



Women for Women International
**Delivering the
Global Goals**
Afghanistan report card 2018





Photo: Rada Akbar

Zarghuna's story*

Zarghuna is a graduate of our core programme in Afghanistan. Her story highlights the potential that can be unlocked when we identify and invest in marginalised women survivors of conflict.

When Zarghuna was only six years old, her parents gave her away to her uncle in marriage to appease a feud with his family. Her uncle was very abusive - he never let her see anyone and threatened to kill her if she tried to escape. By the time she was 15, Zarghuna was the young mother of a baby girl and often alone as her husband was away with the army. One day she received a message that he had been killed.

Zarghuna felt alone, with no one to help her and tried to commit suicide twice. When she went to the hospital for treatment for depression, the doctor suggested: "You need somewhere to go and sit with women, so you can see how they are dealing with the challenges that they face."

Soon after, Zarghuna joined the Women for Women International programme with a group of 24 other women.

"That's when I learned that I wasn't alone in my suffering. There are other women who have the same pain and the same hardships. To realise that was amazing."

After Zarghuna graduated from the programme, she found a job adding embroidery to textiles and creating handicrafts and eventually decided to take a micro-loan of \$500 to start her own business. Today, Zarghuna provides employment to more than 120 women and has plans to expand her business even further.

"I am always talking to other women. I want to share all my experiences and tell them to be strong, as I became strong."

*For reasons of security and privacy, we are using a photo of a different Women for Women International graduate to represent the woman in the story.

The Promise: No one left behind

The UN Global Goals for Sustainable Development came into force in January 2016. Through these 17 interconnected goals, national governments and the international community pledged to work together to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure that all people enjoy peace and prosperity by 2030.

The Global Goals are underpinned by a pledge to 'Leave No One Behind,' meaning that the very success of the Goals is dependent on reaching and supporting the most vulnerable and marginalised people.

"As we embark on this great collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind. Recognising that the dignity of the human person is fundamental, we wish to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society. And we will endeavour to reach the furthest behind first."

Transforming our world: the 2030 agenda for sustainable development, paragraph 4 (outcome document of the UN Summit for the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals).

Identifying and prioritising support for the most vulnerable is a significant challenge. But translating this ambitious commitment into action would also be the most successful way of effectively ending inequality - a root cause of both poverty and conflict.

Women for Women International makes three key contributions to delivering the Global Goals and ensuring that no one is left behind:

- **Reaching marginalised women survivors of conflict:** In 2017, we worked with 26,737 women in communities where support for marginalised women's economic and social empowerment is largely absent.
- **Filling the data gap:** Our data provides a valuable snapshot to help national and international policymakers understand hard-to-reach populations.
- **Amplifying voices:** Women's influence over decision-making is key to achieving the Goals. We support women's advocacy in their communities and make connections with national and global advocacy.

Three years into the Goals, and ahead of the 2019 Global Sustainable Development Report, Women for Women International is concerned that women affected by conflict are being failed by the Goals and are continuing to be left behind.

The promise for marginalised women in Afghanistan

Amidst a deteriorating security situation and rising levels of unemployment and poverty, threats to women's rights continue to undermine the potential for progress in Afghanistan.

"...in some areas, progress is insufficient to meet the Agenda's goals and targets by 2030. This is especially true for the most disadvantaged and marginalised groups."

António Guterres, UN Secretary General, The Sustainable Development Goals Report, July 2018.

The **Government of Afghanistan's Global Goals report** (July 2017) notes deteriorating security and labour market conditions as the key factors for increasing rates of poverty, with 1.3 million more Afghans living in poverty in 2013-14 (compared to 2011-12).¹ For Afghan women, the report notes a decrease in likelihood for rural and poor women to access skilled antenatal care. Girls' education has been particularly affected by insecurity, with rural and poor girls most affected.

The **Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission** registered more than double the amount of cases of violence against women in 2017 (4,340) compared to 2016 (2,046).²

Since 2002, Women for Women International has worked with more than 115,000 marginalised women survivors of war in Afghanistan.

Our core work is centred on a holistic, rights-based programme to address the needs of marginalised women in conflict-affected countries around the world. We have tested

and evolved our approach to fit the needs of women who have been denied access to education, have been affected by conflict and who seek inclusion and recovery. Our programme equips women with skills and resources to earn and save money, regain their confidence and actively participate in their communities.

