Project Updates
2015 Annual Meeting
# Table of Contents

## Education:
- Friends of the American University of Afghanistan 6
- The Ayenda Foundation 9
- E-Higher Education Initiative 11
- The Initiative to Educate Afghan Women 13
- Mothers as First Teachers 16

## Health
- The Abbott Fund 21
- Afghan Institute of Learning 23
- Bayat: Water, Sanitation, and Health Initiative 26
- The Lamia Afghan Foundation 29

## Economic Empowerment:
- ARZU Studio Hope 32
- Bayat Foundation 35
- Women’s Economic Empowerment 38
- Global Partnership for Afghanistan 42
- Institute for Economic Empowerment of Women 44
- Project Artemis Afghanistan 48

## Leadership Development:
- Rising Afghan Women Leadership Initiative 52
- United States Institute of Peace 54
- Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security 56
- Voices on the Rise 57
“The mission of the USAWC is to convene committed and capable stakeholders; identify and mobilize public and private sector resources; and encourage dynamic and collaborative partnerships in support of Afghan women and children in the areas of education, health, economic empowerment, and leadership development.”

U.S. Afghan Women’s Council Leadership and Members

Front row (left to right): Vice Chairperson Dr. Phyllis Magrab; Co-Chairperson, U.S. Ambassador Catherine Russell; Honorary Co-Chair Former First Lady Laura Bush; Honorary Co-Chair Former First Lady and Secretary of State Hillary Clinton; Co-Chair Georgetown President Dr. John J. DeGioia; Executive Director of the Georgetown Institute for Women, Peace and Security Ambassador Melanne Verveer.

Please visit our website at: http://gucchd.georgetown.edu/USAWC/ and our Facebook page at https://www.facebook.com/USAfghanWC.
EDUCATION

U.S. Afghan Women’s Council Member Dr. Sakena Yacoobi, CEO of the Afghan Institute of Learning, working with students in Afghanistan.
Overview

Since opening in May 2013, the International Center for Afghan Women’s Economic Development (Women’s Center) has been steadfast in its mission to promote, coordinate, collaborate, and connect Afghan women and ensure their participation in the global economy.

To lead this effort, Nilofar Sakhi, CEO of the Women’s Center, developed a practical but aggressive two-year strategic plan to allow entry for Afghan women to engage in the private and public sector. With over 15 years working in governance, rights and democracy, transitional justice, and development in Afghanistan, Sakhi realized the growing need for a formalized Hub to address the various challenges to open the door for Afghan women in the economy.

Projects

The first step of the plan is dedicated to education and research. A lack of credible data about Afghan women’s economic participation has prohibited informed discourse about the role of women in the private sector and government. Discussions were limited to opening more doors to traditional businesses for women such as carpet weaving and embroidery. Most small women’s businesses relied on international funding without sustainable business plans. There was also a challenge to convince the donor world to fund existing, proven institutions and organizations instead of starting new ones.

Over the course of the last two years, the Women’s Center, drawing on the robust resources from the university and in close collaboration with various NGOs, researched the role of women in Afghanistan’s GDP, and held two major national conferences to communicate their findings. The first conference, “New Perspectives
on Women in Business: A National Conference on Emerging Opportunities,” included women from 14 different provinces, and invited experts from around the world to address the challenges faced by Afghan women business owners. The conference was followed by training workshops on the basics of commercial contract drafting and business financing with the support of the Commercial Law Development Program from the U.S. Department of Commerce. The second conference, “Afghan Women’s Economic Forum” focused on women’s role in emerging industries, and invited business women, research analysts, economists, NGO leaders, and international speakers. The Afghan women who attended the conference wrote about their specific sectors, and developed content-based analytical writing skills, and their work was published and distributed through the public and private sector.

There have also been exhibitions to showcase the work of various businesses, and capacity building workshops on marketing, branding, business management and legal aspects of businesses. These workshops have also been extended to female business major students from four university in Kabul.

The second step of the plan relates to policy advocacy. Businesswomen who are able to critically assess issues are central to create and revisit laws that will enable businesses to contribute to Afghanistan's economy. Toward this effort, the Women’s Center conducted professional business advocacy training for policy advocates in the business sector. The Center held roundtable and business matchmaking meetings in four provinces, which highlighted regulations that have been restrictive for women’s participation, and ways to motivate change within the legal system. To enable strong public-private partnerships, the Women’s Center continues to work closely with the U.S.-Afghan Women’s Council. Last year, in coordination with Georgetown University, the Women’s Center established the first Rising Afghan Women Leadership Initiative (RAWLI). The Women’s Center team continues to meet with national and international government officials to share the views of various Afghan Women’s associations, throughout Afghanistan, as they relate to international funding. Their shared vision has been to better communicate all the progress that has been made in Afghanistan, as the donor money draws down.
Mission

In 2015, the Women’s Center will bolster its efforts to provide innovative training, educational events, and hands-on-experience in emerging industries, inclusive to men and women, throughout the economy. Last year, the university established the AUAF Business Innovation Hub (Biz Hub), which provides high-quality business management and leadership services to Afghan companies that have both the potential and the interest in future growth. Housed within the Women’s Center, the Biz Hub was created based on the need recognized in the Afghan market for a place where businesses can find a reliable and result-oriented set of services that will help them grow. The Biz Hub will add another important co-ed component to foster female participation in the economy. It will grow female businesses in close consultation with men and women, nurture talent, and incubate female-led small and medium-sized businesses. The Women’s Center will continue to function as a Hub for women in the economy. It will provide business training to female entrepreneurs, funnel investment capital to promising women-run businesses, and provide access to all the business and information technology resources of the American University of Afghanistan.
THE AYENDA FOUNDATION
COUNCIL MEMBER: SHAMIM JAWAD

Overview

We established Ayenda Foundation in 2006 to improve the welfare, education, health, shelter and safety of the Afghan children and to provide them a sustainable pathway to a better and brighter future.

For nine years, Ayenda Foundation has been educating thousands of young children in Afghanistan. As well as building, operating, and supporting schools and computer labs throughout the country. To further advance those efforts, Ayenda has offered scholarships to AUAF, offered training and skills development programs, while also funding health programs, sports facilities and equipment. In addition, we provide humanitarian assistance to the refugee families in Kabul.

Projects

Our most recent project is the opening of Ayenda Children’s daycare at the AUAF’s new International Center for Afghan Women’s Economic Developments to help women entrepreneurs with their young children.

Building our School in 2009, the Ayenda Learning Center, in Bamiyan has been our most significant project. The Ayenda Learning Center, which sits in the shadow of the Great Buddha statues that were destroyed by the Taliban in 2001, currently provides 160 children with a modern curriculum and learning facility and enhanced vocational training, meals, and basic healthcare education that are often unavailable in the impoverished province of Bamiyan.

We were fortunate, with the support of donors from the United States, to provide students with school uniforms, backpacks, school supplies, sports equipment, and most importantly, a computer lab. It is our pride to be able to bring computer and Internet access to one of the most remote provinces in Afghanistan, Bamiyan.
The computer Lab not only serves our students at the Center; but also is available for the benefit of youth in the area, such as female students from Bamiyan University, High School students and women from the community to learn basic computer skills.

**Mission**

This March Ayenda Foundation will start a new program in partnership with 10,000 Global Girls Initiative Sponsors: a joint effort between LitWorld and Global Girls Rising that improves and empowers the lives of girls around the world through storytelling, creative expression, literacy and mentorship. The program structure provides opportunity for girls to learn how to tell stories that empower them, and to meet with a mentor to strengthen their own voices. The program builds 7 strengths: belonging, curiosity, kindness, friendship, confidence, courage and hope. We are planning to involve our 5th and 6th grade girl students, female students from the Bamiyan University and girls from the high schools. We are excited to create even more transformational learning opportunities for our Ayenda students and Bamiyan community through this new initiative.

