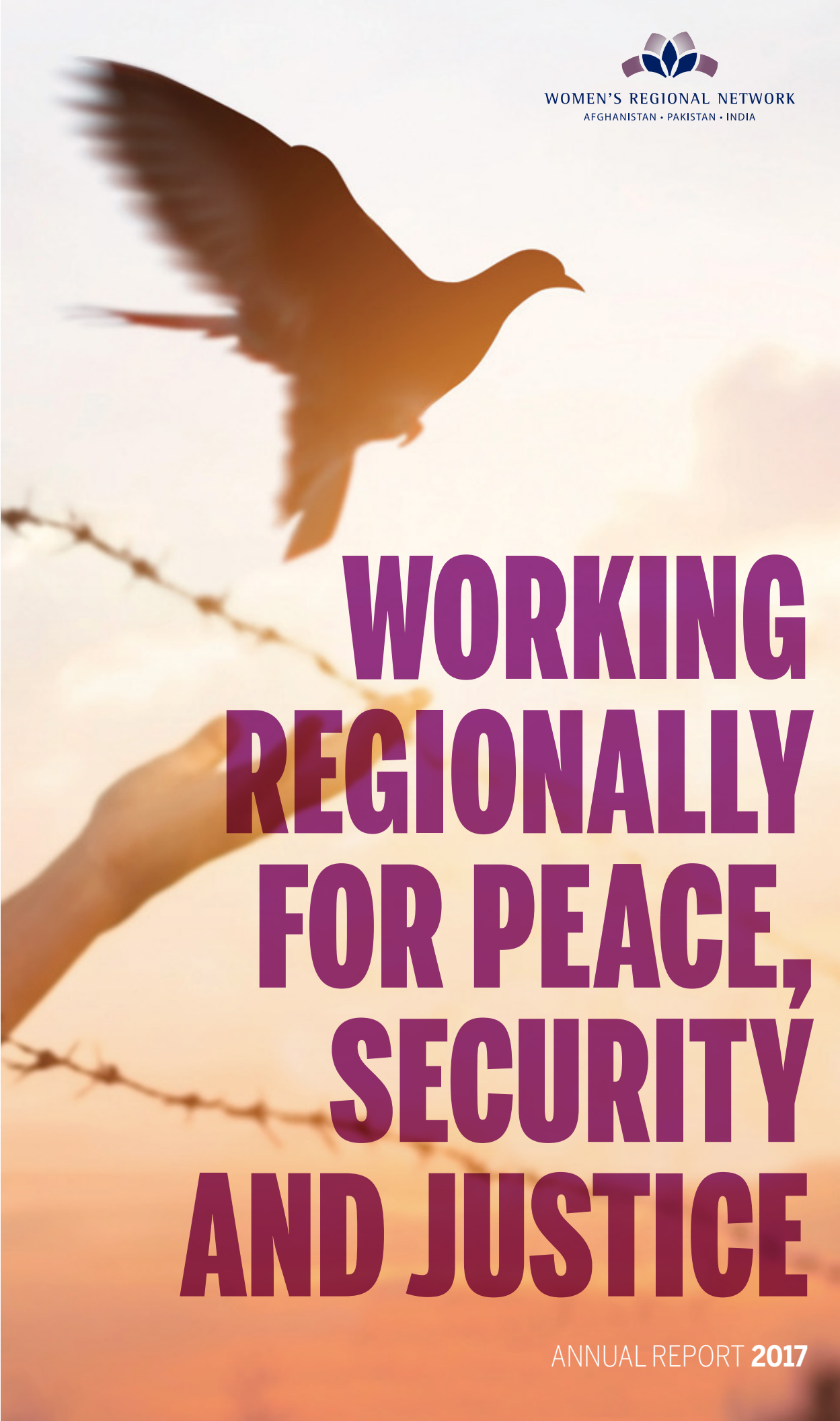




WOMEN'S REGIONAL NETWORK
AFGHANISTAN • PAKISTAN • INDIA



WORKING REGIONALLY FOR PEACE, SECURITY AND JUSTICE

ANNUAL REPORT **2017**

Like weeds, we find invisible routes to seek the sun.
We learn, we teach, we write, we share, we connect.
Like water, we prevail. No fire can resist our flood.

