their behalf as related to inequities and injustices they experience and in their communities and society at large” (Crethar & Winterowd, 2012, p.3). By providing the service of counselling, the operators are not telling callers what to do, rather they provide callers with information and options, so that callers can make informed decisions for themselves to change their own circumstances. It is the caller who makes the final decision on courses of action however: “[...] it is, in part, through the counsellor’s genuine anticipation of the client’s desire for change that the possibility of change emerges as reality” (West-Olatunji, et al., 2011, p. 176). Social justice counselling is centered on core goals: equity, access, participation, and harmony to empower not only marginalized individuals, but whole communities.

## Equity

The Family Support Hotline seeks to bring equity into Afghan households by encouraging family members to discuss their rights with hotline operators, and with other family members. Equity can be described as “the fair distribution of resources, rights, and responsibilities to all members of society” (Crethar & Winterowd 2012, p.4; Crethar, et al. 2008, p. 270). These discussions allow for family members to consider the thoughts, feelings, and existence of the others in a way that was not previously encouraged. In this way, past social norms of oppression are brought out into the open to be discussed by all members of the family and decided upon.

## Access

The Family Support Hotline provides callers with options. By informing families of their individual rights, operators provide options for family members so they can determine the best path for them and their family to best overcome problems. Through the disclosure of information and the discussion of callers’ rights and options, 6464 is giving callers access to information and knowledge, and empowers them to make informed decisions (Crethar & Winterowd, 2012). The empowerment process is directly related to an individual making decisions (Kabeer, 2012, p. 218) in a context where social traditions are difficult to change. Choice, as a means of empowerment, presents individuals

with alternatives and imagines other scenarios for women’s lives. Given choices, individuals can either preserve the context of gender injustice which marginalizes them or transform it into a context of gender justice.

## Participation

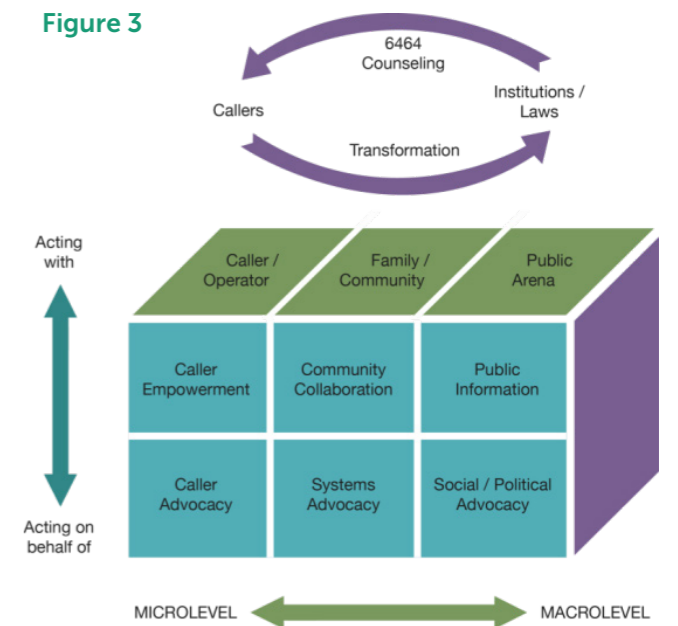
When callers contact 6464, they are taking a step to improve their lives. When they speak to an operator they are taking a first step in finding a solution. 6464 increases callers’ participation or the “right and ability of all in society to be consulted on and contribute to decisions that affect their lives” (Crethar & Winterowd, 2012). Women who call are seeking ways to be heard in their own family systems. Other ways in which hotlines can facilitate participation are considered in the discussion of Pakistan hotlines.

## Harmony

Change is never easy and resistance to female empowerment is a reality that each woman must face, first in her home and again in her community. This is why harmony, “a principle of societal balance whereby the needs of individuals ultimately produce results that create the best possible outcomes for society as a whole while simultaneously societal actions take into account the needs of individuals and minority groups,” must be considered (Crethar & Winterowd, 2012, p.4). Each person finds empowerment individually. Nevertheless, in traditional contexts, where patriarchal practices hinder this process, it is necessary to build support networks encouraging female empowerment. This is why the male callers to the hotline are so important. Men who call in to 6464 are also seeking empowerment through equity, participation, and access. Whether they call about their own issues or to discuss problems with or on behalf of the women they care about, they are empowering both themselves and the women in their lives.

By empowering family members through ideals of equity, access, participation, and harmony operators play the role of counselor, teacher, and advocate (Crether, et al. 2008). As a counselor they discuss issues and problems and explore options with callers. As a teacher, operators inform on both religious and constitutional law so callers can make informed decisions. As an advocate, operators can discuss callers’ issues and options with family members for or on behalf of the caller.

Figure 3



Source: American counselling Association, 2003.  
Note: figure adapted from ACA advocacy competency domains

Operators can also advocate at the community level when referral mechanisms and media campaigns become involved. However, one of the big criticisms of social justice counselling is centered on its political nature. The role of counsellor as advocate places a counsellor in seeming conflict with practices of neutrality that are supposed to be adhered to so as not to influence clients (Harrist et al. 2012; Hunsaker 2011). This criticism is based on western use of social justice counselling as advocacy to change society and thus change the law or other institutions that involuntarily marginalize individuals or communities. Since 6464 operates strictly under Sharia provisions and Constitutional law, counsellors are advocating for progressive laws of government to change society, rather than for change in society to improve government or laws. This does bring up an issue for counsellors who receive calls on issues that are still very much a contested topic in Afghan society, in constitutional law, and in Sharia provisions. Operators do not tell clients what to do, they validate, listen, and advise so callers can make their own decisions.



# EVIDENCE FROM 6464

In this section we will discuss some findings from the data gathered by 6464 during 2014 and 2015 operations.

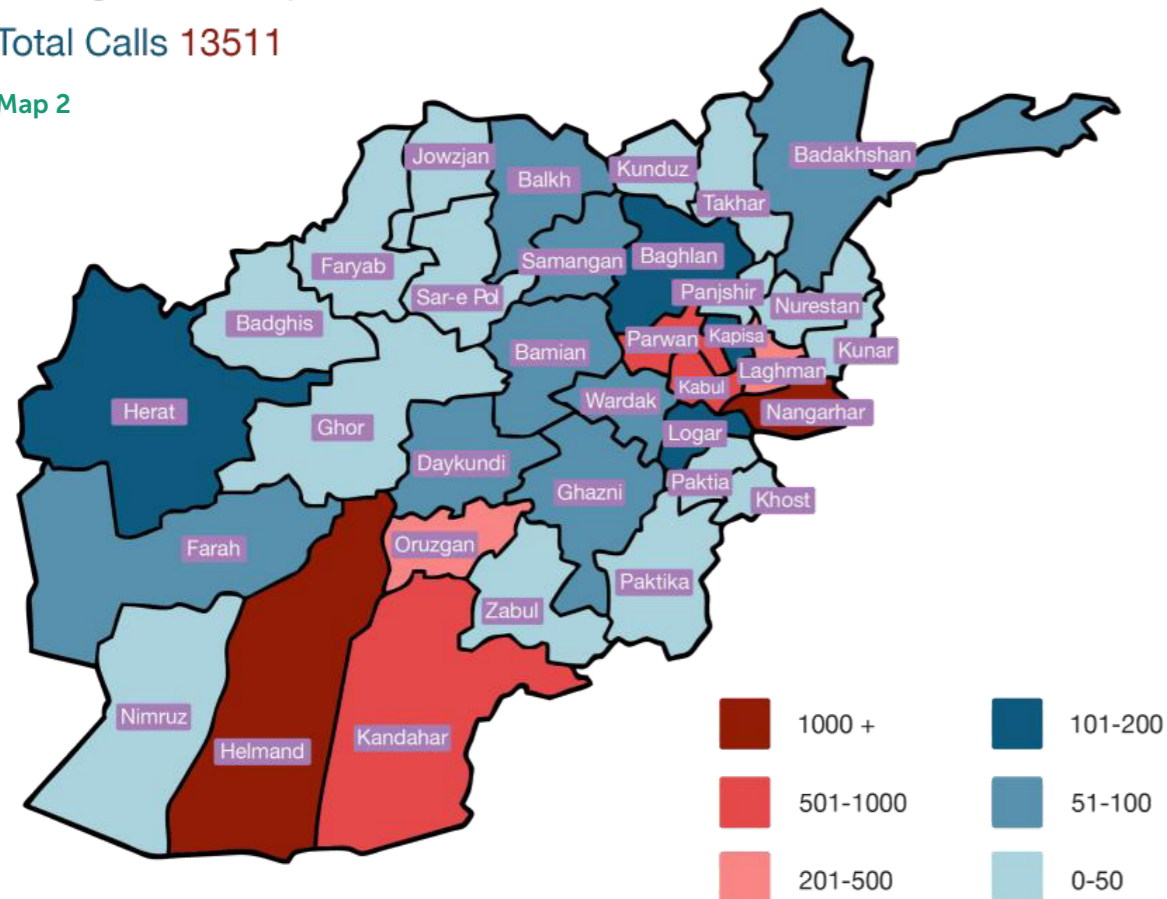
## Operations of the Family Support Hotline