All our accomplishments were made possible due to your support and donation. With the continued support from you, we will sustain and enhance our efforts to improve the lives of Afghan women and children by using the Ayenda Learning Center as a learning platform.
E-HIGHER EDUCATION INITIATIVE
COUNCIL MEMBER: MARYAM QUDRAT

Overview
The E-Higher Education initiative will respond 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. The E-Higher Ed Initiative will develop 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. On February 21, 2015, a white paper on higher education in Afghanistan will be discussed by the larger academic community at a symposium in Washington D.C. This proposed higher education plan for Afghanistan is predicated on introducing fully recognized and transferable e-learning options in Afghanistan and for delineating a standardized general education course of study.

The plan for Afghanistan’s higher education will then be formally presented to the new Minister of Higher Education in Afghanistan for consideration. Fortunately, the nominee for new Higher Education Minister is a female graduate of the American University of Afghanistan (AUAF) and her position should be confirmed at about the same time that the higher education plan will be finalized at the symposium. During this initial phase, universities will be approached in order to develop a select cluster of courses that will meet general education requirements in Afghanistan. Afghan partner universities will be identified that have the capability to host online learning as well as to provide facilitator instructors in order to create a blended learning experience for students in the classroom. The E-Higher Education Initiative will work with highly talented women to lead this effort. These courses will be developed in order to meet student needs and challenges as well as to address translation needs. During phase 2, initial course(s) will be offered and students will be able to begin taking classes. The final phase will be to reflect upon student learning outcomes and overall success.
Mission
Provide high quality academic content to Afghan university and college students. Offer access to digital libraries in the U.S. and to help Afghan university students overcome the obstacles to access to high quality faculty, literature and content by bringing them to the forefront of cutting edge e-learning opportunities. Building a systemic plan for women to play a leading pedagogical role associated with these cutting edge learning opportunities.

Timeline
Months 1-6 – Feasibility assessment, contact with U.S. university leaders in e-learning and contact with Afghan partner universities. Months 7-12 course rollout and months 13-18 will study course evaluations and calibrate program accordingly.
Overview

Who We Are

The Initiative to Educate Afghan Women is an education and leadership development program working to create Afghanistan's next generation of women leaders. The Initiative partners with US colleges and universities to deliver undergraduate education to Afghan women who want to help other women of Afghanistan in their struggle for gender equity. The Initiative also provides leadership training and career guidance to prepare these young women for roles at the forefront of political, economic and social development in their homeland.

The Initiative to Educate

Recognizing that quality higher education for women is the surest path to decisive change for Afghanistan, since 2002 The Initiative has built a growing network of women in Afghanistan and abroad working to achieve gender equality by increasing the participation of women in government and industry and serving as inspirational role models for other women. In 2006, FLOTUS Laura Bush attended the graduation of our first three graduates at Roger Williams College in Bristol, Rhode Island. In the nine years since, The Initiative has leveraged over $2 million in donations to secure nearly $12 million in partial scholarships to help 67 women graduate from 21 US colleges and universities.
Projects

*The Initiative to Lead*

In late 2012, The Initiative undertook an ambitious program of projects to achieve improvements in the areas of governance, administration, operations, development, program and communications. As a result, The Initiative has one of the lowest overhead models for a nonprofit of its size with more than 85% of donated dollars and in kind contributions going directly to support students. The Initiative applies a more rigorous candidate search and qualification process to identify women of outstanding academic potential and demonstrated commitment to public service who are encouraged by their families and communities to study abroad. Students now receive undergraduate education augmented by The Initiative's leadership and mentorship training programs designed to develop effective personal leadership styles with a special emphasis on the identification and resolution of diversity issues. Unique to our program is a required return to Afghanistan each summer to keep students connected to their communities and to begin internships leading to permanent placement opportunities after graduation. Since 2012, The Initiative doubled the number of new starts twice. Currently, 18 women study at 9 universities in pursuit of undergraduate degrees in physics, mathematics, civil engineering, psychology, finance, economics and communications.

Mission

*The Initiative to Change*

The Initiative will increase the number of students in its program over the next two years through college and university partner development, private fund raising and alliances with other organizations. We also will continue building a formal association of current students and alumnae in the United States and Afghanistan to support program admissions and delivery as well as academic and professional mentoring. With and under the auspices of the US-Afghan Women’s Council, The Initiative will work to increase access to our program in the provinces of Afghanistan as well as secure support for scholarships that prepare students for high demand professional careers in service of the political, economic and social development needs of Afghanistan.

Partnerships
**PARTNER COLLEGES (2014-2015)**

Brenau University*, Bucknell University, College of the Holy Cross, Hollins University, Juniata College*, Kennesaw State University, University of Mary Washington*, Meredith College*, Middlebury College*, Mount Holyoke College, Montclair State University*, Old Dominion University, Ramapo College, Randolph College, University of Richmond*, Russell Sage College*, Roger Williams University, Simmons College, St. Mary’s College, Sweet Briar College*, University of Montana,

* Current Students

**POLITICAL**

ADELA RAZ - First Deputy Spokesperson and Director of Communications, His Excellency President Hamid Karzai of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Simmons College – Class of 2008

ANITA HAIDARY - Public Relations and Social Affairs Advisor, Her Excellency First Lady Rula Ghani of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, Mount Holyoke College – Class of 2014

**ECONOMIC**

NADIMA SAHAR – Founder, Soft Power Solutions, Roger Williams College – Class of 2006

SONIA EQBAL - CEO and Partner, PAHNA Media Group, Juniata College – Class of 2007

**SOCIAL**

SADIQA BASIRI SALEEM – Founder, The Family Welfare Center for the Elimination of Violence Against Women, Mount Holyoke College – Class of 2009

NAJIA NASIM - Country Manager, Women for Afghan Women, Bucknell University – Class of 2013

* Partial List
VOICES FROM THE FIELD:
MOTHERS AS FIRST TEACHERS PROJECT
COUNCIL MEMBER: JILL ISCOL

Mothers as First Teachers was inspired by the Early Childhood Development (ECD) work of Hillary R. Clinton, the former U.S. Secretary of State and the Honorary Co-Chair of the U.S.-Afghan Women’s Council (USAWC) at Georgetown University. Secretary Clinton’s life-long commitment to ECD spans from her days as a law student volunteer at Yale Child Study Center, to her development of the HIPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters) program in Arkansas 25 years ago, to her new ECD-driven organization Too Small to Fail. In recognition of Secretary Clinton’s legacy and the importance of ECD worldwide, USAWC Member Jill Iscol initiated and raised funds to support the USAWC’s signature Mothers as First Teachers (MAFT) project in Afghanistan.

Building on a wealth of evidence-based ECD experience, USAWC Vice Chair Dr. Phyllis R. Magrab, Professor of Pediatrics at Georgetown University and the Director of Georgetown’s Center for Child and Human Development the USAWC, together with Roxanne Kaufman and Frances Duran, developed the core MAFT curriculum. ChildFund Afghanistan was chosen as the implementing partner in Afghanistan given ChildFund’s professional experience working with young mothers and children.

As conceived and implemented, MAFT provides parenting instruction to Afghan mothers and caregivers with children 0-3 years, incorporating monthly tea sessions, fortnightly home visits, shura outreach, and mobile phone technology to advance the lives and development of Afghan women and their children. MAFT also engages male
family and community members through written messages for fathers and awareness meetings facilitated by religious leaders.