—Excerpt from *Life - In 250 Words*, Swarna Rajagopalan, WRN Board Member (India)



WRN Community Conversations in Baharak Camp, Takhar, Afghanistan

INTRODUCTION

The core purpose of WRN is to amplify the voices of unheard, marginalized women, and together address the interlinked issues of peace and security, justice and governance and growing militarization in South Asia.

THE WOMEN'S REGIONAL NETWORK

Founded in 2011, the Women's Regional Network (WRN) is a network of individual women civil society leaders from Afghanistan, India and Pakistan working together to strengthen women's rights to ensure peace and security in the region. We are animated by a vision of women working collaboratively within and across borders, listening and learning from each other to construct a common agenda towards equitable development in building a just peace.

The Women's Regional Network is expanding, growing more diverse and advancing the Women, Peace and Security agenda in South Asia. In 2017, we focused on deepening relationships, increasing our presence in the community, reaching out to young peace advocates and activists, and above all honouring and amplifying the voices of women through regional and global advocacy for women's rights, security and justice.

This year, Country Coordinators were hired in Kabul, Delhi and Islamabad, which has allowed us to strengthen and diversify our membership in the core groups and improve advocacy efforts. WRN has focused on engaging youth in a meaningful way and increasing the membership of young women in the Network. Through film screenings, a book club, and our inaugural Women, Peace and Security online course for students in the region, we have created new spaces for cross-border dialogue on peace and gender equality.

WRN is proud to announce that Sri Lanka will be joining the WRN network. The shared history of women's movements amid conflict and peace efforts makes it a natural addition to our growing network. WRN also shared its organizing network model with groups of women activists in East Africa and the Americas. By sharing our model, we have the honour to listen to women civil society leaders across the globe learning about potential solutions and strategies to address shared peace, security and justice issues. We believe that collaboration with women change-makers working in other parts of the world will accelerate and strengthen the global movement for women's rights, equality, and justice.

Consulting with these groups has led us to confront the challenges of peace activism across conflicted borders. We have thought deeply about the question often posed to us: "What are your tangible achievements?" While there are indeed tangible achievements to share, this question has illuminated that the achievements of a network are not best captured in statistics or deliverables, but rather in the connections, relationships, and art that speak truth to the issues we face. Our achievements are in unyielding commitment to peace and unity across conflicted borders, in women working pro-bono across national borders and various caste, class, ethnic, and religious fault-lines to create bold agendas with trust and a collaborative spirit; and in the fortitude of women risking their lives to document the voices of women displaced by conflict.

We have found all this to be nothing short of the definition of achievement: 'something accomplished, especially by... special effort, great courage.' Perhaps it is not the achievement which we should question, but rather by which yardstick we use to measure it. WRN will continue to give our best efforts to address the needs and concerns of women in conflict zones, highlighting their shared lived experiences, their priorities and their solutions for a just and peaceful South Asia.



WRN Community Conversations, Kochcha Camp, Takhar, Afghanistan

MEETINGS, EVENTS AND ADVOCACY

AMPLIFYING WOMEN'S VOICES

Community Conversations

WRN released the 2nd round of Community Conversations reports across the region along with associated high level advocacy meetings and symposiums held in partnership with universities, national human rights institutions, and civil society organisations. At a time when migration issues are at the top of the global agenda, dialogue and advocacy for internally displaced persons (IDPs) is often left out of the global debates. Consideration for the experiences and needs of women in the migration dialogue remains but a footnote, reflected in the limited collection of sex disaggregated data and inefficiency of gender-sensitive programming developed without full consultation and leadership of local women.

WRN's Community Conversations continue to amplify the rarely heard voices of women IDPs living at the nexus of conflict and displacement.

Community Conversation Launch Venues and Partners

- University of Peshawar, Peshawar, Pakistan
- Balochi Academy, Quetta, Pakistan
- Guwahati University, Guwahati, India
- TATA Institute for Social Sciences, Guwahati, India
- National Commission for Human Rights Pakistan (NCHR)
- Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission (AIHRC)
- Human Rights Commission of Pakistan (HRCP), Lahore, Pakistan
- India International Centre, Delhi, India
- Afghan Women's Educational Centre (AWEC), Kabul, Afghanistan

ENGAGING YOUNG LEADERS

Women, Peace and Security Online Course

WRN launched its first WPS Online Course convening students from India, Pakistan, and Afghanistan to deepen their knowledge on the complexities of gender, conflict, and peace studies. Students are learning from the expertise of WRN Members and renowned activists from across the globe including Uganda, Sudan and Bosnia. Lecturers engage with students on violent extremism, conflict resolution, movement building, women in peace processes and politics, and more.