A total of 13,511 calls in a 10 month period during August 2014 - August 2015 were analysed for the purposes of this report. As shown in Map 2, Helmand and Nangarhar provinces concentrate 66% of the total calls, whereas 23 other provinces collectively received only 6% of the calls (Map 2). Media information campaigns took place in each of the twelve provinces in which 6464 operates, after which there was a general increase in the number of calls, highlighting a demand for the 6464 service. The higher concentration of calls coming from Helmand and Nangarhar is due to the unavailability of services for women in Helmand, and the constant media campaigning in Nangarhar (ACDEO, 2015).

### Calling Numbers per Province

Total Calls 13511

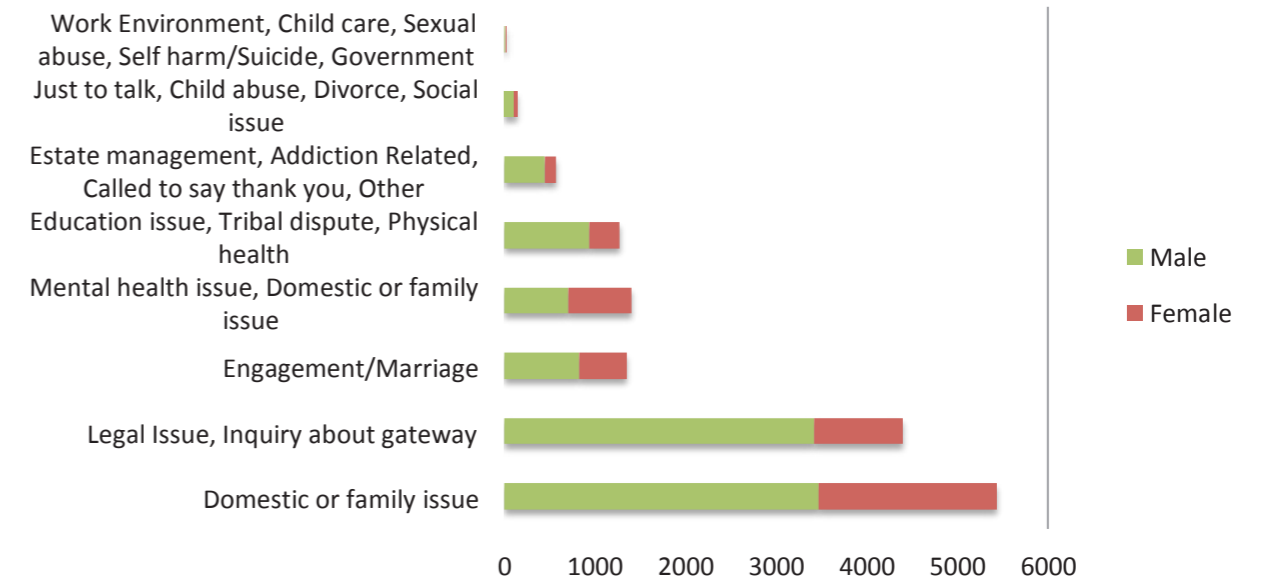
Map 2



Source: Developed with ACDEO data from a total of 13,511 calls on a 10 month period from August 2014 To August 2015.

As can be seen in Chart 1, there is a predominance of male callers (See Annex 8) regarding all issues. There is an important role to be played by men in the process of gender justice as they receive counselling and advice on behalf of women. Most of the calls were related to domestic or family issues. It is important to note that the data only reflects the problems people are calling in about, and not the issues they do not report, but may be suffering from. The data shows that there are only a few calls regarding some of the most serious issues women face in Afghanistan, such as sexual abuse, domestic violence, suicide, self harm, and child abuse. In dealing with "domestic or family issues" that would be considered as not urgent, 6464 is preventing some of these cases from escalating into other types of problems.

Chart 1 Reason for calling 6464 (2014-2015)



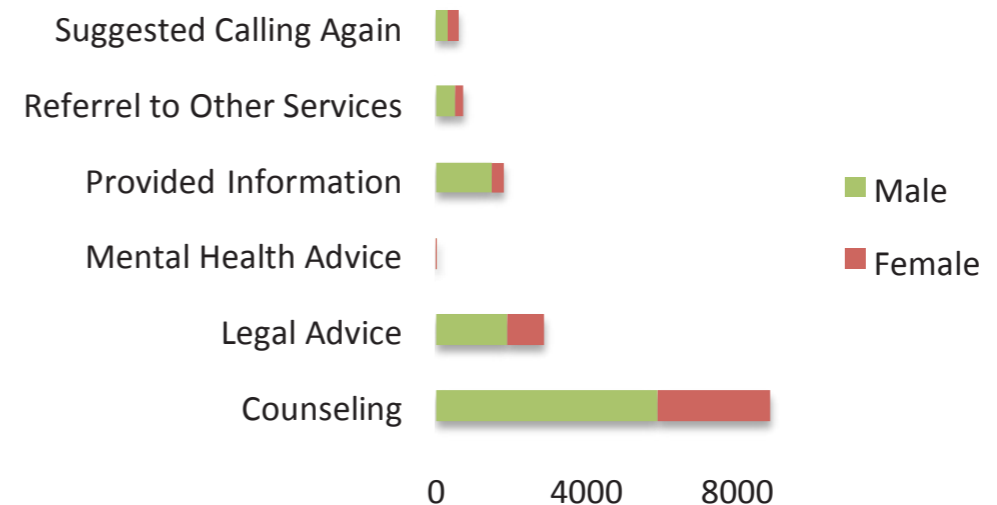
Source: Developed with ACDEO data from a total of 13,511 calls on a 10 month period from August 2014 to August 2015.

Most of the calls were related to counselling: operators identified that "[...] counselling has a huge impact for callers. They give thanks and it shows the different perspectives as they take in the information in a religious and legal context. They realize they have these rights and are open to understanding them." (Interview with operator, 2nd February 2016).

and legal advice services. Of the 9%, a total of 50% of calls were referred to local government services, followed by healthcare providers (19%) and legal aid organisations (9%). This shows that 6464 is strengthening the role of institutions and governments. Nevertheless, it is important to widen the range of organisations to which callers can be referred in order to strengthen independent civil society services as well.