We define marginalised based on a combination of three key areas of vulnerability:

- **Conflict-affected, such as surviving violence, being displaced or the de facto head of household.** In Afghanistan, 9% of 2017 women participants are the head or joint head of household.
- **Socially-excluded, as evidenced by signs of malnutrition, poorer than average living conditions, or restrictive traditional practices such as female genital mutilation and cutting.** In Afghanistan, 91% of 2017 women participants reported having never received any formal education.
- **Living in extreme poverty, perhaps due to unemployment, or limited to high-risk or unsafe occupations.** In Afghanistan, only 6% of 2017 women participants reported being employed in any way.

We also work with a variety of male leaders, male family members of women participants, and other male community members, providing them with training in women's rights and gender equality. In 2017, we reached 1,800 men through our **Men's Engagement Programme** in Afghanistan.

Progress on the promise in Afghanistan

This report card presents key indicators from our Afghanistan data within the framework of the Global Goals.³

By sharing this data, we aim to highlight the lack of progress for marginalised women survivors of conflict, highlight the importance of investing in the most marginalised and make recommendations for how the international community can prioritise them to ensure that no one is left behind.

Women for Women International routinely administers rigorous baseline and endline surveys to a geographically representative sample of enrolled participants to gauge women's progress through the programme. We collect data from 30-40% of women participants at enrolment (baseline) and, 12-months later, at graduation (endline). In 2016, we revised our data collection methods to strengthen the quality of the data we receive. **Data presented here was gathered from 1,381 participants at both baseline and endline, representing 38% of all women who graduated in Afghanistan in 2017 (January - December).**



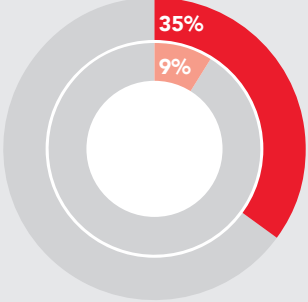

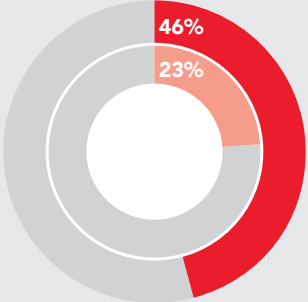
The data we collect focuses exclusively on marginalised women survivors of conflict and therefore is not nationally representative. It does, however, provide a snapshot into the lives of the women we serve and can provide insights into working with hard-to-reach populations.


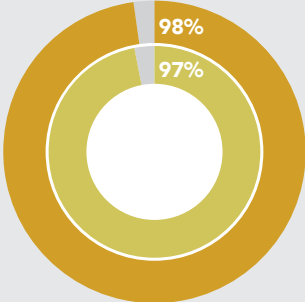

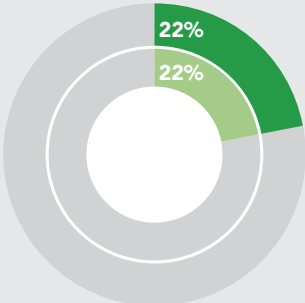
Here, we also present the '**percentage change**' which is the amount of change as a proportion of the starting point (our baseline findings). We use this method as a way of understanding the magnitude of a change relative to a baseline figure.


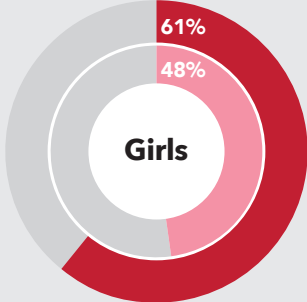

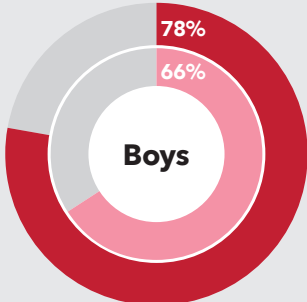
As acknowledged by the Goals, the lived experience of marginalisation or extreme poverty is multidimensional and interlinked - it is not defined by earnings alone. The data presented here also reflects the complexity of leaving no one behind and how marginalisation affects the women we serve in every aspect of their lives.



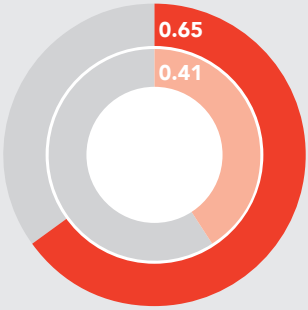

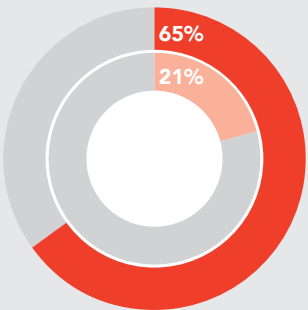
Through sharing our data, Women for Women International hopes to amplify the voices and experiences of the women we serve, share evidence around what works with marginalised groups, and highlight the important of prioritising investment in the most marginalised and the impact that such support can have.



