U.S.-AFGHAN WOMEN’S COUNCIL

"NO ONE CAN STOP WOMEN FROM ADVANCING IN AFGHAN SOCIETY." Governor Habiba Sarabi
The U.S.-Afghan Women's Council (USAWC or Council) was established in 2002 by President Bush. Our mission is to empower Afghan women. Specifically, we seek concrete actions to enable them to assume roles in Afghanistan. The Council focuses on economic empowerment and literacy, political awareness, and healthcare. In 2006, the Council held a special children's agenda, meaning "future."
The U.S.-Afghan Women's Council (USAWC or Council) is a public-private partnership that was established by President Bush and President Karzai in 2002. Our mission is to mobilize public and private sector resources to empower Afghan women. Specifically, we seek to identify concrete actions to benefit women to enable them to undertake leadership roles in Afghanistan. To this end, the Council focuses on key four areas: economic empowerment, education and literacy, political leadership and legal awareness, and access to health care. In 2006, the Council added a special children’s initiative called Ayenda, meaning “future” in Dari. The State Department’s Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs, the Afghan Minister of Foreign Affairs, and the Afghan Minister of Women’s Affairs co-chair the Council. USAWC members represent a wide-range of government, business, and other leaders bringing critical guidance and knowledge to issues affecting Afghan women.

In December 2006, Mrs. Laura Bush, Honorary Chair of USAWC, announced our intention to transition to Georgetown University in 2009 as a way of continuing and enhancing the important work of the Council in the years to come. At Georgetown University, the Council will work under the direction of Dr. Phyllis Magrab, Director of the Center for Child and Human Development and United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Chair. Dr. Magrab will also lead a consortium of Georgetown’s other academic stakeholders, including the School of Foreign Service, the Mortara Center for International Studies, and the Office of the President to assist with this initiative. Dr. John DeGioia, president of Georgetown University, assumes the position of a U.S. co-chair of the Council in January 2009.
Belquis Dawood, 21, is a junior at the American University of Afghanistan (AU Af) in Kabul. The school opened in March 2006 and has approximately 300 students in attendance, 30% women. Belquis is a member of the first class to enroll at AU Af. She is pursuing her business degree and is expected to graduate in 2010. During a trip to the United States, which was funded by the Laura Bush Afghan Women’s Leaders Fund, Belquis stated, “I love going to AU Af. The teachers are great, the business curriculum is challenging, and I have a lot of friends.” When asked what she wanted to do upon graduation, she proudly stated that she wants to open her own business, possibly get an MBA, and one day she wants to run for President of Afghanistan.
International School of Kabul (ISK)  
The ISK opened in September 2005 and is designed to provide Afghan and international students, grades K-12, with a first-rate education through U.S.-style curricula to help prepare them for higher education and leadership roles.  
www.iskafghan.org

The American University of Afghanistan (AUAF)  
AUAF opened in March 2006. It is Afghanistan’s only private, not-for-profit institution of higher education, offering internationally-supported degree programs in a range of competitive areas. www.auaf.edu.af

Women’s Teacher Training Institute (WTTI)  
Established in September 2004 and part of Afghanistan’s National Literacy Center, this train-the-trainer program, which begins with master trainers in Kabul and reaches out to rural provinces across Afghanistan, provides teachers and students with an innovative program that combines literacy and math courses with practical life skills training. www.usaid.gov

The Sunshine Lady Foundation/AUAF Scholarships  
The Sunshine Lady Foundation has committed several hundred thousand dollars to support a scholarship fund for Afghan students that want to attend the American University of Afghanistan.

Afghan Teacher Education Project (ATEP)  
In cooperation with the State Department’s Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs, USAWC supported the pilot phase of ATEP at the University of Nebraska to provide training for Afghan women teachers of grades K-12. www.state.gov/r

U.S. Leadership Management and Computer Education  
In 2002, USAWC brought women from various Afghan government ministries to the United States for an educational exchange program that included computer training, proposal writing, and leadership management.

Microsoft/DELL  
In April 2005, Microsoft and DELL computers worked together on a donation of $100,000 worth of computer equipment and software with teaching applications to support several women’s institutions in Kabul.
Established in 2006 by Council Members Shamim Jawad and Tim McBride, the Ayenda Foundation is designed to support initiatives that enhance the welfare of Afghan children.

In June 2008, future students of the Ayenda Learning Center (ALC) expressed their enthusiasm about their new school. Zarafia, 9, is one of the 200 kids that will benefit from the ALC. She says, “life was very hard under Taliban rule. My mother was killed when I was just one years old. My whole family had to work just to survive. Today, things are much better and I really like going to school and learning.” Since the Taliban left, she says, “I can do anything that the boys can do.” She aspires to be a doctor one day.

Future students of the Ayenda Learning Center at the construction site of their new school. (Photo courtesy of the White House)
Ayenda Foundation  In March 2006, the Ayenda Foundation was established as a special project of the Council. Its mission is to raise private resources to help meet the critical needs of Afghan children. www.ayendafoundation.org

Some of Ayenda’s projects include:

- **The Ayenda Learning Center (ALC)**
  In collaboration with the Bayat Foundation, Ayenda constructed the ALC located in Bamiyan Province. The ALC provides a safe and nurturing learning environment for over 200 disadvantaged children.

