

A Guide to Afghan Diaspora Engagement in Europe

Examples of good practice and recommendations from the Vienna Networking Conference “Knowledge Transfer and Support”

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1. FOREWORD

On 2 and 3 December 2019, the VIDC held a networking conference entitled “Knowledge Transfer and Support. The Role of the Afghan Diaspora in Europe”, in Vienna, Austria. For the first time in Austria, the conference brought Afghan diaspora organisations and experts from nine European countries together with public institutions, international organisations and development NGOs in order to highlight the diversity of Afghan associations and discuss best practice examples from various European countries. In the plenums and workshops of the conference, the status quo of diaspora and migration policy in Europe and Afghanistan was discussed, as well as financing models, networking of Afghan diaspora organisations, (self-)empowerment of Afghan women, the challenges of project work in Afghanistan and Pakistan, and the problems of Afghan refugees in Pakistan and in Europe with regards to integration. In addition, the more than 100 participants

of the conference developed recommendations for future measures and for a better integration of Afghan diaspora organisations in development and migration policy.

The VIDC took the conference as an opportunity to produce a guide on “Examples of Good Practice” of Afghan diaspora organisations. This guide presents 20 promising development projects from five countries that have been implemented by Afghan diaspora organisations in Europe since the Taliban were ousted from power by US-led coalition troops in 2001. In addition, the guide presents five projects of active Afghan diaspora initiatives in Austria, which are mainly active in the intercultural field. The guide is intended to support European development organisations and donor countries in using the potential of Afghan diaspora organisations and to provide an incentive for development cooperation in Austria. The draft guide was discussed at the



conference and a chapter on challenges and recommendations was added.

Making these diaspora initiatives visible, and promoting them, is of central importance to the VIDC. Most of the actors from the diasporas who are committed to development policy are barely noticed in the development policy scene. This is due to the fact that diaspora organisations are very often only informally organised or are only weakly institutionalised themselves; they mainly carry out voluntary work and have few resources available for marketing and lobbying. Nevertheless, they provide individual and collective services for the countries of origin and thus support private health care, education and other comparable development cooperation services. It is difficult to assess the extent to which diaspora organisations influence developments in their respective countries of origin (or that of their parents). In most cases, the discussion on this topic refers to remittances made by migrants to their countries of origin. According to the World Bank, \$USD551 billion of these remittances flowed to low and middle-income

countries in 2019, which is three times as much as was made available for development cooperation and aid worldwide in the same period.

For this guide we would like to thank Ali Ahmad in particular, who researched the “Examples of Good Practice” with great perseverance and commitment and prepared the results of the conference for us. We would also like to thank the conference rapporteurs - Aadilah Amin, Abdulrab Habibyar, Sola Safi and Zafar Shayan - for compiling the challenges and recommendations. We would also like to thank the Afghan associations AKIS, NEUER START, Afghan Wulas, KATIB, the Intercultural Development Centre, the student organisation IGASUS and Fivestones for their support in research and the years of good cooperation with the VIDC. Finally, we would also like to thank our editor Kim Traill, who ensured that the guide became a coherent document.

Michael Fanizadeh
Project Coordinator, VIDC

2. INTRODUCTION

This guide identifies promising development projects implemented by Afghan diasporas in Europe since the Taliban were ousted from power by U.S.-led coalition forces in 2001. It also attempts to assist development agencies and donor countries to utilise the human potential of Afghan diaspora communities. The experience of “engaging the diaspora to carry out development projects in the countries of origin of diaspora has produced significant impacts on the development of their home countries”.¹

Afghan diaspora community initiatives include the provision of development assistance to schools and healthcare centres, women’s empowerment and sport programs, projects to improve social status, along with direct investment into small and medium-sized enterprises. During times of crisis in particular, Afghan diaspora members use their local networks in both Europe and Afghanistan to mobilise and channel humanitarian and financial aid directly, thereby avoiding complex and time-consuming bureaucratic procedures. In 2018, the Afghan Government began to recognise the positive contribution of its diaspora abroad towards the country’s development through its partnership with the diaspora program of the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).²

Diaspora organisations also facilitate integration and provide essential support to migrants in their new countries of residence. Such initiatives by Afghan dias-

pora associations have a long tradition in Austria, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, the United Kingdom and other European countries.

In 2010, the Danish Refugee Council initiated Diaspora Program to recognise the role of diasporas as an “integral part of the international aid system”. The DRC’s assistance in mapping Afghan diaspora organisations in Europe has been crucial to the preparation of this guide. A joint project by the Centre for International Migration and Development (CIM) and the Germany Society for International Cooperation (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit – GIZ) supports the political and development engagement of diasporas in their home countries. This support ranges from assistance in applying for project funding, to the planning and implementation of projects in the field.