Outreach Programs: Film Club, Book Club, and Photography Campaign

The arts are a powerful medium to initiate dialogue about peace, gender equality, and justice with young people. In Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan, we are creating spaces for students and young people from all backgrounds to talk about sensitive topics in a safe space by hosting film screenings and a book club. We believe that by creating opportunities for open communication and exposure to new ideas through these mediums, we will make new inroads to peace locally and across borders.

WRN partnered with the United Religions Initiative (North India and Afghanistan) to launch a photography contest for the 16 Days of Activism to End Violence Against Women. Submissions were gathered from photographers across the region portraying the impact of insecurity on their lives.

LOCAL ADVOCACY

Afghan Women Messengers of Peace Symposium

The WRN delegation including Rita Manchanda (India), Anuradha Bhasin (India), and Bushra Gohar (Pakistan) participated on a panel of the 4th symposium on women and peace entitled *Afghan Women: Messengers of Peace* in Kabul. Also in attendance was Palwasha Hassan, who authored the latest WRN Community Conversations report *Afghanistan's Internally Displaced Women: Complex Realities*. The meeting was hosted by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Afghanistan and the First Lady of Afghanistan, Rula Ghani. Key stakeholders from across the region came together to highlight the importance of women's roles in peacebuilding and conflict resolution, as well as the importance of regional connections and collaborative efforts among women working on peace and security.

International Day of Peace Banners in Kabul

On International Peace Day, WRN displayed banners in Dari across Kabul that read, "Let's find true, fair and comprehensive peace by ensuring women's engagement in the peace process." Afghanistan Country Coordinator, Fatema Kohestani, also attended the *International Peace Day* event and shared her insights on our blog, *Voices for Peace*.

Farhat Asif Awarded N-Peace Award

WRN nominee and member, Farhat Asif (Pakistan), was awarded the "Campaign for Action" UNDP N-Peace Award. The N-Peace Award supports the leadership and capacity of women and men to prevent and resolve conflicts, and serve as active agents for reconstruction and peacebuilding across conflict-affected countries in Asia. Ms. Asif is the founder of the Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies where she promotes peace and women's rights through education.

GLOBAL ADVOCACY

Judge Najla Ayoubi at the Carter Center

WRN Board Member Judge Najla Ayoubi (Afghanistan) presented at the *Human Rights Defenders Forum* in May at The Carter Center in Atlanta, Georgia, U.S.A. She spoke about the complexities of preventing and countering violent extremism and how current programming must be proactive, rather than reactive, for success.

Rukhshanda Naz at the United Nations

- In May, Ms. Naz, WRN Board Member from Pakistan, represented WRN at the *UN General Assembly Preparatory Process for the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration* in New York, U.S.A.



LEFT: Panelists at the 'Homeless at Home' report launch at the India International Centre, New Delhi, January 2017. **CENTER:** WRN Board Members Abha Bhaiya (India) and Rukhshanda Naz (Pakistan). **RIGHT:** On the far right is Farhat Asif (Pakistan), WRN nominated N-Peace Award Winner, Thailand.

She officially addressed the committee with reference to the gendered recommendations from her field research on women IDPs from North and South Waziristan.

- In November, Ms. Naz attended the *UN Universal Periodic Review* proceedings in Geneva, Switzerland. Ms. Naz authored a shadow report for Pakistan which included consultations with over 60 civil society organizations in Pakistan. The report and its recommendations were based on findings from WRN's field research with IDPs from the Federally Administered Tribal (FATA) in Pakistan and ensured that the concerns of women IDPs and women human rights defenders were included.
- Ms. Naz attended the *68th Plenary session of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)* in Geneva, Switzerland. She made a critical intervention and official address to the plenary on behalf of WRN. This was a key session for CEDAW as it was the launch of general Recommendation 35.