The following three caregivers’ insights come from Sheikh Misri New Township (SMNT), located in Nangarhar province, where the MAFT project is implemented. Through their participation in MAFT, they are ensuring a strong foundation for children in Afghanistan to reach their full potential.

**Reflection from a Mother**

Saima* is a mother with five children living in Sheikh Misri. Her participation in the project has led to important changes in her relationships with her children. Before this project, “I did not show love to my children in front of my husband and in-laws. We felt shame to show affection,” she reflects, as it is not part of traditional Afghan culture. “Then, I learned that children require our love and understanding,” Saima said. “Today I care for children and show them love even in front of my elders.”

Her participation in MAFT transformed her attitudes towards playtime: “I used to bar children from playing at home because they bothered us,” she said. “Once I understood that sports and play are important to help children learn and grow, I instantly changed my ways. Now we make time for play and appreciate their games in the home and outside.”

Saima has also changed the way she engages with her children: “I am so thankful for the project, my children now give me respect. I make sure to feed my children on time, teach them how to respect others by greeting and saying thank you. I used to be angry or anxious but now I have the knowledge from the mobile messages and tea sessions.”

Through the mobile messages and new skills, Saima has been able to influence her husband. “He used to differentiate among the children,” she said, “he liked sons, but not daughters. Once I learned that bias was wrong, I was emboldened to tell him not to discriminate because it is not good for our children and it is also prohibited in Islam.” Today, Saima reports that her husband treats all of their children equally.
Reflection from a Father

Ahmed* is 45 years old and has two young children, a boy and a girl. He came to Sheikh Misri eight years ago. His wife participated in the mobile messages, home visits and tea sessions and he was invited to participate in the meetings for men as fathers. He decided to attend because he trusted ChildFund.

He was surprised that the meeting made him reflect on his role as a parent. “The religious leader’s speech and message booklet for fathers changed my spirit and opened my mind considering the duties of a male parent,” Ahmed said. During the meeting, the imam explained the importance of the text and voice messages that the MAFT project disseminates through mobile technology and promoted fathers’ support for these messages. “This has really helped me to work with my wife,” he said.

As a result of the meeting, Ahmed is open to the MAFT messages and has made changes in the household. “Now I support my wife and we both carry out the activities from the messages with our children,” he said. “I show affection and love to my children, I never discriminate between the children. I support both the boy and girl go to school and take care of their hygiene needs.”

Ahmed reflects that, “I used to feel that the duty of a father was to work outside the home and ensure there is enough food for children. Now, I know that the most important thing is to invest in children because they can change society one day.”

Reflection from a Community Volunteer

Community volunteers in the MAFT project receive coaching to reinforce the weekly text and voice messages through mobiles with home visits and tea sessions.

One community volunteer, Laila*, has been excited by the many positive changes that she has observed the community. She said that, ”I go every week to the homes of these mothers to discuss better childcare methods, about health, hygiene and good nutrition. I also stress the need to not abuse the little ones, verbally or physically.” Through her interactions with mothers, Laila has seen that many mothers were previously unaware of these needs and she has observed positive changes in feeding,
playing with and showing affection to children, in response to the messages. In fact, Laila shares these messages to other community mothers whom she does not visit because, as she says, “they are very beneficial to all mothers.”

Laila praises the engagement of men in MAFT because it has helped to create a more supportive environment for caregiving and outreach to mothers, even in her own household. “At first my husband did not like that I led the tea sessions,” she said. His attitude changed, however, when he sat with other men outside to discuss parenting. Afterwards, she notes, “he started to feel comfortable” and began to support her work. Laila notes that MAFT has played an important role in changing the mindset of fathers and other members of the community.

* Names have been changed for privacy.

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The Bayat Foundation celebrates the grand opening of a new 30-bed maternity hospital in Hessa Dowom, Wardak Province, Afghanistan.
Overview

*Improving Maternal and Child Health in Afghanistan*

Afghanistan is one of the deadliest places on earth for women and children. Consider:
- Only 14 percent of births are attended by a skilled health care worker.
- It has the second-highest maternal mortality ratio in the world: 1,400 deaths per 100,000 live births.
- 70 pregnant women die each day, often during childbirth.
- One in five children will not live to see their fifth birthday.

To improve the lives of women and children in Afghanistan, Abbott and the Abbott Fund have partnered with Direct Relief and the Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL). This support is part of efforts to invest in creative programs that advance access to health care around the world, focused on finding sustainable solutions to make a lasting impact on people's lives.

AIL was founded by Nobel Prize nominee Sakena Yacoobi, a longtime advocate for women's rights in Afghanistan. With clinics serving mostly rural areas, AIL is staffed and operated by Afghan women, providing health services and education both within the clinics and through their mobile outreach program.
Projects

Abbott Fund support focuses on empowering Afghan women through the training of female midwives to provide skilled assistance during labor and delivery, as well as care for infants and children. Community Health Worker training is another component of Abbott Fund’s support. In addition, Abbott and the Abbott Fund support five AIL clinics (three in Herat province, two in Kabul province) to ensure quality patient care and services.

To help expand AIL's health education and outreach efforts, the Abbott Fund also supports Women’s Health Workshops, Expectant Mothers Workshops, medical services for local orphanages, and nutrition education programs.

To date, the Abbott Fund has given more than $1.3 million in grants to AIL, and Abbott has provided nearly $4.6 million in product donations, including rehydration solutions, antibiotics, multivitamins and nutritional supplements. Direct Relief, a global humanitarian relief organization, assists with program management, including overseeing the distribution of Abbott Fund grants and Abbott product donations to AIL. Abbott products are now procured through the Abbott Pakistan affiliate for the ease of logistics and an expanded product portfolio to access.

Results to Date

Since the partnership began in November 2005, progress has been significant. More than 1.6 million women and children have received health services and treatment from AIL, with a ten-fold increase in the number of healthy babies delivered at AIL's clinics. Additional results include:

- More than 1,100,000 women have attended health education classes in clinics and in the community
- 180,000 women have received reproductive health services
- 365,000 patients have received vaccinations
- More than 208,000 children have received nutritional assessments
- More than 120,000 courses of treatment have been provided through Abbott product donations.
Overview

20 Years – More than 12 Million Reached

The Afghan Institute of Learning (AIL) was founded in the refugee camps of Pakistan in 1995 by Dr. Sakena Yacoobi to address the urgent needs Dr. Yacoobi observed among her people: an extreme lack of education and healthcare. Using a community-based approach, Dr. Yacoobi began by training teachers, establishing schools and offering health education. As Afghans heard about AIL’s quality programs, particularly for women and girls, AIL was asked to support 80 secret schools for girls in five provinces of Afghanistan with books, materials and supplies, training, and teachers’ salaries.

Since that time, AIL has developed into one of Afghanistan’s largest women-led NGOs, employing 425 people, a majority of whom are women. AIL’s programs have expanded to include pre-school through post-secondary educational programs for women and children; leadership and human rights training; a comprehensive healthcare and education program, and a cultural revival program. During this time, AIL has impacted the lives of more than 12 million Afghans.

In her quest to establish self-sufficient, high quality programs, Dr. Yacoobi has opened four private schools and a private clinic/hospital. All are self-sufficient. In 2015, Dr. Yacoobi will start a private radio station in Herat Province.
Projects

*Working with Communities to Create Sustainable Change*

AIL works directly with communities and at the request of communities. AIL currently supports 44 Learning Centers in six provinces with 26,000 students annually. AIL also supports education programs for orphans, street children, female prisoners and the disabled and has expanded its innovative mobile literacy classes for women. In the area of health, AIL provides health services and education for 330,000 women and children, orphans and street children through village and mobile clinics. Partnering with The Abbott Fund, infant and maternal mortality has been greatly reduced by AIL’s innovative Expectant Mother program. AIL’s Community Health Workers program sends teams of health workers into communities to provide basic care and education to those too far from clinics.