- **The Mir-Bacha-Kot Soccer Field**
  Ayenda joined forces with Roots of Peace, a non-governmental organization, to provide children in Mir-Bacha-Kot village with a mine-free soccer field, equipment, and uniforms.

- **The Afghan Songbook Project**
  Ayenda funded the Afghan Songbook Program, which distributes a collection of 24 traditional Afghan songs put to stories. The songbook is an important educational tool that not only enhances literacy but also connects children and families to an important part of their culture—their songs.

Other programs for children include:

- **The Grossman Burn Foundation (GBF)**
  GBF is building an alliance with charitable foundations, like the Children’s Burn Foundation, to provide comprehensive treatment of burns—from acute care and reconstruction, to rehabilitation and psychological counseling for severely burned children and individuals worldwide. www.grossmanburnfoundation.org

- **Aschiana Foundation**
  Many USAWC Council Members and organizations support the work of the Aschiana Foundation, which provides disadvantaged children in Kabul with access to education as well as artistic and vocational training. USAID has also supported the Aschiana Foundation in its efforts to acquire land and build a new center to educate children in Kabul. www.aschiana-foundation.org

Afghan student sketching at the Aschiana School in Kabul.
PEACE THROUGH BUSINESS

The Peace through Business Program teaches women entrepreneurs from war-torn countries business practices, and then it goes a step further by providing mentorships with American women business owners. “The program is founded on a simple premise: It’s possible to change the world by educating women about business and giving them the tools to achieve economic freedom,” stated the Institute for Economic Empowerment of Women (IEEW) President Terry Neese after the 2008 graduation. IEEW brought its first class of Afghan women to the United States in July 2007. Some graduates have moved beyond traditional business—former student Manizha Wafeq announced that she is running for Parliament.

The Institute for Economic Empowerment of Women’s “Peace through Business” 2008 program participants line-up for their graduation ceremony at Northwood University. Many of them were beneficiaries of the Laura Bush Afghan Women’s Leaders Fund. (Photo courtesy of Ryan Wood/Midland Daily News)
Laura Bush Afghan Women’s Leaders Fund
Established in May 2006 by USAID, the fund provides Afghan women leaders with necessary resources to participate in key training and conferences regionally and in the West.

Women’s Resource Centers (WRC)
A total of 17 WRCs are completed in Afghanistan (one built, in part, by Time Warner, and one newly renovated by Afghan Women Leaders CONNECT). The centers provide opportunities for women to gain literacy and computer skills, constitutional/human rights awareness classes, and entrepreneurial and business training. www.usaid.gov

Capacity Building Project/ Afghan Ministry of Labor
Working with The Asia Foundation, the Department of Labor has launched a program designed to increase knowledge and awareness of the new labor code and internationally-recognized core labor standards (including anti-discrimination practices) among judges, workers, and employers.

The Woodrow Wilson Center and RAND Corporation
Together, they researched and published a comprehensive study entitled Best Practices: Progressive Family Laws in Muslim Countries that depicts family laws in 12 Muslim nations.

Afghan Women Leaders CONNECT
CONNECT supports Afghan-led women NGOs, legal aid clinics, and other legal institutions that provide training in Afghan civil law/civil procedure codes and international conventions on civil rights. www.afghanwomenconnect.org

Afghan Women Judges Training
Since 2004, three training programs for Afghan women judges, funded by the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (State Department), in partnership with the International Association of Women Judges (IAWJ), have provided visiting Afghan women judges with on-site training in family, criminal, and civil law as well as legal and judicial awareness classes for high school girls and their teachers. www.iawj.org

Mrs. Bush with Afghan women political leaders and judges in the Roosevelt Room at the White House, 2007. (Photo courtesy of the White House)
After graduating from the Project Artemis program in 2006, Fatima Kazimi returned home to Bamiyan to open the first woman owned business in that province. Fatima recalls, “When I first opened my store, it was hard. I received threats and many of the men demanded I close down. Now, women encourage me to keep my shop open and even the men are supporting me, too.” Fatima will graduate from Bamiyan University in December 2008 with a degree in sociology. She says “Opportunities for women in Afghanistan are increasing all the time. When I started school, there were only three other women students; now there are 30–35.”
Arzu Arzu provides training, literacy skills, and access to health care to Afghan women/families in the hand-knotted Afghan carpet industry. Over 2000 people are in the program. www.arzurugs.org

The New Hudson Foundation (NHF) The NHF invests in programs that support and assist Afghan women and children. Some of NHF’s projects include upgrading schools, tree planting, hospital restoration and management, as well as supporting the Afghan Red Crescent Society.

The Sunshine Lady Foundation (SLF) The SLF has undertaken numerous initiatives in Afghanistan that focus on self-sufficiency, including assisting internally displaced people while providing vocational training programs. The foundation also supports the Initiative to Educate Afghan Women, a four-year degree program for Afghan women ages 18–22.

