Current and Ongoing U.S.-Afghan Women Council Member Projects

Thumbnail Summary (June 2015)

The U.S.-Afghan Women’s Council (USAWC) was founded in 2002 and is a collection of public-private partnerships based out of Georgetown University. The Council is co-chaired by the President of Georgetown University and the U.S. Ambassador-at-Large for Global Women’s Issues and by the Afghan Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Afghan Minister for Women and Children’s Affairs. Former First Lady of the United States Laura Bush, former U.S. Secretary of State Hillary R. Clinton, and First Lady of the Afghanistan serve together as the Honorary Co-Chairs of the USAWC.

The mission of the USAWC is to mobilize resources and encourage partnerships in support of Afghan women and children in the areas of education, health, economic empowerment, and leadership development.

USAWC Members are leaders in government, the private sector, academia, and philanthropy who undertake initiatives to advance the lives of Afghan women and children. The Council works to address areas of need identified by Afghan women, convening interested partners and brokering connections to build meaningful, sustainable platforms.

USAWC Member Initiatives include the following programs, focusing on education, health, economic empowerment, and leadership development:

**EDUCATION**

- **Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL)** leads the Mobile Literacy Initiative in Afghanistan, a project initiated by the UNESCO Chair at Georgetown University with support from the Geraldine P. Waldorf Fund. The initiative harnesses mobile phone technology to promote literacy among women in rural areas of Afghanistan. The pilot project succeeded in educating Afghan girls at twice the normal rate in half the normal time and was recognized by UNESCO in 2013 as a global case study. (Dr. Sakena Yacoobi and Dr. Phyllis Magrab)
- **Aschiana Foundation** supports the grassroots work of Aschiana’s programs in Afghanistan by providing children working on the streets and those in the internally displaced persons (IDP) camps with literacy and vocational training, healthcare, psycho-social recovery support, recreational activities and the opportunities to grow and develop in a safe environment. Aschiana, meaning “nest” in Dari, was founded in 1995 by Engineer Yousef Mohammed, who noticed the growing numbers of working street children - children who cannot attend school full time because they must work to support themselves and their families. Since then, Engineer Yousef has made it his mission to educate and empower these children. Today, in addition to the main center in Kabul, Aschiana operates in 6 provinces, and in 7 IDP camps – serving more than 3,500 children a day. Since its inception 20 years ago, Aschiana has served over 80,000 children. (Mary Jo Myers)

- **Ayenda Foundation** provides scholarships to female students from provinces throughout Afghanistan to attend the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF). In 2013, Ayenda Foundation opened a Day Care Center at AUAF’s new International Center for Afghan Women Economic Development to support Afghan mothers who conduct business at the center. (Shamim Jawad)

- **Ayenda Foundation** teaches computer skills to female students at Bamiyan University at the Ayenda Learning Center's modern computer lab and offers a safe, nurturing environment for disadvantaged children age 10-15 years old. (Shamim Jawad, Timothy McBride, Dr. Marna Whittington)

- **E-Higher Education Initiative** is responding to the need for high quality education and access to top tier faculty and literature by identifying online learning opportunities that meet core competency needs in Afghanistan. It has been developing partnerships between institutions and organizations in the U.S. that can offer e-learning opportunities and a designated flagship university or cluster of higher education institutions in Afghanistan-- to provide courses via cutting edge online learning management systems. The multi-phase project will begin with a development phase during which a feasibility assessment will be conducted. (Maryam Qudrat)

- **Friends of the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF)** raise funds to support scholarships, academic programs, and new buildings on campus, including the new International Center for Afghan Women Economic Development (ICAWED). (Leslie Schweitzer)

- **The Foundation for Afghanistan** awards scholarships to Afghan students and partners with local Afghan and U.S. universities and colleges to offer scholarships to Afghans, particularly young women. (Ambassador Said Jawad)

- **The Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security** seeks to enhance U.S. national and global security by elevating and examining the effect of women’s participation to: improve peacemaking, peacekeeping, and peace-building; strengthen conflict prevention and resolution initiatives; mitigate humanitarian emergencies; and foster democratic political transitions. GIWPS maintains a focus on Afghan women. (Ambassador Melanne Verveer)

- **The Lamia Afghan Foundation** opened the Amir Dost Mohammad Khan School in Kabul in 2012, which now serves 3000 children. LAF is currently constructing a school for 500 girls
outside Kabul in an area where girls have historically been unable to go to school due to lack of facilities. A LAF-supported refugee camp tent school also opened in Kabul in 2012. LAF schools are supported by the Ministry of Education. (Lt. General [Ret.] John Bradley and Jan Bradley)