It is important to notice that only 9% of the calls were referred to other organisations. This means that nine out of ten calls were not referred, but handled completely by 6464 counselling

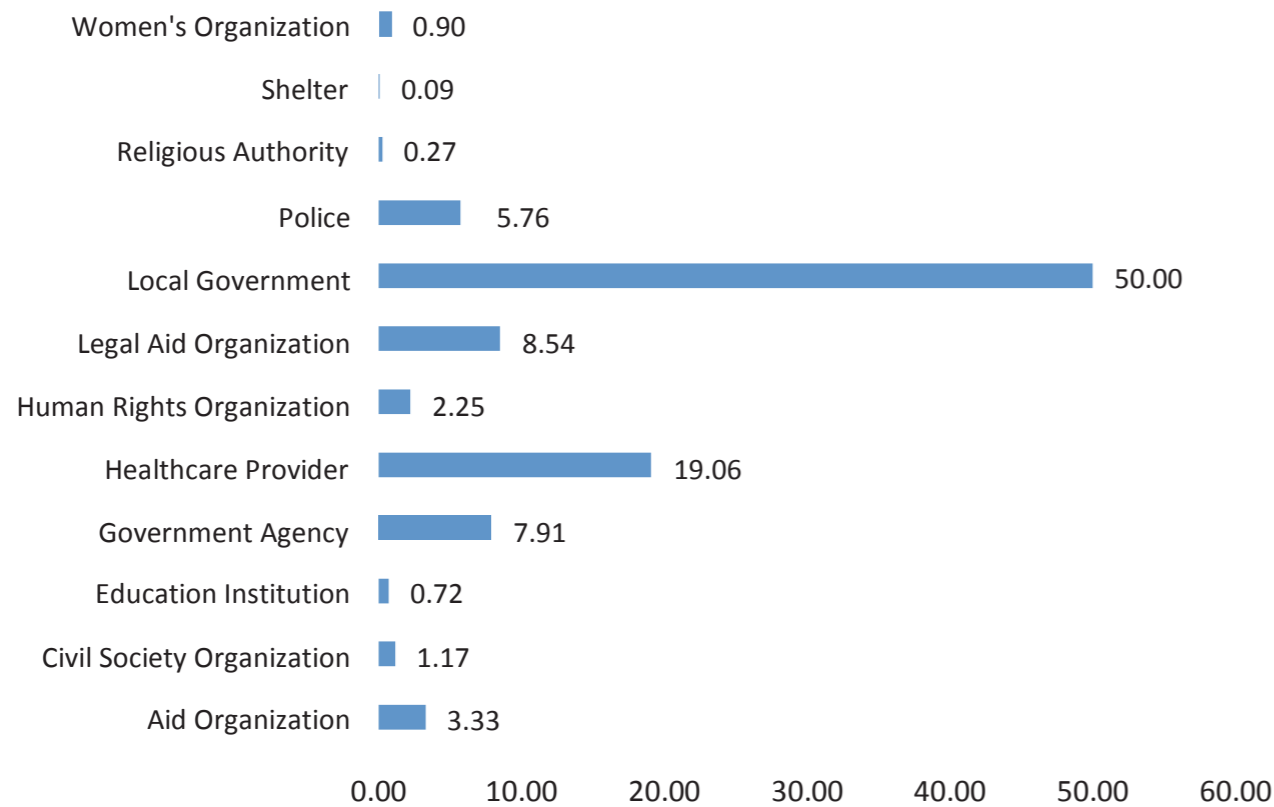
Chart 2 Service by 6464 provided to callers (2014-2015)



Source: Developed with ACDEO data from a total of 13,511 calls on a 10 month period from August 2014 to August 2015.



**Chart 3**  
Percentage of callers referred to other services by 6464 (2014-2015)



Source: Developed with ACDEO data from a total of 13,511 calls on a 10 month period from August 2014 to August 2015.

According to operators, callers are referred on a case-by-case basis: "It really depends on the situation. Sometimes we assess the situation on whether better to go to a government institution or a private. Sometimes it takes a lot of time for government. If it relates to health or is very urgent it goes more to a private organisation. If the caller requires a lawyer they provide connection to legal institution but it really depends on the situation." (Interview with Operator, February 2nd 2016). Nevertheless, we can notice that most calls are referred to the local government (Chart 3) and the amount of callers referred to private services or civil society organisations are less.

In contexts such as Afghanistan it is fundamental to strengthen civil society efforts: "Notably, civil society involvement is one of the most important factors in determining whether a post-conflict peacebuilding initiative will be successful" (Parver & Wolf, 2008, p. 52).

Without the involvement of civil society it is quite difficult to achieve a successful strategy in post-conflict peacebuilding. It would be important to strengthen the mapping of civil society actors to which callers could be referred. Considering insecurity in Afghanistan, remote management as a means of accessing rural and otherwise unreachable areas has been increasingly utilised (Donini & Maxwell, 2014, p. 384). The Family Support Hotline has one call centre, in Kabul, yet receives calls from every province in Afghanistan. The service is able to operate even in contested environments due to the support from the communities, callers phoning the hotline, and the engagement with local organisations on the ground. Further, the activity of the hotline is mostly uncontroversial as it is an information provider and doesn't tell people what to do (Donini & Maxwell, 2014, p. 393).

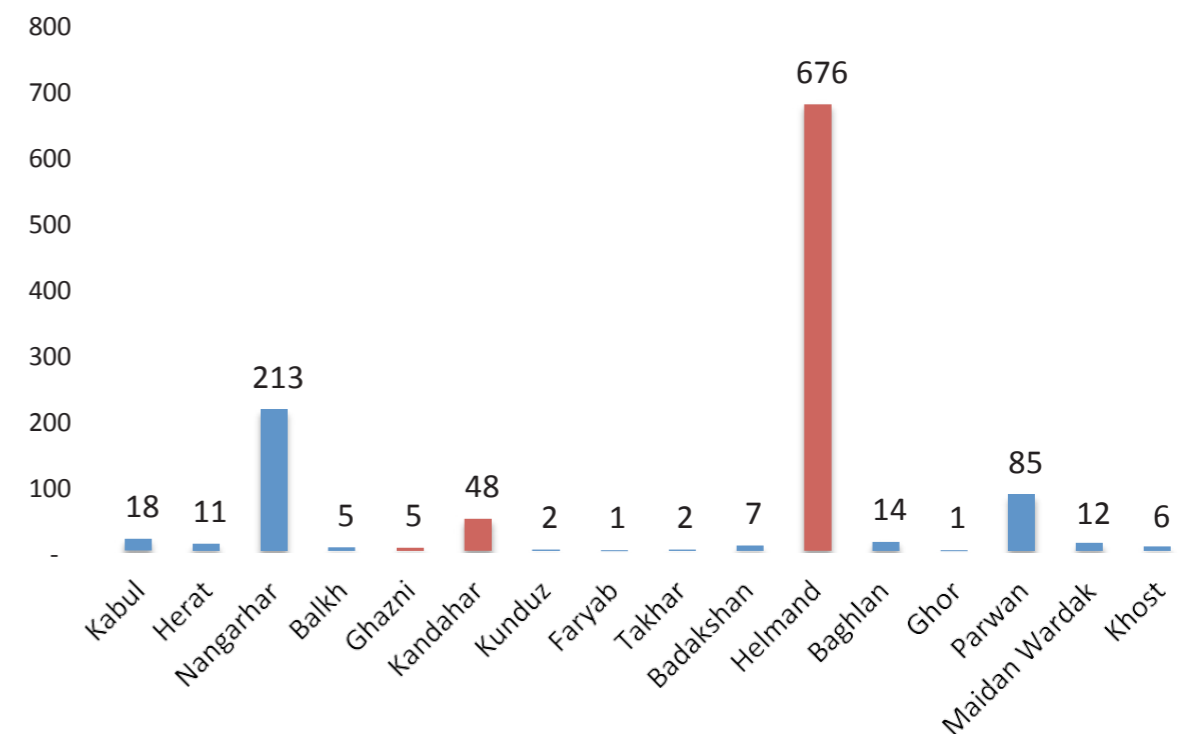
### Importance of Expansion

Most of the calls analysed for the purpose of this project came from specific provinces where the Family Hotline is currently operating. Nevertheless it is important to notice that the provinces with higher number of calls are not necessarily the provinces with the largest population. For instance, from the six provinces with the largest population –Kabul, Herat, Nangarhar, Balkh, Ghazni, and Kandahar– the Family Support Hotline only operates in Kabul and Nangarhar and it is planning to expand to Ghazni and Kandahar. The province with the largest number of calls was Helmand with 44% of calls. The high number of calls is due to the fact that in Helmand a media campaign was implemented to introduce 6464, even though that province was not officially part of the project. In order to identify if the number of calls was proportional to the population density in each province, we developed a rate of calls per 100,000 inhabitants (Chart 4):

The province of Herat has the second largest population in the country with 1,780,000 inhabitants, of which 72% are rural populations, but only 1.4% of the calls come from this area. Herat is a province bordering Iran and located far from the capital and the rest of the provinces in which 6464 is working. It would be important to expand the Family Support Hotline services to this region in terms of potential callers and their service needs.