Daimler Chrysler In 2003–2004, Daimler Chrysler teamed with the Foundation for International Community Assistance (FINCA) and opened seven community banks in Herat Province, providing critical support to women with access to microcredit loans.

Project Artemis/The Global School of Management at Thunderbird University Project Artemis is a unique business-skills training program that aims to build the entrepreneurial skills of promising Afghan businesswomen through intensive classroom work and mentoring opportunities with American business leaders. www.thunderbird.edu

Agricultural Entrepreneurship Program (AEP) In 2003, the Department of Agriculture (USDA) established the AEP to train Afghan women at the University of Nebraska in farming and agricultural techniques, as well as business management.

Institute for Economic Empowerment of Women (IEEW) IEEW teamed with Northwood University on the Peace through Business project, which provides Afghan women business owners with a unique training program in marketing and entrepreneurship that includes spending time shadowing women business owners in the U.S. www.ieew.org

PBS/Afghanistan Unveiled After providing internships and camera equipment to the five camerawomen of the movie Afghanistan Unveiled, PBS purchased the rights to the film in 2005 and broadcast it in over 200 affiliates. Later, the film was nominated for an Emmy in the "News and Documentary" category.
In 2006, the New Hudson Foundation teamed with the International Medical Corps (IMC) to bring Afghanistan its first community dental project. The program, which trains dental workers in Atraumatic Restoration Treatment (ART), is both preventative and a way of treating dental decay.

Fifteen-year-old Said is one of the patients who received ART restoration to treat his cavities. "It didn't hurt," Said stated after undergoing the procedure. On the day that Said received his ART restoration, 70 of his classmates were also examined and treated. For a few hours, the chemistry classroom at Said's high school was converted into a mass dentistry practice. "The ART technique is relatively easy to learn and not very expensive to implement," said Dr. Farida Ghawsi, who filled two of Said's molars.

Dr. Farida Ghawsi, fills Said's two molars without drilling. (Photo courtesy of IMC)
HEALTH CARE PROGRAMS

**TriWest Healthcare Alliance**
TriWest teamed with Sozo International in 2007 to launch a nationwide public awareness and burn prevention campaign for Afghans. They have also committed to supporting a wing of the DOD-sponsored burn center in Herat, which opened in 2005 to provide critical care for burned children.

www.soziointernational.org

**Freddie Mac**
In 2006, Freddie Mac supported a project through Future Generations in Bamiyan Province that provided accelerated literacy and health skills to village women enabling them to gain employment as community health workers and midwives.

**The New Hudson Foundation**
(NHF) NHF joined forces with the International Medical Corps in 2006 to establish Afghanistan’s first community dental care program in Kabul. In 2007, NHF also launched a new initiative in hospitals in Kabul to combat leishmaniasis disease.

**Grand Rapids Middle School, MI**
In 2006, Grand Rapids Middle School raised funds to provide resources to a women’s shelter in Kabul for health care supplies, blankets, and counseling.

**Afghan Family Health Book**
In 2004, the Department of Health and Human Services, in cooperation with LEAPFROG Enterprises, Inc., launched the *Afghan Family Health Book*. This “talking book” provides useful and practical information about health practices and hygiene, focusing on health promotion and disease prevention. The books were distributed via hospitals, clinics, and women’s centers in Afghanistan.

www.hhs.gov

**REACH Program/Midwifery Training**
In 2003, USAWC contributed several million dollars for the pilot phase of USAID’s Rural Education and Community Health Care Initiative (REACH), which provides accelerated health literacy training for women and girls to become midwives and community health workers throughout Afghanistan. www.usaid.gov

REACH students taking a break between midwifery training classes in Kabul.
The generosity of donors like you gives the U.S.-Afghan Women's Council the ability to assist Afghan women and children in acquiring the skills and education they need to play their rightful role in Afghan society. Moreover, a gift supporting the Council helps bring stability to Afghanistan and spreads the goodwill of the American people.

CONTRIBUTIONS OF FUNDS

Financial contributions are especially appreciated since they can be immediately applied toward the most pressing needs. Contributions for the U.S.-Afghan Women's Council are made to the U.S. Department of State.

Please make checks payable to:
U.S. Department of State/U.S.-Afghan Women's Council
and include a donor letter addressed to:
Donna Bordley, Gift Funds Coordinator
Room 7427, U.S. Department of State
Washington, DC 20520
Tel 202-647-5031  Fax 202-647-8194

TAX DEDUCTIBILITY OF CONTRIBUTIONS

Contributions to the Department of State on behalf of the Council qualify for the charitable contribution deduction to the maximum extent permitted by law for Federal income, estate, and gift tax purposes in the U.S. Donors should consult their accountant or lawyer for advice in this area.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

All contributions will be acknowledged by a letter along with a statement describing the contribution, the amount or value of the contribution, and the date of the contribution. The names of all donors, individual, corporate, and foundation, will be listed on the U.S.-Afghan Women's Council website if requested.
"I AM VERY PROUD THAT MY DAUGHTERS ARE LEARNING TO READ. I DON'T WANT THEM TO BE ILLITERATE LIKE ME."

A father sits with his two daughters while they weave an Arzu Carpet.
CONTACT US

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