- **Mothers as First Teachers (MAFT),** inspired by USAWC Honorary Co-Chair Hillary R. Clinton’s work in early childhood development (ECD), MAFT provides ECD and parenting instruction to Afghan mothers in northeastern Afghanistan, incorporating mobile phone technology, in partnership with Child Fund Afghanistan. (Jill Iscol and Dr. Phyllis Magrab)

- **The Nooristan Foundation** continues construction of the first primary school in Pasigam village in Nooristan province. NF will support the school (teacher salaries and operation costs) for two years, at which point the school will be integrated into the Ministry of Education. (Mariam Atash)

- **The Sunshine Lady Foundation** supports Women for Afghan Women (WAW) in its work to care for, house, and educate the children of Afghan women in prison. These centers serve as residences for children above age 5 whose mothers are in prison. The children in the CSCs go to school and have access to counseling, sports, art, music, and a loving environment designed for their well-being and happiness. Thanks to this effort, with the fourth CSC, it is hoped that there will be virtually no children above age 5 living in prison in Afghanistan. (Doris Buffett)

**HEALTH**

- **The Abbott Fund and the Afghan Institute for Learning (AIL),** together with *Direct Relief International*, support five AIL clinics (three in Herat, two in Kabul) and offer five-day community health workshops. (Kathy Pickus and Dr. Sakena Yacoobi)

- **The Bayat Foundation** is supporting a telemedicine pilot project focusing on maternal and newborn health. The project will establish a telemedicine Center of Excellence based at the American Medical Overseas Relief (AMOR) Afshar Hospital in Kabul with the ability to connect with the Bayat Foundation's maternal hospital in Faryab Province, and develop links via live audio/video connections to a network of physicians and specialists in the US and/or around the globe for particularly challenging cases. The program will also expand technical training for rural doctors and nurses so that they may better serve the needs of the population, and educate communities regarding the importance of proper sanitation and hygiene and other critical measures for enhancing maternal and child health in Afghanistan. (Fatema Bayat)

- **The Grossman Burn Foundation (GBF)** launched the first-ever international telemedicine-based burn treatment/training program in tandem with Disaster Logistics Relief to address the need for specialized medical care in developing nations. The program includes face-to-face, real-time training for physicians through satellite technology and access to a network of medical experts who donate their time to help with complicated cases. More Afghan women die of complications from burn injuries than from HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis combined, yet
there are only two hospitals in Afghanistan equipped to treat burns. GBF is exploring partnerships to replicate its e-health program in Afghanistan. (Dr. Peter and Rebecca Grossman)

- **HEEDA’s** vision is to promote a culture of impact and sustainability in developing countries through health, education, and economic development programs. Since its founding in 2010, HEEDA has created culturally sensitive programs and research to improve the lives of Afghans. HEEDA is actively organizing and deploying basic health technologies and advancing a community center built to provide education to children and entrepreneurship to women in the remote village of Shamali. (Suraya Rashid)

- **The Lamia Afghan Foundation** is partnering with ROC Wheels, A Leg To Stand On (ALTSO) and the Kabul Orthopedic Organization in Kabul and Jalabad to provide custom-made wheelchairs and prosthetics to disabled children. LAF’s partner ALTSO has provided over 350 new arms or legs for children. (Lt. General [Ret.] John Bradley and Jan Bradley)

- **Women for Afghan Women** operates life-saving programs in Afghanistan and NY, and advocates for women’s rights in Afghanistan, Washington, D.C., and around the world. As a community-based organization, WAW has advanced its mission by working deep in the community, respecting the culture, religion and traditions of their clients. In Afghanistan, WAW operates legal aid centers and emergency and long-term shelters for women and children in 13 of Afghanistan’s 34 provinces. Since its inception in 2001, WAW has protected and empowered over 20,000 women and children and educated more than 250,000 individuals (men and women) on women’s rights under Islam and the Afghan Constitution. (Manizha Naderi)

**ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT**

- **ARZU STUDIO HOPE** provides sustainable, fair labor, artisan-based employment for women and worker benefits including access to education, health care, and community development projects. Former Bamyan Governor Habiba Sarabi gifted ARZU over eight acres of land to construct a 5-acre Central Park in Bamyan City, a second Women’s Community Center in Shashpul, and a 12-home housing development for displaced Hazara refugees. (Connie Duckworth)