The selection of provinces in which the Family Hotline operates directly are chosen in relation to donor's interests, not necessarily based on call patterns or population needs.<sup>7</sup> The strategy for expanding 6464 needs to be developed through a thorough analysis of callers' needs and the available local services.

**Chart 4**  
Rate of Calls to 6464 per 100,000 inhabitants in 16 provinces of Afghanistan (2014-2015)



Source: Developed with ACDEO data from a total of 13,511 calls on a 10 month period from August 2014 to August 2015 and population data from CSO, 2012-2013. Red: Provinces where 6464 is planning to expand.

<sup>7</sup> Interview with ACDEO Director, January 16th 2016.



## Provinces with low calling performance

Badakhshan and Jawzjan are two provinces currently covered by 6464 with a low performance in terms of the number of calls received. The former received only 66 calls (0.49%) and the latter 37 (0.27%) of the total calls received. The Family Support Hotline only received 7.30 and 7.23 calls per 100,000 inhabitants in these regions. It is important to develop a media campaign strategy in both provinces in order to increase the number of calls and in that sense, increase use of the referral services identified in these areas. It is not about increasing the number of calls, but about improving callers access to services in certain regions. The expansion of the Family Hotline is directly linked to the role of numerous other civil society organisations to which the callers are referred.

## Expanding 6464

Ghazni, Kandahar and Helmand are the three provinces in which the Family Support Hotline expanded its services in late 2015 through a grant from Canada's GPSF. Ghazni (1,168,800 inhabitants) and Kandahar (1,151,100 inhabitants) have the 5th and the 6th largest populations of Afghanistan. A total of 4.96 calls per 100,000 inhabitants were received from Ghazni and 48.30 from Kandahar. In the case of Helmand, it has only 879,500 inhabitants yet 44% of the calls come from that province with a total of 676 calls per 100,000 inhabitants in the analysed period. It is interesting to notice that the province with the higher number of calls received in 2014-15 was only officially covered by the Family Support Hotline. It is necessary to include this province in the expansion as it is fundamental that ACDEO identify the referral services available in the area and develop a network with these institutions and organisations.

6464 operators, Kabul, 2015.



## LIMITATIONS

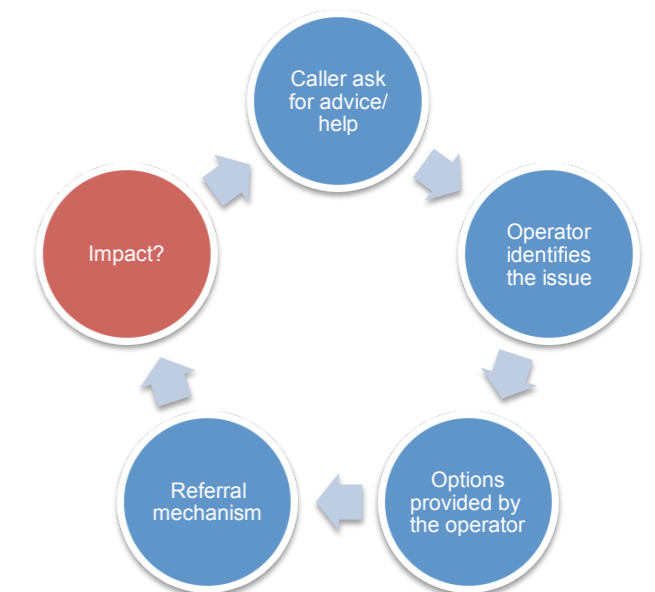
### Limitations of the Data

- Callers with family issues may be asked by the operator to have one or more family members call in additional calls. Multiple people calling in for the same issue are recorded as separate calls in the data set provided. Serial callers are recorded and can be looked up based on phone numbers, but the data does not provide clear indication for how often one person calls in to discuss issues.
- The data regarding age of callers breaks down in groups that are not proportional. It is necessary to establish a standardized method for collecting information regarding age groups. (See Annex 6).
- In cases where a referral to another service is selected, the organisation referred was not always specified, and sometimes it is unclear even if another service was recommended. (See Annex 7).
- There is a lot of demographic information missing that could have been useful. While gender and marital status are known, other demographic information like occupation, income level, and ethnicity is missing.
- The hotline data does not specify threatening calls. A few times a month the call centre will receive angry or threatening phone calls and it is not clear if they are part of the data. (Interview with ACDEO Director, January 16th, 2016). This should be included as a measure of public opinion and potential for mapping areas for future media campaigns.
- There is currently no method for the Family Hotline to actually assess its success rate with callers. There is no formal feedback system and since personal information is not recorded the hotline cannot follow up with referral organisations to see if the caller has actually followed the advice of the Hotline. Except for the calls received to express thanks (Chart 1), callers are under no obligation to provide feedback on their experiences with the hotline and so the hotline has no data reflecting success rates.
- The data analysed is very vague about the context of the call. For example, a caller discussing a forced marriage would be recorded as Engagement/ Marriage; alternatively a caller asking for advice to address an increase in arguments with a spouse would similarly be recorded as Engagement/ Marriage. Both calls would count in the same category even though they are representative of two very different

issues. Using standards outlined by WHO or EAW would better assist in categorising the reason for call, thus helping with advice given and referral suggested.

- It is also necessary to use WHO standards when recording violence. In this sense it is possible to identify different types of violence: self-directed, interpersonal (domestic violence and community violence), and collective (economic, politic and social) (WHO, 2002, p. 5). This could be useful for operators to offer different options depending on the case and type of violence. From a database aspect, specific context may also make it easier for other organisations to disaggregate and understand the data 6464 is recording.
- There is a lack of training for operators regarding the response to mental health issues. Operators are focused mostly on legal and religious issues, nevertheless it is necessary to strengthen the training regarding mental health support (Interview with Operators, February 2nd, 2016).
- As shown in Figure 5, given the necessity of caller anonymity, it is not possible to develop impact evaluations regarding 6464 efforts. Since all calls are anonymous, basic demographic information is recorded, but no specific personal information. This is done to mitigate the risk of violence or negative consequences potentially faced by callers and to provide callers a secure space in which they can speak with confidence and without fear. Asking every caller how safe they feel calling in and if they would feel safe receiving a call back, would monitor feelings of insecurity and potentially signal windows of opportunity for feedback mechanisms to be implemented.

Figure 4. Process of Data Collection





## Country Specific Limitations

There are two pressing limitations imposed on the hotline by the environment in which it operates. The first and most pressing limitation is that the Family Support Hotline can only provide support to those that call in; if no call is made the hotline cannot record any information nor provide any services. While mobile phone ownership has gone up in Afghanistan, from 41.5% in 2007 to 82.3% in 2015, it is still the case that more men (70.7%) report owning a phone than women (31.1%) (Sayed, et al. 2015). As already mentioned, male callers are important for access to justice and empowerment, but the lack of availability of phones to women is a definite limitation to their personal ability to call in.