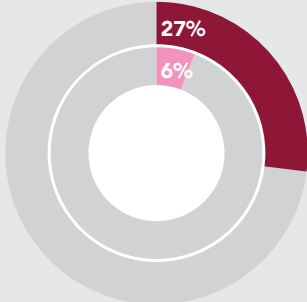
"At the community level, I am active, especially in some cases related to women. I advise women, and people in the community are happy with my activities."
Woman graduate in Afghanistan.

	Global Goal and selected target (by 2030)	Our indicator	Percentage change
	Goal 1: End poverty in all its forms everywhere		
	<p>1.1 Eradicate extreme poverty (people living on less than \$1.25 a day).</p>	<p>Share of women participants who report personal earnings of at least \$1.90 a day (in current USD purchasing power parity).⁴</p>	 <p>■ At graduation (2017) ■ At enrolment (2016)</p> <p>280% ↑</p>
	<p>1.5 By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic, social and environmental shocks and disasters.</p>	<p>Share who report saving a portion of their earnings.</p>	 <p>■ At graduation (2017) ■ At enrolment (2016)</p> <p>100% ↑</p>

	Global Goal and selected target (by 2030)	Our indicator	Percentage change
	Goal 2: End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture		
	2.1 By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round.	Share of women who report sufficient food in the house in the last 4 weeks.	 <p> ■ At graduation (2017) ■ At enrolment (2016) </p> <p>1% ↑</p>
	<p><i>Our interpretation of this data is that while women report having sufficient quantities of food in the house, this does not necessarily speak to food quality. From qualitative feedback, we hear that Afghan women learn a lot about nutrition from the programme, with reports of changed household cooking habits.</i></p>		
	Goal 3: Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages		
	3.7 By 2030, ensure access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including family planning, information and education.	Share of women participants who report practising family planning.	 <p> ■ At graduation (2017) ■ At enrolment (2016) </p> <p>unchanged</p>
	<p><i>Our interpretation of this data is that we believe women's uptake in family planning is a function of increased education. However, family planning necessarily requires buy-in from women's partners, who may ultimately influence their decision to put these lessons into practice. It is also worth noting that some women will - jointly with their partners - actively decide not to practise family planning, even when they have the relevant knowledge and access to services.</i></p>		

	Global Goal and selected target (by 2030)	Our indicator	Percentage change
<p>4 QUALITY EDUCATION</p> 	<p>Goal 4: Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning</p>		
	<p>4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcome.</p>	<p>Share of total school-aged girls in school (5-17 years).</p>	 <p>Girls</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At graduation (2017): 61% At enrolment (2016): 48% <p>27% ↑</p>
	<p>4.1 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcome.</p>	<p>Share of total school-aged boys in school (5-17 years).</p>	 <p>Boys</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> At graduation (2017): 78% At enrolment (2016): 66% <p>18% ↑</p>



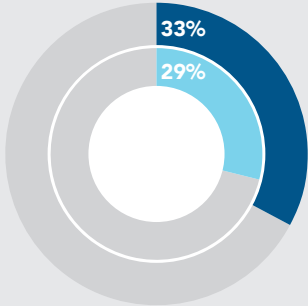

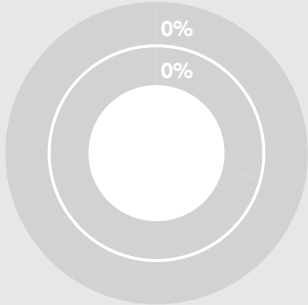
	Global Goal and selected target (by 2030)	Our indicator	Percentage change
	Goal 5: Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls		
	<p>5.1 End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.</p>	<p>Perceived self-efficacy (scale of 0-1).</p>	 <p>■ At graduation (2017) ■ At enrolment (2016)</p> <p>59% ↑</p> <p><i>This is a new metric we use to attempt to measure women's perceptions of self-confidence, future outlook and capacity to follow through with life goals. Using a set of questions commonly used in women's empowerment research studies, we present self-efficacy as a score on a scale of 0-1, where 1 indicates the highest possible level of self-efficacy.</i></p>
	<p>5.6 Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.</p>	<p>Share of women who report being involved in decisions about having more children.</p>	 <p>■ At graduation (2017) ■ At enrolment (2016)</p> <p>210% ↑</p> <p><i>This indicator represents joint decision-making between women and their spouse, which sees a substantial increase, while spouses being the sole decision-maker decreases substantially. This is a huge achievement. It signals a step towards women having greater control over their reproductive health and is indicative of women's wider household decision-making and agency.</i></p>

	Global Goal and selected target (by 2030)	Our indicator	Percentage change
	Goal 8: Promote inclusive and sustainable economic growth, employment and decent work for all		
	<p>8.3 Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalisation and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.</p>	<p>Proportion of women reporting any type of employment across all (1°, 2°, 3°) occupation levels.</p>	 <p>■ At graduation (2017) ■ At enrolment (2016)</p> <p>326% ↑</p>



Women for Women International participants working on crochet in Afghanistan. Our year-long programme supports women to learn a marketable job skill, such as crochet, and provides business training so that women can turn their chosen skill into a stable income.