To empower community members to be the leaders of tomorrow, AIL trains teachers in new methodologies that encourage critical thinking skills in their students. Women, men and students can attend in-depth workshops on such topics as leadership, human rights, gender equality, elections, violence against women, democracy, and reproductive health.

Mission

*Peaceful, prosperous, self-sufficient Afghanistan*

The Afghan Institute of Learning’s goal is to provide education, healthcare and training to Afghans, who can then transform Afghanistan into the peaceful and prosperous Afghanistan that they want. Along the way, AIL reminds Afghans of their core values and reintroduces them to their rich cultural past. AIL strives to economically empower those that it works with to become self-sufficient by giving them the skills and education that they need to find a job, start a small business, help their children with homework and keep their families healthy. Each year, AIL’s programs directly impact the lives of over 400,000.

To show Afghans that they can become self-sufficient and sustainable without outside resources, Dr. Yacoobi has established four private schools and one private hospital. In 2015, a private radio station will hit the airwaves. These programs are owned by
Dr. Yacoobi and operated for the benefit of the communities where they have been established, using the concept that Dr. Yacoobi has called ‘profit for non-profit’. In the case of the private schools, fees are collected and scholarships offered to those who cannot afford to pay. All patients who come to the private hospital are treated, and poor patients are asked to pay what they can afford. The schools and hospital are presently self-sufficient. The radio station will air programming developed by AIL to educate those who live too far from schools and learning centers, as well as music, poetry and entertainment programs. Dr. Yacoobi projects that it will be self-sufficient within 3 years.

It is Dr. Yacoobi’s vision that these private programs will represent the future for her work in Afghanistan, a future where Afghans determine what their needs are and are able to establish and sustain the programs with limited outside assistance.

An Eye Toward Peace and Sustainability

The Afghan Institute of Learning plans to continue to grow and expand services offered to Afghans, with particular focus on the poor, women, children and young adults and with an eye towards encouraging peace, prosperity, self-sufficiency and sustainability. AIL believes that the Afghan people are capable of making good, peaceful, wise choices once their minds are opened. AIL is going to continue working with communities to offer the services that Afghans are requesting, to expanding existing programs and to developing innovative new ones. Dr. Yacoobi will also be looking for opportunities to continue developing her ‘profit for non-profit’ initiative by developing creative new opportunities to establish programs that work for the social good and can become self-sustaining.
Overview

As one of its 2015 priorities, the Bayat Foundation plans to develop and deploy sustainable project(s) related to water, sanitation, and health (WASH) issues. Our aim is to activate the participation of Afghan women and girls in these efforts by developing revenue-generating opportunities that allow them to earn funds while tackling critical WASH challenges. We believe this will help sustain these efforts and also help tackle the growing need for jobs/employment opportunities in Afghanistan.

Projects

_Bayat Foundation’s Water, Sanitation, and Health (WASH) Initiative: Education. Empowerment. Environment._

The Foundation is currently completing its final review of potential project(s) in this sector. Our timetable is to finalize our plans by end of Q1 and start implementation in Q2. Some of the initiatives under consideration include:

I. _DEVELOPMENT AND DEPLOYMENT OF A SYSTEMS-BASED INTEGRATED SANITATION VALUE CHAIN APPROACH TO SOLVE THE SANITATION CRISIS SUSTAINABLY:_
• Repurpose used shipping containers into low-cost, high-quality sanitation facilities with the following features:
  - Hygiene: high-quality materials used are easy to keep clean & maintain.
  - Accessibility: small footprint enables us to install them close to homes
  - Affordability: cost-effective and include essential features like hand-washing facilities.
• Develop a network of women business operators – local residents who purchase and operate the hygienic sanitation facilities. The operators become franchise partners: we provide the retrofit container/toilet, training, access to financing, ongoing operational and marketing support, and a daily waste collection service. The owner generates local demand and ensures that the facility is kept clean.
• Collect the waste on a daily basis via a centralized collection route (a business which, we believe, could grow into an independent venture, managed by women).
• Convert the waste at a centralized facility into useful by-products such as organic fertilizer and/or renewable energy.

II. BEAUTIFY AFGHANISTAN:
• Establish recycling depots in urban centers that would be run by women entrepreneurs.
• Girl Scout Initiative – potentially link with PARSA’s efforts to revive the Afghan Scout program to conduct a series of nature-related programs aimed at further involving young Afghan girls into conservation activities

Mission

In closing, the Foundation believes that women can make a significant difference in addressing Afghanistan’s WASH challenges. We have selected the following proverb as our organizing mantra for this initiative:
"Qattra qattra daryaa mey-sha." (from "Zarbul Masalha: 151 Afghan Dari Proverbs", proverb #130)

**Literal:** A river is made drop by drop.

**Meaning:** Small contributions and teamwork of ordinary individuals can produce a big result.

**Also:** Don’t give up – good things take time and patience.

**In Dari:**

شمشی ایرد مرطق مرطق.

CONTACTS

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Ms. Fatema Bayat (Executive Director) - f.bayat@bayatfoundation.org

www.bayatfoundation.org
Overview

The Lamia Afghan Foundation finished building its sixth school for girls two months ago. We are now in the process of building a security wall around the school. This school is in Cheltan Village, in the Paghman area, near the mountains west of Kabul. This spring when school opens, over 900 girls will have a real school to attend. In the past they have had to sit on the ground inside a set of stacked cinderblocks with a tarpaulin covering for the nine months of school. The recent Minister of education, Mr. Farooq Wardak, had set in motion a plan for Internet connections and computer training for the students. We will try to provide literacy and skills training for the women of the village when we are able.

Projects

Our seventh school project, when we have raised enough money to fund it, will be a school for 900 girls in Shorab Village, in Herat Province, in western Afghanistan. Currently, they go to school sitting on the ground inside a set of stacked cinderblocks with a tarpaulin covering for the nine months of school.

Our second upcoming school project will, when we raise the money, take us back to our first school in Lakan Khel, east of Kabul. We built a ten-room school for 400 children there. When it was built, it was stressed to accommodate a second floor when it might be needed. Now they have 750 students and they need a high school. So, we will add the second floor once we raise enough money.
On the humanitarian aid front, we have now sent over three and a half million pounds of aid to eighteen provinces in Afghanistan. It has been distributed in a number of ways. Our foundation has distributed aid; our partnered Afghan NGOs have distributed aid for us; Special Operations Teams, Female Engagement Teams, Civil Affairs Teams, and Provincial Reconstruction Teams have also asked to distribute our aid in some remote areas and villages we could not reach personally.

In the last year we sent over 200,000 pounds of food packets, for families in refugee/IDP camps, along with tens of thousands of pounds of winter clothing and blankets. The food packet donors were Food 4 Kidz, Feeding the Nations, Feed My Starving Children, and Stop Hunger Now. The distribution has been in many parts of the country, from Kabul to Herat, to Jalalabad, and in many rural villages in several provinces. This aid was distributed to families in IDP/refugee camps, hospitals, schools, and orphanages.

Our last shipment was an ambulance which was flown by the U.S. Air Force to Herat, turned over to our country director, and driven to Khairabad Village where we helped build a medical clinic, including furnishing it, as well as a school, and a job training building, along with wells and irrigation pipelines. We had promised to get an ambulance there and thanks to a donation of the vehicle by the Chicago Fire Department, we fulfilled that promise. They are overjoyed to have it. There is not another ambulance in Afghanistan this big or this nice. It will save thousands of lives.