The second limitation is the difficulty of keeping up to date with governmental and international referral organisations. While 6464 does make regular calls to their list of mapped referral organisations often they find that phone numbers have been changed or no one is in the office when they are supposed to be (Interview with ACDEO Director, 2016). Referral organisations have to be trustworthy and reliable in order that operators can confidently assure callers they will be safe and taken care of when utilising a facility. With callers remaining anonymous, it is even more difficult to contact facilities to find out if they arrived and what happened to referees. This is why personal relationships between organisations are important and can be fostered through activities such as joint initiatives/programmes and training sessions.



## FROM INDIVIDUAL TO COLLECTIVE CHANGE: EXAMPLES FROM PAKISTAN



Pakistan, a neighbor to Afghanistan, has two large hotline services operating with the similar goals of empowering women and families and providing a means to access justice.

Madadgaar focuses more on the counselling and legal area of social justice, rooting itself in human rights law. Madadgaar takes on cases concerning murder, burnings, torture, rape, assault, honor killings, corruption, kidnapping, police brutality, sodomy, suicide, and human trafficking. This hotline helps victims access legal and counselling options after suffering violent crime and advocates for individuals through its legal help desk and work with police and numerous referral agencies (Madadgaar Helpline, 2010).

Rozan focuses on building communities' capacity for women and children to access social justice through counselling and societal change. Rozan has six different programs in operation to achieve its goals of educating, increasing awareness, researching, ending violence against women and children, and providing psychological support to victims. Each of the programs have published online research and training modules. They hold regular conferences, training, and group sessions. Rozan is very much involved with the access and participation aspects of social justice counselling. They focus much of their capabilities on information and community building (Rozan, 2016).

Both have a strong interest in the collection of data and provide mental, physical, and legal support to victims of violence. Both are rooted in the use of a hotline as a means of assistance, but unlike the Family Support Hotline in Afghanistan, they are able to offer physical services to assist individuals and families through their ordeals and issues. Although Madadgaar and Rozan provide examples of the capabilities of hotlines they are not models for the Family Support Hotline to try to fit into.





## Family Support Hotline Comparative Analysis: 6464, Madadgaar and Rozan.

	Family Support Hotline	Madadgaar (data from 2010)	Rozan (data from 2010)
<b>Location</b>	Kabul, Afghanistan	Karachi, Pakistan <sup>8</sup>	Islamabad and Karachi, Pakistan
<b>Staff</b>	12 staff	Unknown staff, 6 internships, volunteer <sup>9</sup>	49 staff, 131 volunteers, 10 internships
<b>Training</b>	Sporadic, as needed	internal and external training and seminars	25 internal and external sessions, last Friday of every month hosts a 2 hour learning forum
<b>Helpline Services</b>	Telephone	Telephone and walk-in counselling, social media, e-mail	In person, telephone, e-mail, written letter
<b>Number of Calls Received</b>	13,511 calls (10 months 2014-15)	11,523 cases (2010) <sup>10</sup>	3,339 calls (2,169 men/boys, 1,170 girls/women)(2010)
<b>Other Services</b>		Missing children desk, legal aid center, field investigation, and database, capacity building workshops, orientation workshops for stakeholders, theatre	Aangan, Zeest, Rabta, Munsalik, and Humqadam, 219 capacity building workshops, and counselling camps in communities
<b>Referral Mechanisms</b>	Keep in touch with organisations through regular calls	200 networking partners, offers a published 100 page directory of referral services and offers trainings with and for other organisations	Keep in touch with organisations through calls, emails, and visits
<b>Media Campaign</b>	Radio broadcasts, leaflets, community meetings and billboards	Press conferences, community visits, established a Child Rights Club in 26 schools, fundraising activities	153 different events with 3311 participants not including those reached through radio and television

<sup>8</sup> The expansion into the three other provinces of Pakistan is not in the data set from 2010, so there is no caller information for how many calls or staff are now working at Madadgaar with the expansion.

<sup>9</sup> Since the expansion of Madadgaar into all 4 provinces in 2013 there is no data available on exact numbers of people working there, but is assumed be substantially more than 12.

<sup>10</sup> The difference between a call and a case is the ability of the hotlines to follow up and provide additional resources

## Hotlines and Individuals

All three hotlines offer the same first step: call in. These hotlines operate telephone counselling services that can be accessed by anyone with a phone; however, Madadgaar and Rozan go further by being available through multiple mediums. Clients are able to reach Madadgaar and Rozan through letters, text (SMS), and e-mail. Additionally Madadgaar reaches clients on social media like Facebook, Twitter, and other services like Skype. This provides options for would be clients to access the services provided by Madadgaar and Rozan in the most convenient way.

Furthermore, Madadgaar and Rozan both offer face-to-face counselling. This allows for a personal relationship and trust to grow between counsellors and clients. More importantly, having clients with a known identity allows the hotlines to implement feedback systems and continued care. Such systems include Madadgaar's missing children desk, legal services desk, and field investigations conducted in tandem with police investigations of criminal cases (Madadgaar, 2016).

However, it is important to note that hotlines need to provide a safe space and they need to be able to ensure a caller's safety (Helplines Partnership, 2015). Asking for names and specific caller information for records or follow up services is, at this moment, a threat, real or perceived, to caller safety in Afghanistan. As previously mentioned, this report cannot recommend that the Family Support Hotline in Afghanistan take more specific caller information or upscale to provide services like the legal help desk or face-to-face counselling service that would require clients to provide identification and travel in insecure locations. However, the monitoring of caller safety is a task 6464 can undertake, by asking every caller about their ability to be called back. In this way, the Family Support Hotline can assess how comfortable callers are in their association with the hotline and make a decision on expanding the database to cover personal information. Asking every caller about the possibility of a call back can lead to calling some callers again for follow up and feedback calls, which could lead to eventual adoption of recording names and instituting continued care and feedback initiatives.

Madadgaar also keeps a database of all violent crime reported in Pakistan, with staff closely following major news sources so victims can be reached out to and a database showing all human rights abuses

in Pakistan can be compiled (Madadgaar, 2016). If 6464 wanted to enhance its role as a database, expanding the field from which they collect data is a viable option.

## Hotlines and Communities

Hotlines must also engage with communities. Rozan's focus on capacity building workshops and community counselling sessions places Rozan's call centre as complementary to their services rather than the main service. Rozan's advanced training programs for clients, referral organisations, employees, police, and men and boys is a clear indication of Rozan's progression from service at the microlevel to the macrolevel (Mizra, 2011). The importance of training in communities is huge for the Family Support Hotline in its expansion. Even if programs such as Rozan's cannot be created by the Family Support Hotline, relationships with organisations that could provide those services is incredibly important.

Currently, the Family Support Hotline provides support to communities in Afghanistan through its referral mechanisms. Madadgaar similarly provides referral mechanisms to people in need. Madadgaar has a large network of referral services that offer physical help when counselling and legal advice are not enough. This network is compiled into a phone book of services that in 2010 listed over 200 services. The referral network is updated and maintained through joint training sessions, phone calls, and visits (Madadgaar, 2016). While 6464 does regularly check on referral mechanisms through phone calls as previously stated, it is not always possible to visit other organisations. However, arranging joint training sessions, that foster relationships between organisations, as Madadgaar and Rozan do, could be an effective way to create direct connections with organisations.



## Effective Media Campaigns

One of Rozan's programmes, Munsalik, is devoted entirely to running Rozan's media campaigns. These efforts in 2010 produced 153 different events with 3,311 participants not including those reached through radio and television. The Asia Foundation 2015 Survey of the Afghan people found that radio (75.7%), television (61.6%), and mobile phones (50.3%) were used the most to access information. Further, television and internet access has a noted increase, with responses indicating men and women use television at equal rates (Sayed, et al. 2015). With access increasing around Afghanistan, delivering maintained media initiatives, as seen in Nangarhar, could play a significant role in advertising 6464 services.