Photo: Millie Harvey

	Global Goal and selected target (by 2030)	Our indicator	Percentage change
	Goal 16: Promote just, peaceful and inclusive societies		
	<p>16.1 Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere.</p>	<p>Share of women who have spoken up in public against hitting or slapping women (sometimes or often).</p>	 <p>■ At graduation (2017) ■ At enrolment (2016)</p> <p>14% ↑</p>
	<p>16.7 Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.</p>	<p>Share who are currently a member of any type of group outside of our training.</p>	 <p>■ At graduation (2017) ■ At enrolment (2016)</p> <p>unchanged</p> <p><i>Our interpretation of this data is that during the data collection period in Afghanistan, our programme did not host formal cooperatives or savings groups for women. However, women do join informal 'self-help groups' through which they have now begun saving money.</i></p>

Delivering on the promise: our recommendations

Based on 25 years worth of experience and evidence from working with women survivors of conflict, we make the following four recommendations to governments, donors and the international community to prevent the women we serve from being further left behind.



1. Use alternative data sources to complement national-level data collection and invest in efforts to listen to the voices of marginalised groups

Progress for those left furthest behind is unlikely to be captured in official, national-level data, particularly whilst existing data collection efforts struggle to capture accurate or sufficiently aggregable data. Alternative sources of data must be included in analysis, as they provide a more nuanced picture of our collective progress and help governments and donors better understand marginalised groups. We recommend a much more active process through which marginalised groups are engaged in ongoing, meaningful dialogue and supported to drive forward the changes they want to see.



2. Identify and invest in the most marginalised women in conflict

Security is a key enabler for women's empowerment. Conflict increases women's vulnerability to exclusion and abuse, further driving them into marginalisation and excluding them from opportunities. Closing the gender inequality gap is not only fundamental to women's rights but is also key to achieving the Goals and the promise to Leave No One Behind. Investing in marginalised groups must be an immediate priority.



3. Provide comprehensive and long-term support for women affected by conflict

The Goals present a comprehensive framework which recognises the various and intersecting needs faced by the most marginalised people, including the women we work with who face the effects or legacy of conflict. Holistic support is essential to addressing these needs and linking this to long-term support for their empowerment is fundamental to their rights as well as building stronger communities and nations.



4. Engage men as allies

Our work with men highlights how important it is to break down discrimination and increase the impact for women. Gender equality and women's rights are not "women's issues" - they affect everyone. Working with men is both necessary and effective for supporting gender equality and women's rights by changing attitudes and behaviours to promote women's empowerment and challenge discrimination.

Join our movement

We can do so much more together and we urgently need more funding to help women survivors of war. There are more than 3,000 women currently waiting to enrol in our year-long training programme.



Sponsor a woman through our year-long training programme. Your monthly donation of £22 could help her learn the skills to support her family and transform her life.

womenforwomen.org.uk/sponsor



Join the global sisterhood and lend your voice to create a chain of inspiration. We need to speak out against injustices that women survivors of war face. Show your support. Stand with us. Join the sisterhood!

womenforwomen.org.uk/sisterhood



Help us engage women as agents of change.

A donation of £1,000 could pay for the training of three Change Agents who will stand up for women's rights in their community.

womenforwomen.org.uk/donate



Endnotes

1. Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan (2017) Voluntary National Review at the High Level Political Forum: SDGs' Progress Report
<https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/16277Afghanistan.pdf>
2. Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission - AIHRC (2016/17) Annual Reports
<http://www.refworld.org/publisher/AIHRC.html>
3. Following a mapping of our data and the Global Goals framework (targets and indicators), Women for Women International identified seven Goals where our work and data make the greatest contribution. Within these seven Goals, we have prioritised three Goals (1,5 and 16).
4. In 2016/17, we integrated the new international poverty line into our monitoring instruments. Our previous data was based on \$1.25 a day.

In countries affected by conflict and war, Women for Women International supports the most marginalised women to earn and save money, improve health and well-being, influence decisions in their home and community, and connect with networks for support. By utilising skills, knowledge and resources, she is able to create sustainable change for herself, her family, and community.

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