Mission

The Denton Program Office in USAID tells us no other non-government entity has moved as much aid to Afghanistan as have we. Our primary focus is reaching and educating girls in rural villages. That is why we believe the U.S. government should fund the building of boarding schools for 5,000 girls each, in the major cities. That way these girls will be able to go to school in a safe environment, as do the girls who live in these major cities. This is the way to really effect change in Afghanistan, rather than spending on programs that help relatively few. Families want this. The Minister of Education wants this. We should do this now.
ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

ARZU’s super adobe pre-school in Bamiyan, Afghanistan.
Overview

June 2014 marked ARZU’s 10th anniversary transforming the lives of Afghan women and their families through skilled artisan-based employment in villages where little or no other economic opportunity exists. By restructuring the rug supply chain with its myriad of middleman, ARZU is able to pay its employees better wages and provide a package of benefits including access to literacy and basic health care.

Documented outcomes underscore the efficacy of ARZU’s comprehensive approach to sustainable poverty alleviation:

- Rural ARZU weavers earn 68% more than the average Afghan per capita income—a statistic that includes both men and urban areas;
- 100% read and write, as compared to the 90% illiteracy rate today for rural Afghan women;
- 55% own their own homes, as compared to 67% in developed countries;
- 20% are supporting at least one child in college;
- Not a single mother or baby has died in childbirth.

In September 2014, following its national audit of all NGOs, the Afghan Ministry of Economy ranked ARZU #1 in Bamyan Province and awarded a Certificate of Appreciation—a recognition not granted to any organization, large or small, for the past several years.
Projects

**ARZU’s Equation for Hope: Jobs = Hope**

This equation is the underlying foundation of a transformational eco-system that impacts 1,000’s across five different villages. The first five years of operations were defined by the methodical development of our grassroots footprint in Bamyan Province, building strong relationships with families and all levels of the local government. By effectively delivering promised results and meeting expectations through competent execution, ARZU’s all-Afghan field team of 55 has become a trusted partner in the villages where we operate. This strong foundation positioned us to experiment with and implement new initiatives at will, expanding our core projects and opening programs to the entire community. Leveraging the power of appropriate financial incentives, ARZU has systematically shifted the paradigm of a patriarchal society to one where women are economically empowered, literate and have the resources to care for themselves, their families and their communities.

From a starting point of 30 women carpet weavers, ARZU now employs some 500 Afghans, with 95% of these jobs held by women. Skilled weavers produce award-winning rugs in classic patterns and modern patterns—including some designed by the world’s most iconic architects, including Zaha Hadid, Frank Gehry and Robert A.M. Stern. Part-time work is available to unskilled or elderly women and to high school girls, making fair-trade Peace Cord® bracelets. We have expanded the market for this accessibly priced product by wholesaling custom models with their unique logos to other non-profits and affinity groups, who then resell them to raise funds for their own missions.

**Laying the Framework for Organizational Sustainability**

As ARZU moves into its second decade, we see the next three-five years as an inflection point. With operations stable and functional on the ground, we can shift our focus to our second underlying objective: to become 100% financially self-sustaining through sales. Two years ago, we began to shift our distribution focus from B2C and direct sales to the development of significant commercial partnerships for both rug and Peace Cord. This approach, driven by large commercial and bulk
orders, will provide a more larger revenue stream, and will ensure consistent employment for our rug weavers and Peace Cord® makers.

Simultaneously, ARZU maintains its commitment to the development and support of the villages where we operate. One of ARZU’s particular strengths is recognizing the importance of collaboration and partnerships to leverage expertise and execute programs efficiently in order to meet local needs effectively. ARZU is actively engaging in partnerships with like-minded organizations that will enable us to continue and expand social programs without incurring additional overhead that hinders the underlying goal of self-sustainability.

Mission

**Scaling our Project of Hope**

Over the last ten years, ARZU has intensely focused on creating and testing a viable working model that addresses sustainable poverty alleviation. Now, with sufficient expertise and outcomes, we would welcome the opportunity to share the ARZU approach with the larger development community development. To this end, we are working with a number of esteemed academics to create credentialed documentation of the power of the ARZU model. Once completed, these case studies and white papers can be used by other organizations, both large and small, to implement and potentially scale the ARZU model in other venues under other conditions. If it works in Afghanistan, the ARZU model can work anywhere in the world.
Overview

Founded in 2006, the Bayat Foundation (www.bayatfoundation.org) is a certified US 501(c)3 and Afghan registered NGO that is proud to have contributed to improving the livelihoods, quality of life, and human security for at-risk Afghan people through more than 250 projects dedicated to building capacity and infrastructure for every man, woman and child in Afghanistan.

Projects

The foundation’s work includes the construction of sustainable infrastructure, hospitals, clinics and schools in unserviced and remote districts, and the development and implementation of health, education, economic, and cultural programs. Selected highlights include:

- Education (construction of more than 20 schools, 10 libraries throughout the nation)
- Health (construction and operations of 12 medical care facilities for Afghan mothers and children which have served > 1M patients, and construction of a new pediatric intensive care unit (ICU) and critical care unit (CCU) at Indira Gandhi Hospital in Kabul)
o Water, Sanitation, and Health – drilled >20 wells and championed cause of Kabul River
o Provided for basic human needs with our annual emergency Winter Aid and Ramadan Aid campaigns (food, clothing, medicine, blankets). Delivering more than >1M meals to Afghans in winter 2013 alone.

o Construction of Orphanages
o Preservation of the rich cultural heritage of Afghanistan (sponsored artists, poets, authors)

o Youth Health and Sports (‘Say NO to Drugs’ Bike Races, Running Races, etc.)

2014 Impact

• In partnership with the Starkey Hearing Foundation, we brought the gift of hearing to >1,000 hearing impaired Afghans who had never heard their family’s voices, music, or even the sound of a bird singing:

• Reconstruction of Tora Bora Hospital as well as a new maternity ward at Esteqlal Hospital (Kabul)

• Imported >$1M of medical equipment and hospital supplies (8 containers) and 6 containers of school supplies.

• Development of 5 new football (soccer) pitches completed in Kabul, Jalalabad, and Faryab for girls and boys.

• Funded the digging/completion of 10 wells in areas suffering from a shortage of clean water.

• Donation of textbooks to universities in Herat, Kundoz, Jawzjan, Badakhshan, Parwan, and Nangarhar.

• Provided a grant to Creating Hope International to pay operating expenses of one orphanage for 6 months.
• Delivered emergency food relief, blankets, and warm clothing to victims of northern Afghanistan floods (Baghlan, Nimroz, and Jawzjan Provinces) as well as continued our ongoing WinterAid food program to at-risk Afghan families. >1M pre-packed meals were delivered in partnership with Feed My Starving Children; FoodforKidz; and Matter.

2015 Plans

• Development of a safe and sustainable Afghan All-Women Transportation Network (AAWTN) in Kabul
• Construction of 13th Bayat Foundation hospital in partnership with Matter, a circa 100-bed facility that we envision potentially placing in Zabul Province where there is an acute need for maternal/early childhood healthcare
• Second annual Starkey/Bayat Hearing Mission (currently scheduled for late Spring 2015) to bring the gift of hearing to another 1,000 Afghan children, elderly, and adults. With support, we could scale this to other parts of the country as well.
• Continued emergency food relief for at-risk Afghan families (we presently have 2 containers staged, awaiting shipment and we can access up to 2 containers of pre-packaged food supplies per month if we had a way of defraying shipping costs)
• Continuation of our Water for Families initiative with funding for another 8-10 wells in 2015
• Implementation of our Beautify Afghanistan strategic initiative to combat Water, Sanitation, and Health (WASH) issues by activating opportunities for women through Education, Empowerment, and Environment.
Fourteen years ago, I was told not to even think of creating Afghan businesswomen because the Taliban just left, and I would put everyone at risk. I understood their concern, but my response to them was that “No Muslim will harm us because Bibi Khadija Kobra, wife of Holy Prophet Mohammad (S), was a businesswoman. They met through business and got married.” With that belief we moved forward with an initial group of 10 women and had a tough time finding them. Today, we have thousands of businesswomen working from their homes or stores around the country. We also have a wealth of young female students who are eager to learn and hungry for change. More and more women are seeing their peers start businesses and wanting to do the same. Shared below are a progress report on recent accomplishments, a summary of on-going activities, and an overview of 2015 plans.