More community-based approaches such as community and school visits are used by Madadgaar. A more lasting impression of Madadgaar hotline is left on school visits as they have set up 26 Child Rights Clubs in schools to continually discuss prominent issues and encourage students to call in whenever problems arise (Madadgaar, 2010). Asking every caller how they learned of 6464 would provide a way to check on media effectiveness, develop strategies for target communities, and learn where campaigns could prove beneficial.

<sup>11</sup> The report found that women use other sources of media, like cell phones and radio less than men to access

## CONCLUSIONS

**Hotlines designed to support families and women can contribute to access to justice, human rights and services in Afghanistan. 6464 represents an important effort for improving the access to these services by providing individual counselling, advice, and support, linking individuals with government institutions or civil society organisations they need, and providing a caller database for monitoring of issues called in. 6464 operations offer a space that provides the opportunity for women's empowerment, gender justice, and social change in Afghanistan.**

On an individual level, the legal advice, counselling and referral services have created an important channel for changing social practices within families by providing options under the principles of access, participation, equity and harmony. This enables institutions and laws to function as catalysts of change for gender justice in Afghanistan. By receiving counselling, callers are informed of the current legislation and are made aware of their rights and encouraged to put them into practice. However, access to knowledge and services that support change can be limited, especially in rural areas. It is important to encourage the expansion of Family Support Hotlines through media campaigns and creating referral mechanisms in each province by identifying and working with local.

The Family Support Hotline, as part of Afghan civil society, has an important role in bringing changes at the legal and institutional level to the individual level. The Family Support Hotline facilitates the process of individual demand being referred to those groups that are supplying a specific service: government institutions or civil society organisations. 6464 increases callers' participation in the application of public policy regarding gender justice. In post-conflict contexts such as Afghanistan, it is fundamental to strengthen civil society efforts because of its important role for peacebuilding. 6464 is strengthening the mapping of civil society actors to which callers could be referred.

This report has strived to outline why the hotline service is important in a context where physical services are not always available or easily accessed. The three functions of hotlines can be developed according to its needs and capabilities. In identifying limitations facing the hotline, opportunities for strengthening can also be found. Ultimately, it is up to the hotline to decide which areas are most viable for adoption and which are most important to the goals the hotline is trying to achieve. It is necessary to continue expanding these efforts as an integrated strategy for achieving gender justice in Afghanistan.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

### Immediate recommendations

- Standardise the practice of asking every caller if they can receive or give a follow up call in two weeks to provide an update on their situation; if it has improved or not, and how. This would be helpful feedback for the operators. Callers can decline. This will provide the basis for a primary feedback system, give an indication on how safe callers feel calling in, and put operators in the habit of asking for feedback.
- Update the ticketing system to more concisely indicate the reason and content of the call. This includes recording more specific 'Reasons for call' (i.e. forced marriage, dowry dispute, underage marriage, early termination of education, etc.), differentiating between physical and mental illness, indicating specific feedback given. It would be important to differentiate between types of violence according to the WHO standards or ERAW legislation. It is also important to separate drug abuse problems from mental health issues when collecting data.
- The ticketing of "serial callers" does not currently reflect the number of times one caller calls in. This hinders accuracy when tracking returning callers and the reasons why they are calling again. It would be helpful to programme a system for identifying "serial callers" in order to obtain data about the developments and impacts they have experienced since contacting the Family Hotline, and understanding their changing needs.
- Asking every caller how they heard of the hotline will increase knowledge of effective media strategies. Further, it will allow 6464 to map how far media campaigns reach, and determine target areas for future campaigns.

### Long-term recommendations

- The media campaigns in Helmand and Nangarhar were effective in increasing awareness about the Family Support Hotline with the number of calls increasing dramatically. Recognising the success and impact of media campaigns, it is recommended that they be organised in more provinces, in order to maximise the hotline's potential.
- It is important to widen the range of organisations to which callers are referred in order to strengthen independent civil society services as well. This requires both information regarding local service providers being readily available to operators and an increase in the number of such service providers.
- Training for operators is fundamental to the quality of service they provide to callers. Training sessions are considered highly valuable by the operators and they have specifically suggested that more training would be beneficial. It was mentioned during the interviews conducted for this report that training outside of the call centre and with organisations that could help better establish network connections with the Hotline and civil society would be highly valuable (Interview with operators, 2016, February 1).
- Although 6464 receives calls from each province in Afghanistan, the Hotline has not been able to establish network and civil society connections in each province (due to funding limitations). Expanding operations into each province would enable operators to be confident in their referrals, thus empowering callers to take action and seek help at the local level.
- Continuous evaluation and monitoring of 6464 services and operations need to take place so future expansion of the hotline can be targeted and effective.





## ANNEX 1: TERMS OF REFERENCE

### Project Working Title: Hotlines - a road to justice in Afghanistan?

#### Background

Established in 1987, BAAG delivers unique policy, advocacy and research activities relating to the humanitarian, development and rights issues in Afghanistan. Operating as a network of NGOs (currently 29 members) and Afghan civil society organisations, our mandate is to provide policymakers with evidence of the needs of the Afghan people and the organisations striving to meet them.

BAAG is working with ACDEO (Afghanistan Capacity & Development Educational Organisation) and its Family Hotline – a free-phone counselling and legal advice service in Afghanistan. Receiving over 50,000 calls since its establishment in 2013, the hotline provides advice and guidance in legal issues, specifically around Sharia Law and the Afghan constitution from trained call operators and an Islamic scholar/Sharia expert. The Hotline has best capabilities in 12 provinces and is expanding into an additional 3 provinces, but receives calls from all 34 provinces.

The joint project with BAAG, ACDEO and the LSE seeks to examine the Family Hotline and refine the quality of its services. Moreover the issues recorded from callers provide valuable insights into the reality of family life and the challenges faced by women, girls, men and boys – information that is not possible to capture through traditional surveys and assessments. BAAG will use this information to provide evidence and recommendations to policy makers and service providers – to inform future service delivery and implementation plans for policies and laws supporting Afghan women and girls.

#### Question:

Can hotlines designed to support families and women contribute to access to justice, human rights and services in Afghanistan? If so how, and in what ways can responses in Afghanistan be improved?

#### Purpose of Project:

The purpose of this project is to better understand the everyday lives of Afghan women and families, especially their need for legal aid and access to justice. Firstly, the project will analyze the information gathered by the call centre to

determine the scope of issues Afghan families face and ways in which the hotline seeks to advise and assist.

Secondly, this project looks to evaluate the referral mechanisms and limitations of the hotline, in order to assess how effectively call operators are able to actively assist with legal issues.

Thirdly, the project will investigate the effectiveness of hotlines as a means for local populations to access information and justice in post-conflict areas and determine best practices for expanding the Family Hotline in Afghanistan and creating hotlines in other post-conflict states.

This project aims at informing BAAG and ACDEO of the limitations and successes currently facing the Family Hotline. It will seek to give recommendations to policy makers and donors, improve practices, expand into other provinces, and inform on hotline effectiveness as a means to access legal advice in conflict-affected countries. Ultimately, the research supports BAAG and ACDEO's commitment to women's rights and EAW (eliminating violence against women) in Afghanistan, and BAAG's objective to support Afghan civil society to take a meaningful role in service delivery, policy and advocacy.

#### Research Objectives:

- The research will help BAAG better understand the needs of women and families in Afghanistan by determining the scope of issues Afghan families face and ways in which the hotline seeks to advise and assist.
- Identify gaps, problems and limitations in the services given by the operators
- Evaluate the referral mechanisms and limitations, in order to assess how effectively call operators are able to actively assist with legal issues.
- Compare the Family Hotline to other regional advisory hotlines and help ACDEO consider and shape its programme of refinements and seek support for these.
- Investigate the effectiveness of hotlines as a means for local populations to access information, support and justice in post-conflict areas and determine best practices for expanding the Family Hotline in Afghanistan and creating hotlines in other post-conflict states.

