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**AFGHANISTAN**

# Success Story

## Protecting Afghan Volunteers

**Working with civil society and government to develop a legal framework that protects individuals and organizations.**



*ICNL worked with civil society organizations and met regularly with government to progress development of the regulation that supports volunteers.*

**The regulation provides a secure legal space for volunteering, and serves as an incentive to develop a culture of volunteerism in Afghanistan.**

As a vibrant civil society sector evolves across Afghanistan, an important component serving global societies, and particularly relevant in developing countries – volunteerism – continues to increase in necessity and relevance. Volunteerism contributes significantly to progressing social and cultural understanding, and forming inclusive representation between communities and government. In Afghanistan there is a void that many countries enjoy: Legislation covering volunteerism. Without appropriate legal framework to support activities, key areas of volunteering are vulnerable to adverse legal action and exploitation.

This normally altruistic activity is vital to many Afghan civil society organizations, although in some areas lines are blurred, with enforced labor passing as volunteerism. The law in Afghanistan fails to define volunteerism and permissible voluntary services. Both would-be volunteers and potential host organizations are uncertain regarding the rights of volunteers and obligations of host organizations.

In addressing this legal gap, the International Centre for Not-For-Profit Law (ICNL), under the Afghan Civic Empowerment Program (ACEP) that is funded by USAID, achieved a major breakthrough after working with civil society organizations and government, to develop a regulation on volunteers. The first of its kind in Afghanistan, the draft regulation seeks to ensure an enabling environment for volunteerism, and recognizes a diverse range of voluntary activities and services.

The Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan has formally accepted the regulation, which is under process. General Director of Legislation, Labor Rights and Labor Improvement of Ministry of Labor, Ghulam Mustafa Harony, stated: “Among 42 regulations under Afghan Labor Code, the regulation on volunteers will be best for all when passed by the Council of Ministers.” The regulation will provide a secure legal space for volunteering, and serve as an incentive to develop a culture of volunteerism in Afghanistan.

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