Overview
Reflecting on the Past:
Ten Years Women Economic Empowerment in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan is making important steps in women’s economic empowerment, but we still have a long way to go. We are coming out of traditional way of doing business and heading into an era of modern technology, which is what is the driving force of business today. Below are some of the accomplishments from the early projects supported by USAID and the international community:

- Women Entrepreneurship Development (WED) started at the Ministry of Commerce of Islamic Republic of Afghanistan in 2003 with a $500,000 investment for two years. 350 businesses were established, participated in exhibitions and trainings in Afghanistan or abroad

- Artemis was established for the first time for Afghan businesswomen by Thunderbird University in Glendale, AZ; the first of experienced Afghan businesswomen attended Artemis in January 2005. Year-to-date 45 women have been trained in advanced business.(USAWC assistance)
Afghan Women Business Association was established which converted to Afghan Women Business Federation in October 2005; (USAID/USAWC assistance) currently has 350 members.

USAID/Capacity Building Project (CDP) supervised and trained top 25 NGOs nationally in NGO Organizational Development of which 5 of them were women NGOs.

USAID/Capacity Building Project/USAWC Afghan Women Executive Training for women in government at Georgetown University where six women attended for two weeks. Outcome of the meeting was establishment of a women’s caucus group within the government.

Through USAID/ACSS (Afghanistan Civil Service Commission) project Gender Units were embedded in 19 Ministries through Civil Service Commission from 2009 to 2011.

Recent Progress and Accomplishments:
Promoting Women’s Economic Empowerment

Thanks to the support of USAID, I have been able to support 3,293 women-led businesses across Afghanistan and mobilize millions in private financing to help them grow their businesses. Looking toward the next generation, we supported 300 female university students to obtain internships in the banking sector. 106 were hired after the completion of their internship. Below is a summary of accomplishments during my tenure as Deputy Chief of Party on the USAID Financial Access for Investing in the Development of Afghanistan (FAIDA) project from 2012-2014:

- 1,604 businesswomen from 30 provinces participated in 29 business and gender workshops called ‘AMA-Women’s Access to Business Development Opportunity and Islamic Finance’. 45 concept notes, totaling $98,718, approved from banks and financing institutions for women entrepreneurs
- 9,391 female beneficiaries have benefitted through FAIDA’s interventions (trainings, technical assistance, and access to finance, marketing and other services including mobile money)
- 3,293 women-led businesses have been supported with U.S. government assistance
- $2,490,705 private financing has been mobilized for 1,315 women-led businesses
• 532 financial sector women employees have been trained with U.S. government assistance.
• 160 financial sector women professionals/supervisors have been trained with U.S. government assistance.
• 218 businesswomen from 15 provinces were given in-depth training on business planning called ‘Business Planning Training for Businesswomen,’ which is a follow through of the ‘AMA-Women’s Access to Business Development Opportunity and Islamic Finance’ This advanced training is for women who are getting loans and is meant to teach how to create a business plan.
• Thirteen top Afghan businesswomen, representing 14 sectors, were identified to attend the Delhi Investment Summit on Afghanistan on June 28, 2012. Two days of business-to-business meetings were organized, resulting in a total of 261 face-to-face meetings with Indian investors, four MOUs signed, and 31 initial business agreements. This group of women entrepreneurs has become FAIDA’s core partner and is regularly collaborating with FAIDA on activities.
• Six Afghan women participated at Gulfood Exhibition 2014. 11 contracts were signed between the Afghan women and the foreign businesses to export dry fruits.

Projects

Ongoing Activities: Building a Database of Afghan Women Businesses

In November 2014, I conducted focus groups with women entrepreneurs in 5 cities across Afghanistan: Kabul, Kandahar, Herat, Mazar-e-Sharif, and Jalalabad. My team was able to use skype to reach business women in difficult to reach provinces, such as Uruzgan and Helmand. In total, we combined interviewed more than 400 women in November. I am leading a team to compile these results into a database that can be used on future women’s economic empowerment programs. We are currently conducting follow-up calls with surveyed women business and conducting outreach to expand the database.

Mission

2015 Activities: Representing Afghanistan in South Asian Women’s Network
For the past six years, I have participated in the South Asian Women Network. This networking brings together from across the region. In 2015, Bamyan, Afghanistan will be the capitol of SAARC. Through the network, I plan to support events and facilitating ways to engage Afghan women at all levels i.e business, political and civil society. Planned events will showcase the culture of Afghanistan through exhibitions, fashion shows, business-to-business roundtables and other events. This is an opportunity for Afghan women to engage with their peers across South Asia in the united goal of advancing women’s empowerment.
Overview

10 Years, 30,000 New Businesses, 9 Million Trees

I am pleased to share with you highlights of GPFA's ten years of work in Afghanistan and outlook for the future. Thanks to partners like you, since 2004 we have invested $18.5 million resulting in an estimated $64 million in income to farm families. We've improved farm practices, incubated 30,000 new businesses (9400 owned by women), increased water supplies, and planted more than 9 million trees. The results: over 336,000 individuals in 2,500 villages across 14 provinces are benefiting from higher incomes, better nutrition, a healthier environment, and technical and business knowledge that farmers and hundreds of former GPFA staff are using and transferring to others.

Projects

A Catalyst for Returns for Years to Come

Our most recent projects linking women farm producers to markets, which you generously supported through our Women's Catalyst Fund, have highlighted several urgent needs for the development of sustainable farm businesses: first, to establish linkages between producers and markets; second, to support Afghan businesses that are working to create these linkages. The Fund invested in women-owned small and
medium businesses in new areas of the agriculture economy. These businesses – collection centers, food processors, cold storage unit owners, and wholesalers – have bridged gaps between producers and markets. They will generate returns for Afghan women and their families for years to come.

Mission

*A New Generation of Young Entrepreneurs Emerges*

We deeply believe in the courage and tenacity of the farmers and staff with whom we have worked. They and the new generation of young, entrepreneurial, educated Afghans working to rebuild their country are the hope for its future. We are committed to help them realize that hope by continuing to support the agriculture sector. We see great potential for joining forces with this new generation of Afghan entrepreneurs who can accelerate the increase in farmers' incomes by filling the gaps in the farm to market value chain.

