

TRADE SHOW REPORT

ADVANCING WOMEN-LED AGRO-BUSINESSES TO REACH ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT (AWARE)



NEW WAY SOCIAL AND DEVELOPMENT ORGANIZATION (NSDO)

New Way Social and Development Organization (NSDO) is a national Humanitarian, Development, and Advocacy organization working in Afghanistan since 2011. NSDO, based in Kabul with programming hubs and holds deep roots in the north and with operational capacity and presence in different parts and regions of the country. NSDO brings strong technical expertise and years of experience implementing inclusive value chain and market development, community-driven natural resource management, and innovative agricultural techniques and technologies.

NSDO has established strong links and relations with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), community leaders, religious leaders and other community members, youth groups, and social activists through the implementation of Humanitarian, Development, and Advocacy initiatives projects.

NSDO's primary focus is on women and children, and its work has contributed to changes in the lives of thousands of marginalized and vulnerable communities, particularly women and children living in fragile and humanitarian situations in Afghanistan. This work has been made possible by the pronounced support and backing of upright partners, including the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), USAID Counterpart International, DAI- USAID, European Commission (EC), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), World Food Organization (WFP), United Nations Human Settlement Programme (UN-HABITAT), United Nations Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA), Concern Worldwide (CWW), Norwegian Church Aid in Afghanistan (NCA), Mercy Corps (MC), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), Kindernothilfe (KNH), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Save the Children International (SCI), GFA Consulting Group GmbH, International Rescue Committee IRC, WHH, CARE, ACTED, OXFAM, Democracy International, Afghanistan Human Rights Independent Commission (AIHRC), International Development Stakeholders, and community partners.



NSDO staff in AWARE program Trade Show, Kunduz, 31st of July 2024, Kunduz city.



Expert visitors during buying products of AWARE beneficiary participated in trade show, 31st of July 2024, Kunduz City.

AWARE:

The Advancing Women Led-Agri Businesses to Reach Economic Empowerment (AWARE) program aims to promote community business development through agriculture in five value chains – Dairy, Fruit, Vegetables, Almonds, and Saffron. Implemented by the AWARE Consortium, which includes Concern Worldwide, Save the Children, and New Way Social & Development Organization (NSDO), the project spans five provinces of Northern Afghanistan: Badakhshan, Takhar, Kunduz, Jawzjan, and Balkh, over a four-year period.

The AWARE program is inspired by the Islamic principles of poverty reduction - supporting the household to contribute to poverty reduction activities in their community by increasing incomes in agriculture. The program is either increasing agricultural income with the support of women who are currently working in agriculture or with women who want to start agricultural activities by joining women's agricultural and community savings groups. The program provides agricultural and financial literacy training and resources to program participants and works with both men in their respective roles as heads of the family- with women given their roles as careers of family livestock, cultivators, and processors of fruit, vegetables, saffron, and almonds. In addition, the program engages with men, boys, and religious leaders to support their women in the agriculture business.

PROGRESS:

NSDO is responsible for implementing the project in Kunduz province, covering 26 villages across two districts - Imam Sahib and Kunduz Center district.

The project has a total of 2031 beneficiaries across four categories: WABC (468), Existing (144), SHG beneficiaries (612), religious leaders (43), and men and boys (1376).

From January to August 2024, NSDO provided life skills training to 3,393 male beneficiaries across ten sessions and family well-being training to 3,633 female beneficiaries in ten sessions. This training supported the establishment of various small businesses:

- In Otagan Tapa and Qara Wool, 612 female beneficiaries used their business marketing and family well-being training to start businesses such as a baking factory, with investments totaling 55,000 Afghanis from 23 beneficiaries and 39,300 Afghanis from another 23 beneficiaries.
- In Kanam village, Imam Sahib, a tailoring shop was set up by 23 SHG female beneficiaries with an investment of 42,400 Afghanis.
- In Durmen B, 16 female SHG members opened supermarkets with an initial investment of 68,300 Afghanis.
- A local fertilizer shop was established in Qara Turkmen by 24 female beneficiaries, with an investment of 38,000 Afghanis on February 17, 2024.
- A small chicken coop production machine was also created by the SHG, with an investment of 96,000 Afghanis.
- In Bish Kapa Turkmania village, Imam Sahib district, SHG members decided to start a local supermarket with an investment of 48,000 Afghanis from 23 members.

In Dorman A village, a bakery was established by 7 female beneficiaries of the savings groups. The bakery, rented for 830 Afghanis per month, includes a baker's salary of 8,000 Afghanis and a worker's salary of 5,000 Afghanis per month, funded by a collective investment of 52,000 Afghanis.

