



**Asia Almas Ashraf**

World Federation Against Drugs

**Supported by:**

WOCAD

**Candidate for:**

Secretary (*recommended by the Nominations Committee*)

I am writing this letter to nominate myself for the position of Secretary in VNGOC board election. It's an indeed a great opportunity by VNGOC to encourage participation of civil society in policy making process. Let me introduce myself.

I am Asia Ashraf from Pakistan holding Masters in Applied Psychology (2003) from Punjab University and one-year fellowship in Substance Abuse, Education, Treatment, Policy and Prevention from Virginia Commonwealth University, USA (2015-2016). I am national trainer for the UNODC, Colombo Plan and international trainer for WFAD. I am internationally certified addiction professional (ICAP-II) from GCCE, Sri Lanka. Starting as an intern psychologist (2003), I remained Director Rehabilitation and Head of Psychology Department, Sunny Trust until 2019. My main responsibilities were overall management, program implementation, monitoring and supervision of treatment and rehabilitation of persons with substance use disorders.

Currently I am serving as Director Rehabilitation and Consultant Psychologist at Greenfield Hospital of Psychiatry, where I undertake individual/group and family counseling, relapse prevention trainings, capacity-building of addiction professionals and orientation sessions for mental health trainees. Besides working on treatment and rehab of male population, I am deeply interested in exclusive needs and access to these services for the female, who remain neglected and excluded. At Greenfield, I am improvising evidence-based, culturally sensitive treatment and rehabilitation of young girls & women with substance abuse. Apart from organizing seminars, walks and discussions on substance abuse in various educational institutions of the country, I have also been conducting training and awareness sessions for parents, teachers and general community.

I am member of Asia-Pacific working group for VNGOC & core team member of Gender Working Group (GWG) by WFAD to specifically address the drug addiction among women, gender based violence and its correlation with illicit drug use and access to health care, treatment and recovery services for women. Whilst advocating for women's rights and contributing to the global drug policy debate, I also launched a first Recovery Club, an open, free, safe space for persons in recovery at Islamabad, Pakistan.

My keynote address at the UN Informal Interactive Stakeholder Consultation preparatory to the UNGASS in New York on February 10, 2016 & Attendance at UNGASS session in April 2016, gave me an in-depth understanding of overall drug situation in the world, approaches adapted to address the issues and international drug policy.

I am an energetic, passionate, grass root level female worker with 18 years of experience in the areas of drug abuse treatment, rehabilitation, policy and prevention with diverse groups of youth, women and elderly people. My practical experience, yearlong stay at USA, active participation in UNGASS, close and responsible role in drug policy futures and in Gender working group and my experience as a special advisor to the board of WFAD has given me good insight into drug situation, strategies and perspective of the world on it.

I believe that my nomination in the VNGOC board would be a great opportunity to represent my region, south Asia which is a huge region and holds geographical importance in trafficking and consumption of illicit drug. Drug addiction is a predominantly male dominated field in my country and in the region, my long and a difficult journey as female advocate will assist me to support, and promote gender sensitive, and humane drug policies nationally and internationally.

Lastly, my experience and work within the areas treatment, reintegration and recovery would serve as a much needed addition to the balance of the VNGOC board and will allow me to work for the provision of evidence based treatment, fighting stigma and reintegration of recovering people into mainstream community.