## ANNEX 2: DESCRIPTION OF TICKETING CATEGORIES

- **Addiction Related:** Drug abuse is common in Afghanistan and callers seek advice on dealing with family member's addiction.
- **Called to say thank you:** This includes gratitude for help received, perception of help done, and appreciation for support.
- **Child Abuse:** This deals with, inter alia, domestic violence, forced or underage marriage, and sexual violence towards children.
- **Child Care:** Used when care of child is in dispute, for example if a caller expects greater support in child-care from their in-laws.
- **Divorce:** Divorce is not very common in Afghanistan, and those who have divorced or are in the process may call regarding social stigma and ostracization from family and society.
- **Domestic or Family Issues:** difficulties family members face when living together. This is usually ticked if violence is not involved.
- **Domestic Violence:** Callers may be living in fear of family members or calling on behalf of someone in that situation, seeking information regarding their rights and options in a violent situation.
- **Education Issue:** Mainly deals with issues of continuing education for children and youths.
- **Engagement/Marriage:** Issues include, forced marriage, underage marriage, dowry disputes, and questions about married life.
- **Estate Management:** Often inheritance related and also includes issues people may face regarding land/property rights.
- **Government Management:** This revolves around issues callers face when dealing with government entities and the police, often centered on real or perceived issues of corruption.
- **Inquiry about 6464:** When callers are unsure of or skeptical of the services offered by the hotline. Some call in for clarity, others to test the hotline's knowledge of Sharia provisions.
- **Just to Talk:** Especially in rural areas callers who feel isolated can call in for emotional support and easing of loneliness.
- **Legal Issue:** For various legal issues excluding divorce or estate management, callers want to know how they are protected under the law.
- **Mental Health Issue:** Either when callers say they are experiencing mental health problems or express symptoms of social withdrawal, depression or anxiety.
- **Physical Health:** Relates to callers' questions about health issues and ability to access health care services.
- **Self-harm:** Callers may indicate destructive behaviour, suicidal thoughts or actions themselves or be calling with concerns for someone else.
- **Sexual Abuse:** Deals specifically with cases of rape, sexual violence, and shaming. Callers are concerned about their rights and safety.
- **Social Issue:** When security or cultural issues prevent callers from doing what they want to do. This is normally ticked when violence is not involved.
- **Tribal Dispute:** This can be tribal elders or tribes limiting women's ability to leave the private sphere or confrontation between community or tribal leaders and families.
- **Work environment:** Issues related to the workplace, often relations between employees or between employer and employees.



## ANNEX 3: CALLS FROM 34 PROVINCES IN AFGHANISTAN (AUGUST 2014 – AUGUST 2015)

TOTALS										
Province	Total calls	Dari	Pashto	Male	Female	Single	Married	Engaged	Widow/ er	Divorced
Not Specified	568	60	508	376	192	254	227	34	3	0
Kabul	720	421	299	360	360	420	240	47	10	3
Herat	190	122	68	93	97	113	60	16	0	1
Nangarhar	3059	166	2792	2003	1055	1664	1140	229	19	7
Balkh	57	48	9	33	24	36	16	2	2	1
Ghazni	58	21	37	39	19	41	11	6	0	0
Kandahar	556	15	540	462	94	276	258	17	3	0
Kunduz	21	5	16	15	6	12	7	2	0	0
Faryab	11	6	5	8	3	8	3	0	0	0
Takhar	20	16	4	11	9	8	9	3	0	0
Badakshan	66	51	15	23	43	42	22	2	0	0
Helmand	5947	63	5882	4840	1097	2802	2831	289	23	2
Baghlan	122	100	22	83	39	88	23	8	3	0
Ghor	5	4	1	4	1	2	2	0	1	0
Parwan	536	409	127	176	361	324	156	49	5	2
Maidan Wardak	68	1	67	48	20	31	30	6	1	0
Khost	33	5	28	23	10	21	12	0	0	0
Sar-e Pol	7	5	2	0	7	5	1	1	0	0
Paktya	29	3	26	22	7	18	11	0	0	0
Jawzjan	37	25	12	12	25	20	15	2	0	0
Farah	92	62	30	51	41	47	38	7	0	0
Badghis	5	2	3	4	1	3	2	0	0	0
Daykundi	64	53	11	27	37	49	13	0	0	2
Kunarha	44	3	41	37	7	20	17	7	0	0
Bamyan	63	50	13	36	27	43	14	6	0	0
Laghman	298	26	272	202	96	157	120	20	1	0
Kapisa	166	119	47	59	106	91	49	19	5	1
Paktika	13	0	13	10	3	8	4	1	0	0
Logar	186	96	90	71	115	110	59	16	0	1
Samangan	73	57	16	18	55	38	28	6	0	1
Urozgan	336	10	229	270	66	178	144	13	1	0
Zabul	9	0	9	8	1	6	3	0	0	0
Nimruz	25	6	20	15	10	7	14	3	0	1
Panjshir	24	11	13	6	18	9	13	1	0	1
Nuristan	3	1	2	2	1	1	2	0	0	0
TOTALS	13511	2042	11269	9447	4053	6952	5594	812	77	23

## ANNEX 4: REASON FOR CALL (AUGUST 2014 – AUGUST 2015)

Reason for Call	Totals	Male	Female	Unknown
Domestic or Family Issue	5441	3472	1964	
Legal Issue	2263	1620	638	
Inquiry about Gateway	2147	1799	341	
Engagement/Marriage	1349	832	515	
Mental Health Issue	814	520	293	
Domestic Violence	589	182	407	
Education Issue	484	307	177	
Tribal Dispute	476	407	69	
Physical Health	313	227	86	
Estate Management	227	216	11	
Addiction Related	143	105	38	
Called to say Thank You	136	79	57	
Other	63	47	16	
Just to Talk	45	37	8	
Child Abuse	43	31	12	
Divorce	26	9	17	
Social Issue	25	20	5	
Work Environment	9	6	3	
Child Care	6	5	1	
Sexual Abuse	5	2	3	
Self Harm /Suicide	4	1	3	
Government Management	1	1	0	
Sub-total	14609	9925	4664	14

## ANNEX 5: SERVICE PROVIDED TO CALLERS (AUGUST 2014 – AUGUST 2015)

Service Provided	Totals	Male	Female
Counselling	8896	5901	2990
Legal Advice	2878	1888	985
Mental Health Advice	28	19	9
Provided Information	1798	1489	308
Referred to Other Services	735	513	222
Suggested Calling Again	590	327	263
Sub total	14925	10137	4777



## ANNEX 6: AGE OF CALLERS (AUGUST 2014 – AUGUST 2015)

Marital Status	Age	Female	Male
Divorced	16-20	6	1
	21-35	13	3
	<b>Divorced Total</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>4</b>
Engaged	16-20	219	177
	21-35	117	271
	36-50	1	4
	Not Specified	1	2
	<b>Under 15</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Engaged Total</b>		<b>355</b>	<b>459</b>
Married	16-20	380	429
	21-35	1278	3051
	36-50	170	225
	51-65	16	14
	66-80	4	1
	Not Specified	13	39
	<b>Under 15</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Married Total</b>		<b>1888</b>	<b>3767</b>
Single	16-20	1117	2879
	21-35	368	1695
	36-50	5	18
	51-65	3	1
	Not Specified	26	99
	<b>Under 15</b>	<b>237</b>	<b>543</b>
<b>Single Total</b>		<b>1756</b>	<b>5235</b>
Widow/er	16-20	9	1
	21-35	35	7
	36-50	21	1
	51-65	2	1
	66-80	0	1
<b>Under 15</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Widow/er Total</b>		<b>68</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>4086</b>	<b>9476</b>