Halifax International Security Forum

WRN Core Board Member Rita Manchanda attended the *Halifax International Security Forum* in Canada. Ms. Manchanda presented on the panel *Real Conflict Solutions: The World After Vancouver* on the role of civil society in peacekeeping and going beyond numbers to enable women to fully and equally participate in decision making processes.

Involvement in the Renewal Process of the Canadian National Action Plan on 1325

WRN Member Hossai Wardak attended the *Looking Back, Looking Forward: Consultations on Canada's WPS National Action Plan (NAP)* sponsored by Global Affairs Canada and facilitated by the Women, Peace and Security Network - Canada where the Canadian government took key recommendations from civil society to renew their NAP on UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (UNSCR 1325). Ms. Wardak was also invited to attend the official launch of the Canadian NAP which seeks to address the challenges women face in conflict, and promote their role in global peace and security. Ambassador of Afghanistan to Canada Shinkai Karokhail and the WRN have been continuing advocacy for Afghan women with Canadian stakeholders.

WRN MODELED IN THE AMERICAS AND EAST AFRICA

Women are leading movements to create autonomous forms of security from the bottom up, based on rebuilding community ties. WRN is expanding outreach to groups of women civil society leaders to share our organizing method.

A WRN delegation met with women human rights defenders and civil society peacebuilders from Cuba, Honduras, Guatemala, Mexico, Colombia, the United States, Puerto Rico and El Salvador to advise on the formation of a regional network to collaborate and find joint strategies for the most critical WPS issues we face today. The WRN delegation is honored to have participated in the Americas network founding meeting in Antigua, Guatemala. Participants included Nobel Laureate Jody Williams; Sofi Ospina Collazos, a leading Colombian feminist activist; and Amarilis Pagan Jimenez, a Puerto Rican attorney and feminist activist. In 2018, the WRN model will be considered for replication in five East African countries: Kenya, Tanzania, Burundi, Uganda, and Rwanda.



LEFT: Rita Manchanda and Canadian Minister of Defense Harjit Singh Sajjan, Halifax International Security Forum, Canada, November 2017. **CENTER:** Ambassador Shinkai Karokhail and Huma Safi, WRN Advocacy, Ottawa, Canada. **RIGHT:** WRN Community Conversation launch, Peshawar, Pakistan.



WRN as a model in Latin America: Antigua, Guatemala, November 2017

INITIATIVES

How do we increase the visibility of internally displaced women who are strong agents of change, but who have been forgotten in the global migration dialogue? How do we increase and strengthen women's full and meaningful participation in peacebuilding? How do we engage youth in the path for peace and gender equality? How do we support other networks of women peacebuilders and activists?

MILESTONES

- Released the 2nd round of Community Conversations reports across the region along with associated high level advocacy meetings.
- Conducted associated advocacy with recommendations from women on the ground at the local, national, regional and international level.
- Sent delegates to high level refugee and migration related events at the United Nations and in the United States.
- Implemented a Women, Peace and Security Online Course for students in the region.
- Initiated partnership with *Emerging Young Women Leaders Congress* (EYWLC) led by the Institute of Peace and Diplomatic Studies in Pakistan.
- Shared the WRN organizational model with women peace activists in the Americas and East Africa.
- Successfully nominated Network member, Farhat Asif, for the N-Peace Award from the United Nations Development Programme and the Institute for Inclusive Security.

STRENGTHENING THE NETWORK

- Hired Country Coordinators to staff field offices.
- Enhanced our work on youth mentorship and invited more young women leaders to join the Network across the region.
- Launched the Voices for Peace blog.
- Welcoming Sri Lanka into the Network.

DONORS

Everything we do is made possible by our generous supporters who share our vision of women working within and beyond borders to amplify the voices of unheard, marginalized women, and together address the interlinked issues of peace and security, justice and governance and growing militarization in South Asia.

DONATIONS TO WRN IN 2017

Due to the generous support of our donors over the past seven years, the Network has been able to build partnerships between women leaders of Afghanistan, Pakistan and India and philanthropists, foundations and individual donors in the United States, Canada and Europe, each contributing in their unique way, to bring peace and justice and equality for women across South Asia.

