



Reception and conference

Overcoming limits, shaping the future: empowering Afghan women and girls through education

May 3 - 4, 2024

(28 years of Akis Cultural Association and 24 years of Banu Women Magazine)

Since the drastic events in August 2021, when the Taliban took control of Afghanistan, women in the country have experienced a dramatic worsening of their living conditions, which has also had an impact on life in the diaspora. In particular, the situation with regard to education, from 7th grade onwards, as well as access to universities and basic facilities such as recreational and medical facilities, is extremely worrying. Added to this is the humanitarian disaster that the country is experiencing, which is hitting women and children particularly hard.

Against this backdrop, we are organizing a two-day event in cooperation with the VIDC (Vienna Institute for International Dialogue and Cooperation) and the AK Vienna (Vienna Chamber of Labor) entitled "Overcoming borders, shaping the future: Empowering Afghan women and girls through education". The event will kick off with a festive reception hosted by the Mayor of Vienna, Dr. Michael Ludwig, in the Vienna City Hall basement on May 3, which will be followed by a one-day conference on May 4. The overarching aim is to raise awareness of the pressing educational limitations faced by Afghan women and girls and to sensitize people to the dramatic situation in Afghanistan.

Planned program

May 3, 2024, 19:00 - 21:00: Reception in the Vienna City Hall (Rathauskeller, Salon Lehar)

- Opening: Mayor Dr. Michael Ludwig
- Welcome words: Ghousuddin Mir (Chairman AKIS) and Sybille Straubinger (Director, VIDC)
- Short statements: Councillor Safak Akcay, Asiye Sel (Vienna Chamber of Labor), Fariba Sadeq (Banu-Magazin), Shoura Hashemi (Amnesty International)
- Panel:
 - On the general situation of women in Afghanistan: Shagofa Ghafari, Afghan Diaspora Organizations (NADOE)
 - Supporting girls' education in Afghanistan: Nargis Mommand, peace activist and education expert, former professor, Kabul Educational University
 - Interview with Saghar Wafa (AKIS Women's Chairwoman) about Afghan diaspora engagement
- Manizha Bakhtari, the ambassador of Afghanistan to Austria
- Video report: AKIS activities in Afghanistan
- Presentation of the Rabi Balkhi Award for special commitment to supporting women and girls in Afghanistan
- Special award for diaspora engagement in Austria
- Moderation: Friha Charkhi (AKIS) and Michael Fanizadeh (VIDC)
- Musical accompaniment: Khadim and company
Traditional Hazara music with Rubab and Dambura

May 4, 2024, AKIS Conference, Rußbergstrasse 13, 1210 Vienna

Workshop:

12:00 – 13:30: Afghanistan: The epicenter of foreign and regional interventions

Moderator: Heela Najibullah, Religious scientist, Switzerland

14:00 - 15:30: Opening with speeches by the international guests of honor (languages: English and Farsi)

Moderation: Friba Shamal, journalist and social media activist, Germany

Welcome words: Ghousuddin Mir (Chairman AKIS) and Asiye Sel, Arbeiterkammer Wien

The Role of Women in a Future Peace Process in Afghanistan

Keynote address by Dr. Alema Aleman, Former Deputy Minister of Human Rights and Civil Society in Afghanistan

Inputs:

- Tahmina Salik, Danish Afghan Women Diaspora Forum (DAKDIF)
- Horia Mosadiq, Conflict Analysis Network, UK
- Sanga Siddiqi, women's rights activist, Netherlands, International Conference of Afghan Women
- Alaha Ahrar, Kindness Sharing Project, USA
- Heela Najibullah, report from the workshop

15:30 - 16:30 Panel: On the current situation of human and women's rights in Afghanistan: What is the current situation regarding access to education, work, health system, etc.? (Languages: Farsi, Pashto)

Moderation: Rafi Ahmadi, Vienna

- Hoda Khamosh, poet and journalist, worked as a radio broadcaster in Afghanistan, Norway
- Saida Tolo, women's rights activist, Netherlands
- Mina Miakhel, social worker and human rights activist from Vienna
- Palwasha Hamzad, women rights activist, and Banu Magazine Board, the Netherlands
- Friba Sadeq , Danish Afghan Women Diaspora Forum
- Amina Haqprast, Afghan journalist and activist, Germany
- Shakila Bijanpoor, women's rights activist, Moscow
- Said Amin, human rights activist, the Netherlands

16:30 – 17:00 Coffee break

17:00 - 18:00 Panel: The role of Afghan women in the diaspora: How can the diaspora support women in Afghanistan? (Languages: Farsi, Pashto)

Moderation: Najlah Zamani, Afghan journalist and Vice President of the Bakhtar Institute and member of the management board of Banu magazine, Germany

- Gulchera Yaftali, women's rights activist
- Fardiana Tabibzadeh, Banu Magazine, the Netherlands
- Fariba Sadeq, Editor-in-Chief of Banu Magazine
- Wali Shapoor, Afghan diaspora, Netherlands
- Amina Momeni, women rights activist, Austria
- Ali Baqueri, human rights activist, Austria
- Ahmad Rashed Mubarez, Judge
- Masuma Safa, AKIS Cultural Association

18:00 – 19:00: Dinner

20:00 - 20:30: Presentation of the Rabi Balkhi Award:

Moderation: Najlah Zamani, Editorial Board, Banu Magazine, Germany

- For women who fight for education for all women in Afghanistan
- For women who fight for freedom and human rights
- For women who are successful in sports
- For women who are active in poetry and literature

The event concludes with Hazaragi music in which Rubab and Dambora are played by Khadim and his company.

Moderation: Friba Sadeq, journalist, Germany

Aims of the conference:

1. Raise awareness: To raise awareness of the need for increased support by discussing educational constraints and challenges faced by Afghan women and girls.
2. Promote dialogue and cooperation: The conference will serve as a platform to intensify dialogue and cooperation between members of the Afghan diaspora in the EU.
3. Develop solutions: Participants will jointly discuss and develop solutions and support measures for Afghan women and girls.
4. Build a bridge between the country of origin and the destination country: Utilizing the knowledge and resources of the diaspora to create an effective "bridge" between Afghanistan as a country of origin and the EU host countries.

Topics of the conference:

1. Access to education in Afghanistan: analysis of the current situation and challenges.
2. Education as a key to self-empowerment: Discussion on the transformative role of education.
3. Cooperation and partnership: discussion of opportunities for cooperation between the Afghan diaspora in the EU

4. Role of EU countries (Austria) and international NGOs: assessment of support from host countries and NGOs.
5. Empowerment through education: Emphasizing the importance of education as a tool for self-empowerment.
6. Looking to the future: discussion on long-term perspectives and sustainable measures.

Participants:

We invite 30 women of the Afghan diaspora from European countries. There will also be up to 70 participants from Austria. Overall, we aim to use this conference not only to raise awareness of the educational limitations of Afghan women and girls, but also to take concrete steps towards a better future. We hope for broader support for this initiative and look forward to a fruitful exchange.

Binding registration with Mr. Ghousuddin Mir:

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