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Freshta on the right didn't agree with release of her photo. Photo: UNFPA

Story of Freshta: A Dream Comes True

"I still hear my mother's cries and moans in pain. I can recall how exhausted she finally was before she surrendered to death", says Freshta a student of midwifery at the Herat Institute of Health Studies.

Freshta and her 4 siblings were orphaned by the painful death of their mother due to obstructed labour, where no help from a skilled birth attendant was available. Freshta was only 11 by then and the youngest sibling, a sister was only 6, Sadaf and Sonita, both girls, were 19 and 16. Freshta's mother might have been trying in the hope of having a second son after her only male child, Jalil who was 18 by then.

It was midnight in remote Kamana Village, Kohistaan District of Herat Province of Afghanistan, almost eight years ago, Freshta, was hearing her pregnant mother's cries for help. The only help available was from an old woman from their neighborhood.

"I prayed that my mother would be saved, and that her pain is relieved. I prayed and cried for help", said Freshta, "I wish an angel would come and save my mother", she continued in grief. Her mother's screams and cries faded into groans from exhaustion and pain and then she was silent forever, with the unborn baby still struggling and then was dead in few minutes.

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About UNFPA – United Nations Population Fund

UNFPA is the United Nations agency which leads global efforts to help ensure that every pregnancy is wanted, every birth is safe, and every young person's potential is fulfilled.

UNFPA is mandated by the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD), held in Cairo in 1994, to reduce infant and child mortality, reduce neonatal, maternal mortality, and increase access to reproductive health services including family planning. The Cairo Consensus placed these population and development issues within a human rights based framework, and UNFPA is committed to integrating human rights into its work globally.

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4600 Midwives trained across Asia-Pacific from 2014-2017



Herat Province witnesses the inauguration of Community Midwifery Education Programme

Training midwives for new Family Health Houses in Herat and Ghor Provinces

Herat, 11 April 2018 - The Afghan Ministry of Public Health with technical support from UNFPA and the generous financial support from the Italian Agency for Development Cooperation inaugurated the commencement of a Community Midwifery Education programme at the Herat Institute of Health Sciences.

The programme will train 35 new midwives for the Family Health Houses to be established in Herat and Ghor Provinces. This is part of the expansion of UNFPA Family Health Houses Initiative that began in Herat province and established 9 Family Health Houses in very remote and under-served areas.

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Potential Unleashed; from the Afghanistan Youth Parliament to candidacy for the Wolesy Jirga

Last year, in August 2018, we saw President Mohammad Ashraf Ghani and the Dr Abdullah Abdullah formally welcome the National Youth Parliament of Afghanistan and publically acknowledge this positive step forward for democracy. What they couldn't anticipate then is that less than a year later, 31 Youth Parliamentarians would strive to be formal nominees for the National Parliamentary election.

Becoming a formal Parliament nominee is no easy feat, especially in a country such as Afghanistan where the prolonged conflict can make registering a risk and the elite family connections are sadly often the norm for securing political positions. Yet astonishingly, of these 31 ambitious young people, 14 were successful.

UNFPA caught up with two Youth Parliamentarians who - through dogged determination and engaging the skills learnt through the UNFPA supported Afghan Youth Parliament - are now official candidates for the National Parliamentary elections in October 2018.

One of these young nominees is Muqadasa Ahmadzai, a candidate from Jalalabad. Ahmadzai a successful parliamentarian nominee shares the same optimism as by other young nominees for the future and wishes that by 2030

"There would be no fighting, people would have strong trust on the government, education and would believe in international relations [and] not power of the warlords."

Ahmadzai became the Deputy Speaker of Afghanistan's Youth Parliament, all the more significant considering the social challenges young women face in Afghanistan often preventing or deterring them from pursuing education or political and high profile positions.

When asked about her motivations for nominating herself for the Parliamentary elections, Ahmadzai highlighted how being younger is an advantage - not a disadvantage - as many would assume: *"Being a young woman I see the ability and skills in myself to elect myself and politically represent women and play a positive role...I want to prove this to the world that the Afghan women can also make positive changes in the country"*

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Afghanistan Commemorates the World Population Day 2018; “Family Planning is a Human Right”

- Only 20 per cent of currently married women use a method of contraceptive,
- Family planning can help avert maternal and neonatal mortality and morbidity,
- Family planning can improve the health of mothers and babies and the health of the whole family,
- Family planning can help nations to achieve a speedy economic growth,

17 July 2018, UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund commemorated the World Population Day #WPD2018 in collaboration with the Afghan Ministry of Economy (AMoEc), Ministry of Public Health (MoPH), Ministry of Haj and Religious Affairs (MoHRA), Afghanistan National Statistics and Information Authority (ANSIA) and the Afghanistan Midwifery Association (AMA) at the Government Media and Information Center in Kabul.

The commemoration took place under the global theme of “Family Planning is a Human Right”. Representatives from the Afghanistan’s highest religious entity the ministry of Haj and Religious Affairs attended the commemoration and stated that family planning is in line with the verses of the holy Quran and the teachings of Prophet Mohammad (PBUH).

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UNFPA Afghanistan Partners with Afghanistan National Statistics and Information Authority: promoting data generation and utilization

UNFPA in Afghanistan provides technical and financial support to the Afghanistan National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA), in its lead role of data for development generation, management, dissemination and utilization. UNFPA supported the NSIA to carry out the largest survey ever conducted in Afghanistan, i.e. the [Socio-demographic and Economic Survey \(SDES\)](#).

SDES was planned to cover all 34 provinces of Afghanistan, however, due to unfavorable security situation SDES was carried out in 13 provinces.

SDES collected comprehensive socio-economic and demographic data at household and village level, with the results released in provincial reports.

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UNFPA Afghanistan Organizes Socio-demographic and Economic Survey Data In-depth Analysis and Journalists Briefing Workshops

In collaboration with the Afghanistan National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA), UNFPA organized a workshop with Ministry of Public Health, Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled and Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation, on the thematic analysis of the SDES data.

The workshop involved six days of discussions and further analysis of the data from all 13 provinces.

UNFPA organized a second key training workshop on Data Journalism on the 12th April 2018. The workshop aimed to provide Afghan journalists and policy makers with the [Socio-](#)

[demographic and Economic Survey findings](#), promote utilization of data in mass media reporting and research. Thirty journalists and 20 news editors attended the workshop, which was facilitated by data experts from the National Statistics and Information Authority (NSIA), UNFPA and Chief Editor from 8AM Daily.

The use of data by the media as the society's watch dog shall not only promote evidence based reporting but also encourage the use of data by development programme planners, policy makers, the Afghan government and the international community.

The United Nations Population Fund and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan Sign the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement

Kabul, 21 February 2018 – UNFPA, the United Nations Population Fund and the Ministry of Economy representing the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan signed the Standard Basic Assistance Agreement (SBAA) at the Government Media and Information Center in Kabul. The SBAA is an umbrella legal document that governs all UNFPA technical and financial assistance in Afghanistan.

So far, UNFPA assistance interventions were governed under a similar agreement signed between the Afghan government and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

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