On March 24, 2024, a butcher shop was inaugurated in Nasiri Ha village by 23 female SHG members. They invested 42,000 Afghanis in the shop and purchased an ice cream machine for 75,000 Afghanis, an electricity meter for 12,000 Afghanis, and other necessary materials for 18,000 Afghanis, with a monthly rent of 1,000 Afghanis for the shop in Dong Qoshlaq.

In June 2024, the Lumpy Skin Disease (LSD) vaccination campaign covered 14 villages in Imam Sahib and 12 villages in Kunduz center, vaccinating 552 cows. Additionally, the second round of FMD vaccination for cattle began on April 18, 2024, targeting 554 cows owned by 277 female beneficiaries in both regions.

The cash grant program in Kunduz and Imam Sahib villages provided 597 individuals with 1,650 Afghanis each, totaling 978,450 Afghanis. The funds were distributed in groups, which then purchased and shared materials equally.



During selling products by AWARE project beneficiary participated in the trade show to local buyers, 31st of July 2024, Kunduz city.

TRADE SHOW IMPACT

The trade shows focusing on agricultural products value chains, such as saffron, vegetables, dairy, pickles, fresh fruits, and handicrafts which are crucial for promoting sector growth and sustainability. Trade shows and other specialized events bring together experts, companies, and organizations, providing a platform for exhibitors to showcase their products and innovations. By highlighting local products trade shows attract both local and international buyers.

Moreover, agricultural trade shows facilitate networking, allowing exhibitors to connect with potential clients, generate leads, and market their products effectively. Participants stay informed about market trends and technological advancements, ensuring competitiveness. Attendees benefit from discovering new products and engaging in knowledge-sharing activities that enhance their industry understanding. Overall, trade shows foster collaboration, support economic development, and promote local agriculture, benefiting farmers and consumers alike.



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Networking and Business Opportunities: The trade show offered a platform for Afghan women agri-businesses and Women Self-Help Groups (WSHGs) to network with market actors and explore business opportunities. Farmers, agricultural businesses, input suppliers, traders, distributors, manufacturers, and professionals connected with one another.

Product Launch: The agriculture and handicraft trade show provided female exhibitors with the opportunity to introduce new products, machinery, innovations, and technologies to a targeted audience.

Market Research and Competitive Analysis: The trade show allowed newly established and existing women-led agri-businesses to conduct market and competitive analysis and observe market trends for future partnerships and networking.

Education and Knowledge Exchange: The trade show aimed to enhance the knowledge of Afghan women agri-businesses and WSHGs regarding market trends, develop marketing skills, and establish linkages with market actors, including distributors, traders, and input suppliers at local, district, and provincial levels. This will enable women-led agri-businesses and WSHGs to operate within their provinces and create livelihood opportunities for both girls and boys.

Sector Promotion and Advocacy: The trade show served as a platform for promoting the agriculture sector, with a particular focus on advocating for women's empowerment and support. NSDO actively engaged with relevant authorities and stakeholders to advocate for increased support for women in business and economic initiatives.

Market Trends and Insights: The trade show offered a comprehensive overview of the latest trends and developments within the agricultural sector. Attendees gained crucial insights into evolving consumer preferences, such as the increasing demand for sustainable and organic products. Additionally, the trade show featured expert panels and presentations on emerging market dynamics, regulatory changes, and global trade patterns affecting the agricultural industry considering the focused value chains in Kunduz province. This wealth of information allowed participants to better understand market demands, adapt their strategies, and stay competitive in an evolving landscape.

Collaboration and Partnership: The trade show served as a dynamic platform for fostering collaboration and forging new partnerships within the agriculture and handicraft sectors. It facilitated networking opportunities among key stakeholders, including farmers, agribusinesses, craft producers, and industry experts. Attendees engaged in meaningful discussions about potential joint ventures, shared best practices, and explored opportunities for cooperative deals. The event showcased successful case studies and collaborative models, demonstrating how strategic alliances can drive innovation and growth. Additionally, market linkage and networking sessions were organized to help participants build relationships and establish valuable connections with potential partners, suppliers, and clients. By encouraging dialogue and cooperation, the trade show aimed to strengthen the ecosystem, drive industry advancements, and create synergies that benefit all participants involved.



During selling products by AWARE project beneficiary participated in the trade show to local buyers, 31st of July 2024, Kunduz city.



During selling products by AWARE project beneficiary participated in the trade show to local buyers, 1st of August 2024, Kunduz city.