*A New Phase for GPFA*

Your contributions have ensured the success and sustainability of our work to date. However, given the virtual standstill in government funding for rural development projects in Afghanistan and the changes underway during this time of transition, GPFA is pausing our operations in Afghanistan and our fundraising while we reassess our model of investing in businesses that will create sustainable agricultural livelihoods. Over the coming months, we will work to identify the investments in the agriculture sector, particularly those that will empower rural women and have the most potential to achieve our mission. We will keep you informed as we consider GPFA's next steps because we greatly value your judgment.
Overview

The Institute for Economic Empowerment of Women (IEEW) and the PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS® program was founded in 2006 by Dr. Terry Neese. The mission of the Institute is to empower women economically, socially and politically around the world. The program consists of 10-week business entrepreneurial classes to 60 qualified women business owners in Rwanda and Afghanistan. Upon graduation from this In-Country course, 15 women from each country are selected to attend further Leadership Development in the U.S. in July. As part of the curriculum, U.S. women business owners are paired with students as E-mentors. As well, qualified students who are selected to come to the U.S. are paired with a one-on-one mentor. During that time, they shadow the mentor at work and at home for hands on experience in balancing work and family. Upon graduation, students maintain contact with PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS® by joining the Alumnae and Network Associations recruiting new students for future classes, and mentoring and networking in the business community.
Projects

Going into its 9th year, IEEW has graduated over 250 students in Afghanistan and 80% are still in business today. On average, graduates create 28 jobs per company. Their profits provide economic stability for their employees, families and country. It has been well established that democracies with a GDP above $6,000 per capita rarely war against each other. Countries whose GDP fall below $3,000 are vulnerable to coups and civil war. In Afghanistan the GDP is $672. The average income of a PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS® graduate is $5,440. PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS® graduates have formed a Network Association and 66% of graduates are Paying Forward the knowledge they’ve received by recruiting and mentoring new students and networking and mentoring each other. These women face great challenges and obstacles as they work to bring economic stability to their families and country. As they are successful, they contribute to a safer and more peaceful environment.

For example, Freshta Hazeq, a 2013 PTB graduate, owns Royal Advertising Company, the only woman owned printing company in Afghanistan. Freshta faced many obstacles in running her business since 2008. She has exhibited great determination to break the glass ceiling in an industry dominated by men. In fact, several of her male employees were bribed to sabotage her business by burning her paper inventory and breaking her machines. Her competitors went so far as to threaten her life and kidnap her children. However, she persevered and her business continues to thrive and she has created jobs for 27 others.

Another 2013 graduate, Lina Shafaq, was initially trained as a veterinarian. She has also founded Life-Skills Development Center, a nonprofit established in 2010, which empowers women and youth. Her center offers courses in literature, art, English, math, computers and other leadership and life skills. During one of our PTB classes she explained what Emotional Intelligence meant to her, “All day we head down, working, working, working. And, the bombs keep going off outside our doors. And we stay head down working, working, working.” This says it all. No matter the obstacle, these women keep working toward improvements and peace.
Mission

For the first time, 2014 applications exceeded the class capacity. 2015 classes began on January 10 and graduation will be held at the end of March. Students are evaluated on their grades, attendance, the completion of a business plan and, their E-mentorship relationship. At graduation, this business plan is presented to an impartial committee that will select the students for Leadership Development and Mentorship in Dallas, TX in July.

The goal of IEEW and the PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS® program is woven into the name. Our mission is literally to bring “peace through business” to war torn and developing nations through business entrepreneurial education.

Currently, the women business owners come to our classes held in Kabul at the Afghanistan Chamber of Commerce & Industries. Our goal, for the near future, is to train interested graduates of PTB to teach the In-Country courses so that classes can be taught in multiple provinces. This would further expand our network of economic stability. IEEW receives many requests to take this program into other countries and we see that expansion in the distant future.

Also, we will be reaching out and collaborating with other Afghan women’s organizations in an effort to get everyone moving in the same direction. Over the past year, we did coalition training on several Afghan women’s organizations in an effort to build a large group to advocate on issues important to women and especially women entrepreneurs. In addition, there are many American organizations working with women in Afghanistan who are doing similar work but not communicating or coordinating efforts. The goal to educate and empower women in Afghanistan would be greatly enhanced by the cooperation and combined resources of the many groups working in the area.

PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS® students in Afghanistan have been given hope in the new administration. The fact that President Ghani has appointed three women to ministry positions is a big step in the right direction. One of the goals of PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS® is to see some of our graduates move into the
administration. What will be important is that the women know how to lead once they are given a leadership position. Until now, PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS® has been known strictly as an economic education opportunity. This past year, we introduced the 2014 students to public policy and the important role that plays in any successful business. The door has been opened, now is the time to prepare these women to take the knowledge they’ve gained and their economic success, to the next level and become leaders in their government.
PROJECT ARTEMIS AFGHANISTAN

COUNCIL MEMBER: AMBASSADOR BARBARA BARRETT

Overview

The Office of Thunderbird for Good has trained over 104,000 people in 27 countries all over the world since our work started with the women of Afghanistan in 2005.

Thunderbird became part of Arizona State University as of January 1, 2015. Thunderbird School of Global Management at Arizona State University is an unprecedented alliance. It combines Thunderbird’s nearly 70-year heritage of developing inspired global leaders with Arizona State University’s unrivaled resources and ardent goals for international expansion. Thunderbird’s mission remains “to educate global leaders who create sustainable prosperity worldwide.”

Thunderbird for Good’s work will continue as it always has under the new Arizona State University umbrella. We are so excited to see what the resources of a large University can bring to the important work that we are doing in Afghanistan and other developing economies all over the world.

Projects

A big part of our work is the two programs that we run for the women of Afghanistan:

Project Artemis Afghanistan

- Thunderbird is currently finalizing the dates and details for our next cohort of Afghan women entrepreneurs, scheduled to arrive in Arizona in early 2016.
• 74 women have completed the Project Artemis training and mentoring program since 2005. These women have returned to Afghanistan to create over 2,500 jobs and to train and/or mentor over 15,000 of their fellow Afghans in business management and leadership skills.

• Notable success stories include:
  o **Kabul**: Kamila Sidiqi has been appointed an Assistant Chief of Staff for President Ghani, overseeing business operations for his office and advising on business, entrepreneurship, and gender issues. She also opened a new business last year called Kaweyan Cabs, a female friendly cab service operating in Kabul.
  o **Bamyan**: Amina Hassanpur has built a completely new school to house the growing student body attending her business, the Baba Private School on lands granted to her by the Governor of the province. She has added over 100 students and 8 full and part-time jobs to Baba since attending Project Artemis in 2010.
  o **Herat**: NasimGul Azizi has added over 300 full and part time jobs to her food processing business in Herat, and is building the first large cold storage facility in her province.
  o **Kabul**: Fatima Akbari (who was recognized by Vital Voices and spoke at the Bush Center in 2011) has added 50 full and part time jobs to her carpentry business, and uses her business space in off hours to provide literacy and skills training to women in her area.
  o **Kandahar**: Rangina Hamidi’s business, Kandahar Treasures, provides work for over 300 women working out of their own homes in Kandahar, which she then markets and sells online and at art markets all over the world.

**Goldman Sachs 10,000 Women**

• We are very proud that in partnership with the American University in Afghanistan’s Women’s Center, Thunderbird has graduated over 300 women from the initiative in Afghanistan.

• Over the last year, 10,000 Women assisted graduates in establishing an alumni network with the purpose of providing continuing educational and business support to program graduates. Several alumni opportunities are planned over the
coming months including continuing education workshops, mentoring and networking.

