



## APT Narrative Report (Apr - Jun 2018)

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## **I. General Information**

Date: 20 July, 2018  
Name of Organization: Afghans for Progressive Thinking (APT)  
Website: [www.apr.af](http://www.apr.af)  
Country: Afghanistan  
Email: [info@apr.af](mailto:info@apr.af)  
Reporting Period (dates): 1 April, 2018- 30 June, 2018

## **II. Executive Summary**

From April to June 2018, Afghans for Progressive Thinking (APT) was able to organize all of its planned activities, engage and impact 1,522 students (1,088 males and 434 females) directly, and reach approximately 1 million people via its radio program. APT also managed to conduct some field interviews and focus group discussions with youth and government officials in Kabul and Badakhshan for the research project. APT also opened the “Mehrabonon (Kinds)” elementary school for children in need in Mazar, a city in the Balkh province. The students who participated in APT’s activities during this quarter demonstrated increased critical thinking and communication skills, improved leadership skills, and reported acquiring a broadened vision to promote APT’s values in Afghanistan. This report covers the details of the implemented events and presents the impact of APT’s activities in the past quarter.

## **III. Main Activities**

This part of the document delineates the facts and the statistics, while the following section explains the impact of the events and why they matter in the context of Afghanistan, taking into consideration the vision of APT.

### **Debate**

During the past quarter, APT conducted 90 debate training and practice sessions for 272 newly recruited students from 25 universities in Kabul, Balkh, Herat, Mazar and Samangn. In addition, APT also organized three provincial debate tournaments: one in Samangan, one in Blkh and one in Herat and conducted five training workshops for the newly hired debate trainers in APT’s judges’ community. Additionally, APT staff in Kabul, Badakhshan, Balkh, Samangan and Herat organized the monthly networking event for its debate club members and representatives whose purpose was to evaluate the progress and performance of the debate clubs, as well as to assess their sustainability.

### ***Tournaments: Balkh, Herat and Samangan Debating Championship***

APT organized the Balkh Debating Championship at Maulana University on April 26 and 27, the Herat Debating Championship in Galib University on April 12 and 13, and the Samangan Debating Championship in Mawlana University on May 4 2018. A total of 420 debaters (265 male and 155 female), adjudicators and audience participated in the competition. .

A total of 672 students comprising of 262 women and 410 men participated in APT's debate events during this quarter.

### **Leadership**

APT completed a 40-hour leadership course for 22 students (16 male, 6 female) from different universities in Kabul. The class started on March 2018 and ended on May 16, 2018. Some of the topics that were covered in this course included: conflict transformation, problem solving, decision making, goal setting, vision, values, and non-violent communication. At the end of the course students received certificates for completing a social service project. The course was taught by Afghan and international instructors who are experts on leadership development.

### **Research and Dialogue**

#### Second and Third Round of Dialogue at Kabul University

The second and third round of Dialogue was organized on April 8 and May 7, 2018 at Kabul University. A total number of 90 students (60 male, 30 female) attended the event. Every speaker was given 7 minutes to deliver his/her speech and then the floor was given to the audience to ask their questions. The debate round ended by a tea and talk session where the participants had chance to interact with each other and engage in friendly conversations.

#### Second and Third Round of Debate at Nangarhar University

Similarly, APT organized the second and third round of debate on April 4 and May 5, 2018 at the Science Faculty auditorium of Nangarhar University. A total number of 82 students (78 male and 4 female) attended the event.

#### Final inter-university debate tournament between Kabul and Nangrahar University

Following the provincial debate tournaments and dialogue in Kabul and Nagarhar, the final inter-university debate round was held at Kabul University on 10 May 2018, between students of Kabul and Nangarhar Universities. A total number of 80 students (10 female, 70 male) of which 32 students (30 male, 2 female) from Nangarhar traveled to Kabul to attend the event.

### **Media:**

In the past quarter, APT built upon the series of discussions on Countering Violent Extremism that were aired live through De Rana Palaton in Kabul every Thursday morning for one full hour via Kilid Radio. Discussion topics in the past quarter included "Identity", "Meaning of Identity", "Types of Identity", "Changes in Identity" and "Defining One's Own Identity", "Parents as Models for Children", "Parents' Relation with their Children" and "Essential Conversations." Discussions on identity encouraged parents and older brothers and sisters to model values for children and allow them to identify themselves with principles of integrity, community, service, and selflessness. Speakers highlighted that if we do not model values for our children, there is a high chance they would turn to others who may try to instill hatred and extremist ideas in them. Approaches parents can use may include spending time with children, playing with them, helping them with their assignments, paying attention to them, listening to them, and loving them. Speakers also made sure listeners understood that while some aspects of identity (ethnicity, physiology, and race) may not change, visions, goals, and principles of people that shape their identity may change

over time due to evolving circumstances and an increased exposure to diversity and different experiences.

Although the program was aired in Kabul, people could listen to it across the country through their radios as well as online via [www.tkg.af](http://www.tkg.af).