Event Overview

New Way Social & Development Organization (NSDO) hosted a two-day agricultural trade show under the AWARE project, funded by the European Union, in Kunduz city, Kunduz province, on July 31 and August 1, 2024. The event aimed to encourage farmers and producers and enhance domestic agricultural products. NSDO organized 83 booths where farmers, producers, agricultural associations, and cooperatives exhibited a variety of products including dairy, vegetables, saffron, fresh, and dried fruits, agricultural assets, and handicrafts. Approximately 2,000 individuals attended the event, including men, women, relevant-governmental directorates, media, INGOs, and UN agencies. About 35% of visitors and 40% of participants were women. This was the second trade show conducted by NSDO in the Northeastern region and was well-received by attendees.

VALUE-CHAINS:

Dairy Production:

Female beneficiaries from the dairy value chain showcased a range of products including milk, cheese, yogurt, curd, dry curd, and butter. These products were well-labeled and packaged. Some beneficiaries prepared curd and yogurt drinks for attendees, resulting in additional sales. The trade show aimed to increase consumer awareness of food nutrition quality and encourage the use of local products. Innovative processing methods were also demonstrated.

Saffron Production:

Saffron, a valuable spice, was prominently featured. Local female beneficiaries exhibited high-quality saffron, showcasing its vibrant color, strong aroma, and distinct flavor. All the saffron was sold at the event, attracting potential buyers and investors interested in the saffron value chain.

Fresh and Dried Fruits Production:

A variety of fresh and dried fruits, including grapes, cherries, plums, and apples, were displayed in standard packaging. Many buyers purchased fruit packages in bulk from cold storage, resulting in successful sales and marketing.

Honey Production:

The trade show featured a diverse range of honey products. Beneficiaries from Qara Turkmen Imam Sahib presented their honey, emphasizing its quality and unique flavors. The honey was displayed in standard packaging, and many buyers made bulk and retail purchases, increasing consumer awareness of local honey products.

Fresh and Processed Vegetable Production:

The trade show highlighted processed vegetable production, with local women showcasing a variety of pickles (tomatoes, cucumbers, onions), melons, and watermelons. These products, labeled with the NSDO-AWARE logo, were affordable and sweet, resulting in significant sales. Exhibitors emphasized sustainable farming practices and modern technologies to improve crop yields and quality, fostering partnerships with potential buyers such as restaurants, hotels, and supermarkets.

Handicrafts:

Women's self-help groups and agri-businesses showcased a range of colorful handicrafts, including hand-stitched tablecloths, flatweave carpets (kilims), knotty carpets, Kuchi dresses, Gandi Afghani dresses, traditional clothing, and various hand-woven items. These products attracted many female customers and achieved high sales, promoting local handicrafts, and stimulating the economy.

Agriculture Assets:

Various agricultural equipment, including chemical fertilizers, different wheat varieties, animal and plant medicines, artificial insemination equipment, spraying pumps, and drip irrigation systems, were showcased. Many buyers purchased agricultural supplies in bulk and retail, leading to successful sales and marketing.



An AWARE project beneficiary participated in the trade show, 1st of August 2024, Kunduz city.



During selling products by AWARE project beneficiary participated in the trade show to local and foreign buyers, 31st of July and 1st of August 2024, Kunduz city.

PARTICIPANTS:

The trade show was advertised through social media and invitations were sent to relevant figures, women agri-businesses, WSHGs, traders, market actors, vendors, input suppliers, and value chain actors. Local, national, and international organizations, as well as UN agencies, were also invited. The event saw diverse participation, with both men and women showcasing their products and engaging in discussions about market trends and local product promotion.

CONCLUSION:

The agricultural trade show effectively brought together experts, companies, and organizations to showcase goods, services, and innovations in the agricultural sector. It provided valuable networking opportunities for Afghan women agri-businesses and WSHGs, enabling them to connect with market actors, farmers, input suppliers, traders, and professionals. Female exhibitors introduced new products, innovations, and technologies, while participants conducted market research and competitive analysis to facilitate future partnerships. Held by NSDO under the AWARE project, funded by the European Union, the two-day event in Kunduz city on July 31 and August 1, 2024, featured 83 booths with a diverse range of products. With around 2,000 attendees, including a significant percentage of women, the trade show was well-received and highlighted the crucial role of women in the agricultural sector. It also provided valuable insights into market trends, promoted sectoral advocacy, and fostered collaborations, ultimately empowering women in business and enhancing their market presence.