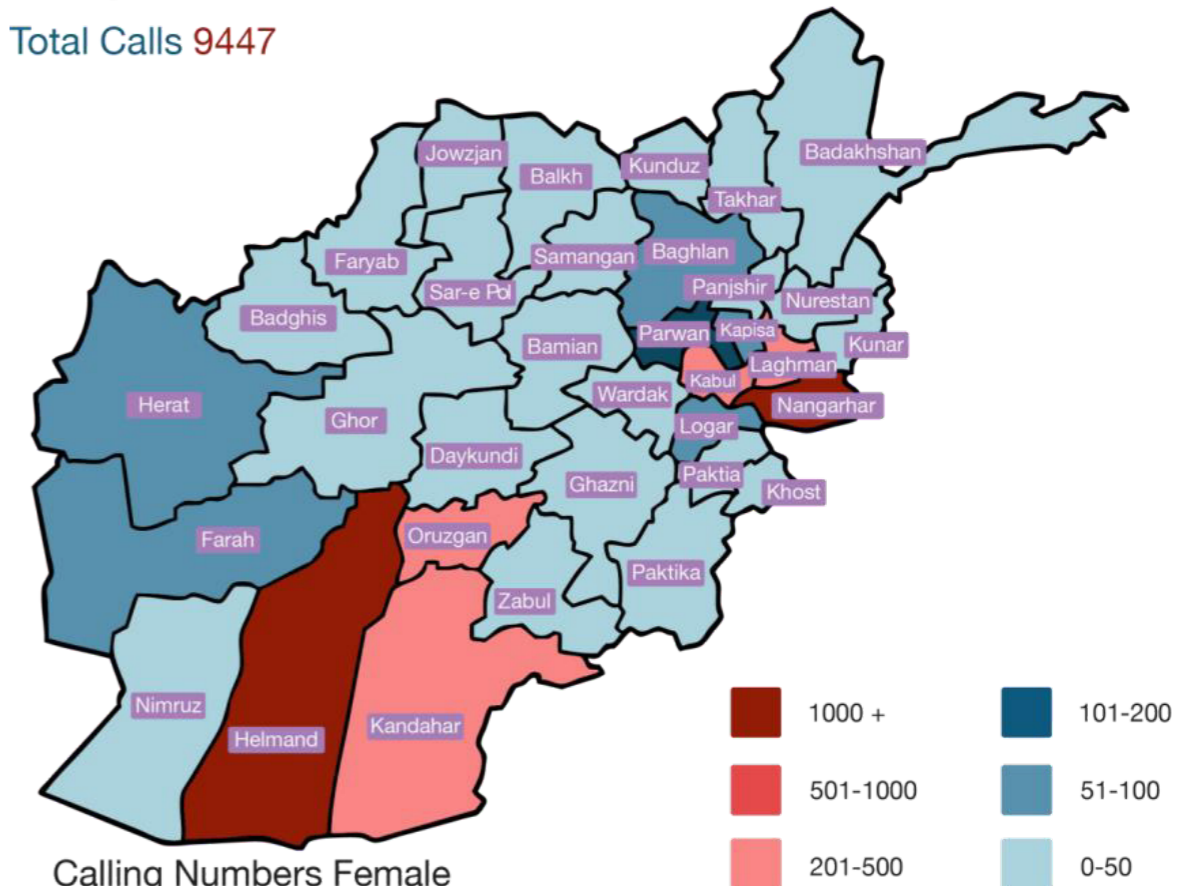
## ANNEX 7: REFERRAL TO OTHER ORGANISATION OR INSTITUTION (AUGUST 2014 – AUGUST 2015)

	Total	Male	Female
Aid Organization	37	16	21
Civil Society Organization	13	11	2
Education Institution	8	7	1
Government Agency	88	65	23
Healthcare Provider	212	158	54
Human Rights Organization	25	13	12
Legal Aid Organization	95	51	44
Local government	556	435	121
Police	64	55	9
Religious Authority	3	3	0
Shelter	1	1	0
Women's Organization	10	2	8
<b>Sub Total</b>	<b>1112</b>	<b>9255</b>	<b>4016</b>
<b>Not Specified</b>	<b>12170</b>	<b>8438</b>	<b>3721</b>

## ANNEX 8: MALE AND FEMALE CALLERS MAP

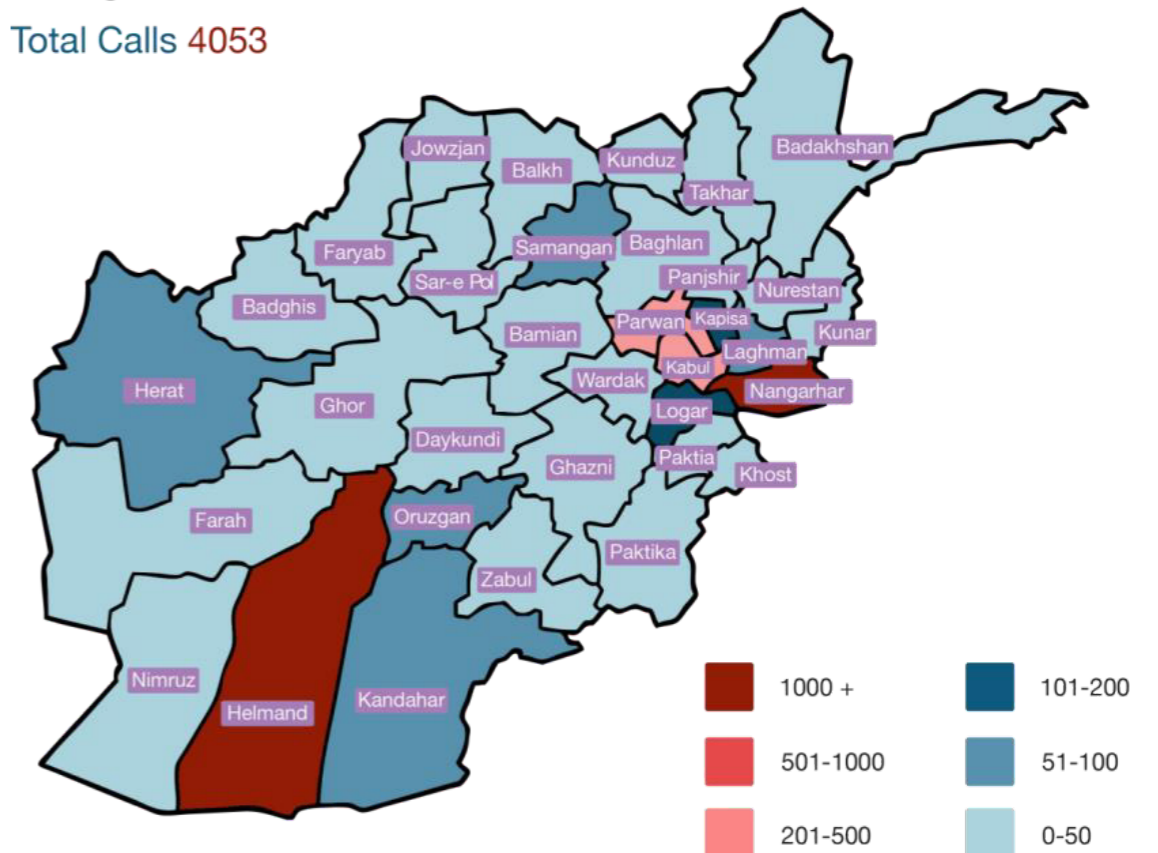
Calling Numbers Male

Total Calls 9447



Calling Numbers Female

Total Calls 4053



Source: Developed with ACDEO data from a total of 13,511 calls on a 10 month period from August 2014 to August 2015.



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## Interviews and Case Studies

- Case studies recovered by operators (August 2014 – August 2015).
- Interview with ACDEO Director. 18 Jan. 2016.
- Interview with four 6464 Operators (February 1st & 2nd, 2016).





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