This publication provides practical guidance with practical examples on how to utilise the potential of the Afghan diaspora to the Austrian Federal Ministry, the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), other donor agencies in Austria and Europe, as well as to international humanitarian non-government organisations interested in migration and development. Additionally, we wish to further encourage Afghan diasporas to use their knowledge of their home country, along with their familial, social, and political connections, to implement development projects in Afghanistan.



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3. BACKGROUND

Afghanistan's past forty years are a history of invasion, violence, displacement and migration. The never-ending war has driven millions of people from their homes, forcing them into lives of constant flight. After decades of armed conflict, millions of Afghans still live as refugees outside their country's national borders. According to a 2018 report by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2.7 million Afghans are registered with the organisation as living outside Afghanistan. Afghanistan's Ministry of Refugees and Repatriation (MoRR) estimates more than five million Afghans (both registered and unregistered) reside in neighbouring Pakistan, Iran and beyond.

After Syrians, Afghans constituted the second largest group seeking asylum in Europe during the so-called "refugee crisis" in 2015-16. Political uncertainty, the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan following the withdrawal of Western combat forces at the end of 2014, along with the reduction in military expenditure associated with these troops are reported to be the main reasons people leave their homeland. Other contributing factors include increasing numbers of civilian

casualties, territorial gains by the Taliban, the emergence of Daesh and extreme poverty affecting 54.5% of the population (2016)³.

There are no official statistics regarding the number of Afghans fleeing their country. Since the 2015-16 refugee influx into Europe, tightening migration policies and stricter border controls within the EU have led to a dramatic drop in the number of Afghans entering the continent. First-time asylum applications by Afghan refugees in the second quarter of 2019 in the EU28 fell to 10,190.⁴

This large-scale migration over several decades has led to a significant increase in the size of Afghan diaspora communities in the EU and worldwide. In 2014, 14,016 Afghans were registered in Austria. At beginning of 1.1.2019 this number had increased to 44,420. Germany's Federal Statistics Office estimated that by the end of 2017, the country was host to more than 250,000 Afghans. The Netherlands accommodates approximately 34,000 Afghans, 68,000 live in the United Kingdom, 14,000 reside in Denmark⁵, while Sweden has taken in a further 50,000.

3.1. Diaspora Engagement

There is increasing recognition by academics, civil society and the media that diaspora communities make a significant impact on the social and economic development of their countries of origin, through knowledge and skill transfer, support of healthcare and educational initiatives, direct investment and the provision of humanitarian assistance.

The contribution made by migrant communities not only to their homelands, but to their host countries has also become an area of interest for policy makers.⁶

Some host countries endeavor to increase the effectiveness of diasporas by engaging them in both development assistance and integration projects, while the countries of origin attempt to attract their diasporas' talents, innovative potential, networks and resources. Both destination and countries of origin treat diasporas as valuable assets and seek to strengthen their engagement.⁷

Remittances are amongst the most tangible links between migration and development. According to World Bank estimates, the total flow of remittances worldwide in 2010 surpassed \$440 billion⁸. By 2017, this amount reached an estimated \$625 billion USD, an increase of

7% on 2016 figures (Pew Research Centre). The MPI/IOM report states that these remittances contribute to the reduction of poverty, the promotion of transparency and the formation of human capital, chiefly by improving access to education and health.

3.2. Afghan diaspora for Afghanistan development

Increasing numbers of Afghan migrants to Europe have established a range of diaspora organisations, with activities ranging from organising cultural and sporting events to women's associations. Others provide integration assistance to new arrivals, along with teaching the new generation of European-born Afghans their native languages and creating connections between Afghanistan and EU countries.

There is no exact data on the number of diaspora organisations in the EU. Michael Daxner – author of a report entitled "Prepare – Protect – Promote: Mapping of and report on the Afghan Diaspora in Germany"⁹ – has identified 130 associations in Germany with clear connections to Afghanistan" reflecting the fact that more than 250.000 Afghans live in Germany.

4. GOOD PRACTICE EXAMPLES

This guide focuses on twentyfour Afghan diaspora organisations in five European countries: Austria, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, and the United Kingdom. These organisations are engaged in Afghanistan through targeted development programs in the areas of health, education, vocational training and women's empowerment. The associations have been selected via snowball sampling and personal contacts, in addition

to DRC recommendations of diaspora organisations in Denmark and the UK. The 2018 diaspora conference organised by the CIM in Hamburg, Germany, also provided contacts to the diverse Afghan community in Europe. More research is required to identify further associations in other EU countries.

The associations and countries where they are active are arranged in alphabetical order.