\$30,000 and above

NoVo Foundation
Channel Foundation

\$20,000 to \$30,000

CarEth Foundation
Global Women's Empowerment Fund / Cynda
Collins Arsenault

\$10,000 to \$20,000

Seattle Foundation / Linda Mason
Jane C. Hays

\$2,000 to \$10,000

Brad and Karen Yuan
Josie Hadden
Lynda M. Goldstein
Open Society Foundation
Rockefeller Brothers Fund
Mary Zinn

Up to \$2,000

Tiffany Boyles
Center for International Policy
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TO DONATE BY MAIL, please send your contribution to the Colorado Nonprofit Development Center
c/o The Women's Regional Network, 789 Sherman Street, Suite 250, Denver, Colorado, 80203, U.S.A

WHO WE ARE

The membership is a dynamic network of women peacemakers from Afghanistan, Pakistan and India, inclusive of activists, researchers, academics, students, educators, women entrepreneurs and development practitioners who are joined by supporters outside the network. The WRN is currently growing to include significant participation of young women.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Abha Bhaiya: India, Founder, Jagori Delhi and Jagori Rural

Swarna Rajagopalan: India, Founding Member, Prajnya Trust

Kishwar Sultana: Pakistan, Executive Director, Insan Foundation Trust

Rukhshanda Naz: Pakistan, Executive Director, Legal Aid and Awareness Services

Judge Najla Ayubi: Afghanistan, Former Deputy Country Representative, Asia Foundation

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Nimalka Fernando: Sri Lanka, President, International Movement against All Forms of Discrimination and Racism (IMADR)

Patricia Cooper: US & Canada, Founder/Convener, Women's Regional Network

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Frishta Karimi (Kabul)

Amina Mayar (Kabul)

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Maryam Rahmani (Kabul)

Humira Saqib (Kabul)

GLOBAL ADVISORS

Cynda Collins Arsenault: President, Secure World Foundation

Jane Barry: Principal, Linksbridge

Stephanie Morgan: Western Union

Daisy Khan: ED, American Society for Muslim Advancement

Julie Shaw: Founder, Urgent Action Fund for Women's Human Rights

Amy Claire Wild: Global Marketing Strategist

Bushra Gohar: Former Parliamentarian, Pakistan

Mary Jane Real: Co-Director, Urgent Action Fund-Asia Pacific, Philippines

Nafis Sadik, M.D.: Former Director, UN Population Fund (UNFPA), former Special Advisor to UN Secretary General

Dr. Sima Samar: Chairperson, Afghanistan Independent Human Rights Commission

Huma Safi: Former Deputy Director, Equality for Peace and Democracy, Afghanistan

Wazhma Abdulrahimzay: Former Human Rights Program Officer, Open Society Afghanistan

Nargis Nehan: Acting Minister of the Ministry of Mines and Petroleum, Afghanistan

Dr. Syeda Saiyidain Hameed: Vice Chairperson South Asia Foundation, India

Hossai Wardak: Former Chief of Staff to First Lady Rula Ghani, Afghanistan

Abdul Wahed (Zia) Moballegh: Former Country Director for Heinrich Böll Foundation, Afghanistan

FINANCIALS

COLORADO NONPROFIT DEVELOPMENT CENTER

Statement of Financial Position

WRN–Women's Regional Network

As of 12/31/2017

	BALANCE
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Cash	
Operating Cash	125,180.88
Total Cash	125,180.88
Other Current Assets	
Contributions Receivable 2	847.14
Contributions Receivable 1	220,000.00
Total Other Current Assets	220,847.14
Total Current Assets	346,028.02
Total ASSETS	346,028.02
LIABILITIES	
Accounts Payable	2,565.59
Accounts Payable - Other	34.86
Project Fee Payable	22,084.71
Total LIABILITIES	24,685.16
NET ASSETS	
Beginning Net Assets	
Project Unrestricted	85,624.60
Temporary Restricted	3,109.00
Total Beginning Net Assets	88,733.60
Year To Date Change In Net Assets	
Project Unrestricted	209,743.26
Temporary Restricted	22,866.00
Total Year To Date Change In Net Assets	232,609.26
Total NET ASSETS	321,342.86
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	346,028.02



WOMEN'S REGIONAL NETWORK

c/o The Colorado Non-Profit Development Center
789 Sherman Street, Suite 250
Denver, CO 80203

WRNOffice@womensregionalnetwork.org

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