Our programs have greatly benefitted from participation with the Council, and the women that we work with have also gained great benefits from the ties that are in this room:

- **Amb. Barbara Barrett**: of course, who brought Project Artemis into reality in the first place, and continues to be one of our strongest supporters.
- **AUAF**: Our long-time partners in Afghanistan at the AUAF, who host the *10,000 Women* program and assist us in administering Project Artemis activities in Kabul.
- **Goldman Sachs**: Who have funded and guided the *10,000 Women* program in Afghanistan since 2008 as well as donating support to Project Artemis.
- **The Bush Center**: In March of 2011, Fatima and Shahla Akbari were featured in a panel discussion at the Bush Institute’s Conference. Fatima and her daughter Shahla talked about how relatively modest investments by corporations in the west could significantly improve women’s abilities to start and grow businesses, thereby enabling economic growth and prosperity in their homeland.
- **Caroline Firestone**: Who has participated generously in our past two classes of Afghan entrepreneurs, and generously funded building expansions for two of the ladies’ schools in remote provinces of Afghanistan.
- **Connie Duckworth**: Thunderbird’s Afghan Program Manager participates in ARZU’s advisory board, and works collaboratively to identify best practices between our programs and organizations. We are partnering with Connie Duckworth and ARZU to bring additional opportunities for business education to those women in their programs that have shown the potential to grow significant businesses of their own.
LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

U.S. Afghan Women Council’s Rising Afghan Women Leadership Initiative in Qatar, 2014
American University of Afghanistan
International Center for Afghan Women’s Economic Development
Georgetown University Center for Child and Human Development

RISING AFGHAN WOMEN LEADERS INITIATIVE (RAWLI)
A COLLABORATIVE INITIATIVE OF THE USAWC

Overview

The Rising Afghan Women Leadership Initiative (RAWLI) was established by the Center for Child and Human Development at Georgetown University through its Executive Leadership Program. As a collaborative effort among all USAWC Council members, RAWLI advances a core pillar of the USAWC’s mission to promote substantive and practical leadership development for Afghan women.

Projects

The first RAWLI Leadership Academy, conducted in April 2014, was realized through the generosity and steadfast commitment of USAWC members. In particular, critical support from Caroline Hudson Firestone, Abbott Laboratories, and the Georgetown University Geraldine P. Waldorf Fund made the first RAWLI Leadership Academy possible. The Goldman Sachs Foundation intends to provide additional major support for the Leadership Academy in 2015.

The inaugural RAWLI Leadership Academy was offered to 22 Afghan women leaders nominated by Council members and six Georgetown University students from diverse fields that reflect the scope of the USAWC’s work. Participants included midwives, educators, businesswomen, women’s rights advocates, NGO leaders, diplomats, and Members of the Afghan Parliament. The Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Doha, Qatar hosted the Academy.

The RAWLI curriculum is a week-long personal journey of self-exploration designed to support the personal and professional leadership development of Afghan women.
leaders. The training is framed around each participant’s individual leadership challenge. Participants individually and collectively examine, explore, and solve their leadership challenges through peer-to-peer engagement, facilitated dialogue, formal instruction, and community action. A second RAWLI Academy is being planned for 2015.

Importantly, a follow-up initiative, the RAWLI Community Learners’ Program, was established to create a network of learners, including the RAWLI Academy participants, and to expand the reach of RAWLI. The program is sponsored by USAWC member Caroline Firestone and is housed in and implemented by the International Center for Afghan Women’s Economic Development (The Women’s Center) at the American University of Afghanistan. The Women’s Center provides programmatic support and guidance, logistical support, office space and security support to the program.

Mission

The objective of the RAWLI Community Learners’ Program is to develop and inspire a learning community of women leaders in Afghanistan. Prior to the implementation of the program, a number of coordination meetings with women leaders from government institutions and civil society, including the participants from the initial RAWLI Leadership Academy, were conducted in Kabul to discuss the vision and work plan for the program. A network of 83 Afghan women leaders in four provinces: Kabul, Jalalabad, Herat and Mazare Sharif was established. In each community a three day training program launched the network based on the RAWLI Leadership curriculum. In each province additional follow-up and mentorship components were implemented.

As Afghanistan moves into a new chapter of governance, the role of women leaders will be critical to its success. The RAWLI network of leadership academy participants and community learners can provide ongoing support to the development and sustenance of Afghan women leaders. It is important to note that a number of members of the RAWLI network have been appointed by the new coalition government to different leadership positions.
Overview

*Lessons Learned/Best Practices*

We have brought together a community of practice, consisting of representatives of the USG, civil society and Allied Embassies in Washington, to examine the lessons learned and best practices for international programs to empower women in Afghanistan and other conflict and post-conflict countries. In addition to holding regular sessions of the Lessons Learned Working Group at USIP, many of which have been focused on Afghanistan, we have convened experts dialogues bringing together women leaders from all sectors from Afghanistan, Iraq and countries of the Arab Spring in order to establish effective networks among these women leaders and to get their views on how the international community can be most effective in helping to advance women in these countries. This work has resulted in several USIP publications on lessons learned/best practices for empowering women in Afghanistan and other key countries.
Projects

Young Women’s Civic and Political Participation

We have conducted a program to build up the civic and political participation of young women from the 34 provinces of Afghanistan, working on the ground with a women’s-oriented NGO as our Afghan partner. This program has included civic training forums for aspiring women leaders in the southern and northern provinces of Afghanistan, followed by a major forum in Kabul on the eve of the presidential elections where the top women leaders of the country and the 11 presidential candidates were invited to come before over 200 women leaders representing all 34 provinces. Each of the presidential candidates was invited to give his “manifesto” on actions he would take, if elected, to empower Afghan women. Eight of the 11 candidates accepted the invitation, including Ashraf Ghani, who was joined by Mrs. Rula Ghani. The Kabul forum received extensive play in the Afghan media, which reported that it left Afghan women with a sense of their enhanced political influence.

Mission

Engaging Afghan Men to Support Women’s Empowerment

We are carrying out a new initiative on “Men, Peace and Security,” addressing the effect of violent conflict on gender relations and men’s sense of their own masculinity, which we see as the indispensable other side of the UNSC 1325 Women, Peace and Security agenda. We are working with a network of NGOs in conflict and post-conflict countries in Africa and the Balkans that are run by young men and that train young men in their societies to have a peaceful sense of their own masculinity, to respect girls and women, to combat gender-based violence, and to recognize and combat various forms of hate speech, including that directed against girls and women. We have just made a proposal to begin such programming with young men in Afghanistan and hope to begin on the ground training in Afghanistan by the middle of this year.

*Steve Steiner, as Senior Advisor to the Center for Gender and Peacebuilding at USIP, is carrying out several areas of programming for women in Afghanistan.
INSTITUTE FOR WOMEN, PEACE AND SECURITY
COUNCIL MEMBER: AMBASSADOR MELANNE VERVEER

Overview

The Institute co-organized the 2014 Norway conference to support Afghan women that was a sequel the conference we hosted at Georgetown University last year. The Oslo conference created a series of recommendations to governments participating in the London conference on Afghanistan.

Projects

We convened the women's NGO community to focus on advocacy on behalf of continued US support for Afghanistan.

We participated in briefings for Members of Congress.

Ambassador Melanne Verveer wrote an op-ed on support for Afghan women that appeared in Huffington. Our monthly Newsletter always contains update on issues pertaining to Afghan women.

Mission

We continue to interview Afghan women leaders for our oral history project.

https://giwps.georgetown.edu/
VOICES ON THE RISE: AFGHAN WOMEN MAKING THE NEWS

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PHOTOJOURNALISM EXHIBIT

*Voices on the Rise: Afghan Women Making the News* is a photojournalism exhibition dedicated to courageous Afghan women working towards the reconstruction of their country from all fields – journalism, art, government and human rights. Originally launched across Canada from 2006 - 2009, the exhibition has toured extensively in the United Kingdom, Indonesia, France, Belgium, and was hosted by the U.S. Embassy in April 2012 at The Hague in Holland.

The exhibition provides an excellent platform for dialogue and helps to create bridges of understanding among its viewers. There has been incredible response to the exhibition, which has been successfully organized along with conferences and roundtable discussions on the status of Afghan women. Though many of the images are incredibly moving and some startling, the overall message of the exhibition is one of hope.

Given the uncertainty and conservative backlash facing Afghan women caused by political instability and the withdrawal of U.S. and NATO military forces, this exhibition provides a timely and effective platform helping to keep the spotlight on Afghan women and the challenges they continue to face as the gains they have achieved in Afghan society have started to lose ground.