4.1. Austria



Afghanistan Culture, Integration and Solidarity Association (Afghanischer Kulturverein – AKIS)

“Education is the basic right of every child. An educated society will not go to war, rather it will focus on economic and social development.”

Ghousuddin Mir –
Founder and Director – AKIS

“I have two homes, Afghanistan where I was born and Austria where I live and work. I have a civil duty towards both. I must do everything to do my civil responsibility towards Afghanistan and to the country of my residence. I am in debt to Afghanistan. I could not serve it the way I should have.”

Ghousuddin Mir

FURTHER INFORMATION AND CONTACT

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In the early 1990s, Afghan refugees in Vienna had no place to meet, let alone celebrate national and cultural events. In the hope of encountering fellow countrymen, some Afghans attended prayers at a Pakistani mosque. Ghousuddin Mir, who had arrived in Austria as a refugee in 1993, was among them. Along with other Afghans, he decided to found the Afghanistan Culture, Integration and Solidarity Association (AKIS), in order to bring the small diaspora community together.

Since its establishment in 1996, AKIS has been engaged in the promotion of solidarity and integration in Austria, providing services to both newly-arrived refugees and the Afghan migrant community. AKIS also offers language classes and organises cultural and dance events, as well as Afghan New Year and Independence Day celebrations. These events are open to the Afghan diaspora, Austrians and other non-Afghans who are interested in Afghanistan.

In 2004, AKIS also began to carry out humanitarian and development activities in Afghanistan. Mr. Mir travels to Afghanistan annually to oversee various projects, which include assisting street children with education, drinking water and vocational training for girls and boys. Generous donations from institutions such as the Österreich-Afghanistan Gesellschaft (OEAG), Don Bosco – Jugend Eine Welt, and from private citizens in Austria have enabled positive changes to be brought to the lives of children in Afghanistan.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Ghousuddin Mir has been president of AKIS since it was established in 1996. Wali Mohammad Yusofzai is first deputy director. Dr. Gawhar Musleh is director of the women’s section of the association. Toba Nazari, Safia Sadat and Farhad Langary are on the board.



© AKIS

PROJECTS

AKIS is engaged in various small-scale development projects in Kabul.

Bibi Sarwar Sangari School, Khair Khana, Kabul

AKIS has implemented several projects at this school on the recommendation of Mr. Mir's sister, who worked as a teacher. These include the construction of a sunshade and protective walls around the school to ensure privacy and protect girls from sexual harassment, along with the construction of a volleyball court and provision of school supplies.

AKIS was also involved in the building of a water system at the school, which now supplies clean drinking water to the over 5,000 mainly female students. AKIS provided the Österreich-Afghanistan Gesellschaft (OEAG) with necessary contacts and was involved in the project for the first six months. The project was then completed by the OEAG. The school had two 100 metre deep wells but no storage system, so OEAG connected a 12 cubic metre water tank to the wells via a 110 metre long pipe. The water tank was plastered to protect it from freezing, painted and a 2,000 watt electrical system was installed to ensure grid stability. Access to safe drinking water prevents children from contracting water-borne diseases. In addition to health benefits for the children, there is also an economic benefit, resulting from the reduction in medical expenses related to

treating these illnesses. The project was completed in August 2017 and maintenance of the water tank is now the responsibility of school management.

Another AKIS initiative provided education for some of Afghanistan's tens of thousands of children forced to work on the street. In Kabul alone, an estimated 60,000 children¹⁰ are engaged in car washing, shoe cleaning, work as vendors or beg. Most of these children work a minimum of ten hours per day and are either war orphans or come from extremely poor families. They face numerous physical and psychological dangers, have no opportunity to attend school, see no prospects for their futures and are highly vulnerable to exploitation by criminal networks.

"It is very hard to earn money on the street. The children often work more than ten hours a day, in scorching heat as well as freezing cold weather. Many do not have even shoes."

Ghousuddin Mir – AKIS¹¹

OTHER PROJECTS

In 2004, in cooperation with the Salzburg Friedensverein, AKIS provided assistance to 48 orphans in Kabul for a period of one year.

Between 2007-10, with financial support from Jugend Eine Welt¹², AKIS provided money to families so children could attend school rather than work on the

street. Teachers used a schoolroom at Bibi Sarwar Sangari School to teach thirty street children on a regular basis, along with a further 100 children in three shifts over subsequent years. AKIS supporters also provided these children with shoes, clothes, school supplies and one meal a day. In addition to classes for street children, girls from the school received training in tailoring and metalwork. These courses were carried out in cooperation with a local partner, “Women and Youth Social Association”.