During the next quarter, APT will conduct sites-visits and invite mothers and children to the radio station to share about the impact of our program and how this program changed the behavior of their children.

## **New Initiatives and Partnerships**

- 1) *Research Project: Understanding Youth-led Civic Engagement in Peacebuilding: Examining the Context and Contributions of Young Peacebuilders in Afghanistan, Libya, Sierra Leone and Colombia.*

APT, with the support of the United Network of Young Peacebuilders - a global network of youth organizations, started conducting a research project (field research) in Kabul, Mazar, Faizabad and Herat. In the past quarter, APT organized 7 conversations: 5 in Badakhshan, 2 in Kabul, and 2 semi-structured interviews in Kabul. APT will conduct around 20 additional conversations, semi structure interviews and focus group discussions with different groups of youth, government officials, and civil society members in the next quarter. At the end of the project, all the data will be analyzed and documented. The document will examine young people's roles in peacebuilding and study the factors that enable or/and constrain these roles. The study will represent a youth-led participatory action research in four countries: Afghanistan, Libya, Sierra Leone and Colombia. A comparative study in these four countries will allow an examination of young people's roles in civic engagement initiatives in different cultural, historical and geographical contexts, where factors like gender and age may shape the roles of youth in peacebuilding in different ways. After a policy paper is developed for all four countries, a final research document will be generated and shared with decision makers and policy makers in Afghanistan and the U.N.

- 2) *APT's Elementary School – Mehrabonon (Kind People)*

APT, in partnership with *Love Does*, a California based organization,<sup>1</sup> opened the Mehrabonon Elementary School in Mazar, a city in the Balkh province of the country, in April 2018. The school welcomed 60 children (40 Female and 20 male) particularly those who have been displaced due to the conflict in the neighboring provinces of Balkh. The principal and teachers have been hired and the school has started preparatory courses for students. Regular school classes will began in March 2019.

- 3) *Afghan Youth Representative to United Nations*

APT in collaboration with the Netherlands Embassy selected an Afghan Youth Representative to the United Nations for first official in the history of Afghanistan. Ramiz Bakhtiar who is APT's special member and APT's debate judge was selected as the Afghan Youth Representative through a rigorous selection process and in a final round by a 4-member jury included

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<sup>1</sup> <http://lovedoes.org/>

Netherlands Foreign Minister Stef Blok, UNAMA's Head SRSG Tadamichi, H.E. Dep Minister of Foreign Affairs Adela Raz, and APT's Executive Director Ms. Sofia Ramyar. Mr. Bakhtiar will be traveling to New York to represent the voices of Afghan youth in the United Nations headquarters.

#### **IV. Qualitative Impact**

APT's activities are without doubt impacting hundreds and thousands of individuals and helping them form visions for their future and determine their values and approaches to reach those visions. In the past quarter, students reported that they have broadened their visions beyond the self and the family. They not only think about how to help and care in their own unique ways for their families, but also for the wider community and society. In the context of Afghanistan, where war has forced people to think about their immediate survival, such a change in attitudes and thinking is invaluable. War has also divided people across different lines of language, ethnic groups and religion. After attending APT's activities, we observed that students built friendships with those they normally do not mingle or work with.

Sayeed Esmatullah Mosav, a senior student of the Law Faculty at Kabul University, shared with us the following: "I was impressed by the behavior and treatment of both APT's personnel and lecturers towards the participants of the leadership course. The way they behaved toward me and others changed my attitude and treatment towards other people, because I learned from them how to better care and include others in my life and plans."

Sharifa Esfandiary, a young woman who studies Public Policy at Kabul University, participated in a roundtable discussion that APT organized between students from Kabul and Nangarhar. She wrote to us: "It was interesting for me as a Dari speaking person to interact with students of Nangarhar who speak just Pashto. They spoke in Pashto and I responded in Dari. I understand Pashto, but unfortunately I cannot speak it. It was a lot of fun to communicate with people of Nangarhar, and I will continue my interaction with them through the internet."

During the discussions in the Radio programs, we received hundreds of calls from provinces, and this shows that families are interested in engaging with the discussions that APT organizes. Rahmat Bibi, a mother of 3 children (2 daughters and 1 son), from Achin village of the Nangarhar province, shared her experience with us after hearing our Radio program:

"I am living in Achen village where ISIS extremist groups are active. In the past, I did not pay attention to where my children would go, who they spend time with, and what they learn. It has been five months that I listen to your radio program and all of a sudden I care about where my children are, who they are with, and what they hear. I now see that if I am unaware, they can easily be influenced by extremist ideologies and that would be devastating. I have to say that I use some of the techniques you have taught us and that they have been helpful. For example, I spend time with my children intentionally and they feel loved. They have now a growing interest in staying close to me and sharing the things they hear outside the home on the street or at school. Awareness about my children's lives gives me confidence that they will grow as people who will help our society."