- **The Bayat Foundation** is working to create a women-only minibus route around Kabul to provide women with an acceptable, safe, and affordable means of transportation that will increase their ability to participate in daily activities such as education, employment, and medical appointments. The goal is to build a sustainable business that can grow. (Fatema Bayat)

- **The Bayat Foundation** plans to partner with Afghan Wireless to establish a women-owned phone distribution/sales network to expand communication throughout Afghanistan. Phones2Women will train women as micro-franchisees and enhance access to mobile technology by building a sustainable, market-based economic chain. Bayat will train women entrepreneurs in areas such as mobile money, marketing, and advertising in small business, and inventory tracking. (Charlie Ponticelli)
• **The Concordia Summit** is partnering with the USAWC to establish a USAWC Corporate Council that will seek to attract private sector businesses in support of USAWC initiatives. (Ambassador Paula Dobriansky)

• **Global Partnership for Afghanistan (GPFA)** works with rural Afghans to create sustainable, profitable agro/farm businesses that increase incomes through training and development of local associations. GPFA recognizes the vast potential for promotion of Afghan women in the agricultural sector, where 80% of the Afghan workforce and many women are already employed. (Dana Freyer)

• **Goldman Sachs’ 10,000 Women Initiative** has provided 300 Afghan women with business and management education to date. In partnership with the American University of Afghanistan and Project Artemis, the Initiative continues to engage and support areas of need amongst the rising generation of Afghan women. (Dina Powell)

• **The Institute for Economic Empowerment of Women (IEEW)**, now in its ninth year, and its PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS® program for women entrepreneurs, has now graduated 250 Afghan women. The PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS™ Network for Alumnae is garnering excellent visibility in Afghanistan working with USAID and Afghan government agencies, as well as events and pay-it-forward training. (Dr. Terry Neese)

• **Kandahar Treasure** employs women artisans from the Kandahar area in order to develop an economic base for the province and support the advancement of women throughout Afghanistan. For the past four years, Kandahar Treasure has been a non-profit project of Afghan for Civil Society (ACS). Since its inception in 2003, the number of women artisans who produce the handcrafted products we sell has expanded from 25 to more than 400. Four years later, Kandahar Treasure is now transforming into an independent for-profit business, marking an important milestone in the creation of economic opportunity and independence for Afghan women. (Rangina Hamidi)

• **Marshall Plan Charities** is developing, on a 50/50 basis with Afghan villagers, its first sustainable, self-sufficient "model village" in Khairabad with wells, crops, a school, a vocational center, and a health clinic. (Joanne King Herring)

• **Project Artemis** is a proven, successful business training program for Afghan women entrepreneurs, held by Thunderbird School of Global Management at ASU, a top-ranked international business school located in Glendale, Arizona, USA. With a total of 74 graduates since 2005, the program aims to build the entrepreneurial skills of promising Afghan businesswomen, enabling them to return to Afghanistan to create and grow sustainable businesses. Mentors assigned to each participant provide additional support as the women return home to establish or expand their companies. Other participants use their new business knowledge to succeed within civil society. Project Artemis graduates have returned to Afghanistan to run successful businesses that have created over 2,000 jobs for their local communities, and have trained and mentored well over 10,000 of their fellow Afghan citizens in business and leadership skills. The next program will be held February 14 -27, 2016. (Ambassador Barbara Barrett)
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

• **Afghan Women Leaders Connect** identifies and supports effective and accountable Afghan women educators, doctors and health workers, lawyers and judges, and women in business, through: direct financial support; human rights training; voter education training; and in-depth, year-long business training to help expand and strengthen their organizations. Afghan Women Leaders CONNECT hosts an internet forum where Afghan women’s voices can be heard. (Diana Rowan Rockefeller)

• **Georgetown University**, home to the U.S.-Afghan Women’s Council, hosts the Rising Afghan Women Leaders Initiative for Afghan women leaders from a variety of sectors, bringing them together with Georgetown University students from the Washington DC and Doha campuses. (Dr. Phyllis Magrab)

• **The U.S. Institute of Peace** leads a working group of Council Members, NGOs, and government representatives to compile lessons learned and best practices in empowering Afghan and Iraqi women. USIP Center for Gender and Peacebuilding also operates a program in Afghanistan to enhance to civic education and political participation of young Afghan women. (Ambassador Steven Steiner)

• **Voices on the Rise** develops training modules to empower future Afghan women leaders through mentoring programs and better access to leadership, democracy, media, and elections education. Voices on the Rise is specifically working on the development of audio and video files from project partners and advisory board members, including translation into Dari and Pashto. (Khorshied Samad)

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