According to Mr. Mir, more than 800 children from impoverished backgrounds have benefitted from these projects, including 180 street children. Today AKIS assists 100 children from poor families to attend the Bibi Sarwar Sangari Girls High School in Kabul by providing school

uniforms, school materials and a small amount of pocket money on an annual basis.

FUNDING

Salzburg Friedensverein, Salesianer Don Bosco and Jugend Eine Welt provided financial support to AKIS for these projects. Jugend Eine Welt is an Austrian-based organisation established in 1997 with the aim of improving the lives of children and young people around the world. Private donations have also been crucial to the successful implementation of AKIS’s projects in Afghanistan. To date, the maximum cost of a single project has not exceeded 22,000 euro, which was paid for the walls and sunshade at Bibi Sarwar Sangari school.



FIVESTONES

“The main goal of the projects in Afghanistan is for Afghan youths to learn to cooperate with each other, to find solutions to their problems and help others, rather than seeing that everything is possible in foreign countries and everything is impossible in their own.”

Masomah Regl –
Founder and Director – FIVESTONES

FURTHER INFORMATION AND CONTACTS

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FIVESTONES is a non-profit, charitable diaspora association based in Graz, which supports the integration of people with migration backgrounds into European society. Another goal is to represent Afghans in European media in a positive light. Rather than focusing on stories of war, poverty and terror, FIVESTONES produces and publicises short video clips on its website, presenting success stories and positive role models of the Afghan community in Graz, as well as providing insights into life in Afghanistan.

FIVESTONES’ founders are motivated by empathy for people struggling to adapt to their new environment after leaving their home countries. The name, ‘FIVESTONES’, is taken from a popular Afghan children’s game known as ‘Panjjaq’, typically played by Afghan girls and requiring only five small stones, creativity and concentration. The name refers to the ability to create something of value using creativity and skill. The number “five” also symbolises the five core values of the association: tolerance, creativity, empathy, engagement and authenticity.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

FIVESTONES was founded by two Afghans and one Austrian. Masomah Regl is chairperson, Fereyduh Zahedi is deputy chairperson and Franz Pfuisi is the association’s IT and marketing specialist.

PROJECTS

Two of FIVESTONES’s projects involve collaboration with local partners, Kabul Equal – Youth for Afghanistan, and a film production company, ‘Afghanistan.anders’ – in Afghanistan.

Austrian-based projects include the establishment of the first Farsi library in the city of Graz and Integration by Fulfilling Work (Integration Durch Erfüllende Arbeit – IDEA), an initiative in which well-integrated Afghans in Austria lead workshops for newly-arrived refugees to encourage faster integration.

Partnership with Kabul Equal: Kabul Equal is a youth volunteer organisation operating as FIVESTONES' representative and local partner in Kabul. The organisation aims to raise awareness of social and environmental issues, as well as encouraging solidarity and social participation by Afghan youth. Volunteers at Kabul Equal come from all across Afghanistan and have no affiliation with political parties and/or warlords.

Kabul was once a "green" city, with frequent rainfall and minimal pollution. Prior to the outbreak of war four decades ago, Afghans were keen gardeners and used to carry out collective actions called 'Hashar', to plant trees and clean up the city's residential areas.

In March 2019, Kabul Equal and FIVESTONES, along with other local organisations, began a program called "Donate clothing, plant a tree". The project's aims to both raise environmental awareness and to encourage people to donate clothes to returnee families and IDPs. According to Kabul volunteer, Ismael Qasemi, within two hours of the debut campaign organisers had collected 400 sets of clothes and distributed 70 trees.

After the 2018 parliamentary elections in Afghanistan, Kabul Equal volunteers went around Kabul removing electoral posters from walls. The team then took these posters to IDP camps to be used for heating and cooking.

FUNDING

FIVESTONES' founders have full-time jobs in Austrian tech companies and social organisations. All association-related activities, including website construction and maintenance, marketing and organisation of events, are carried out during the team's spare time and personally financed by Masomah Regl. Each initiative is realised solely through the competence and dedication of members, volunteers and supporters, many of whom are fellow Afghans living in Austria.

Currently FIVESTONES has no sponsors, as members decided to take immediate action rather than waiting for external funding. Future plans include finding sponsors, the establishment of an office and employment of staff in Kabul, and the construction of an art school in Kabul.





Help Afghan School Children Organisation (HASCO)

“If we do not provide educational opportunities for children today, and deprive them of their basic rights, extremists will exploit and recruit these uneducated children into their ranks and use them as fighters.”

Hafiz Khaled – Director – HASCO

Help Afghan School Children Organisation (HASCO) is a Vienna-based, non-profit entity founded in 2002, which aims to help Afghan children catch up on education missed as a result of conflict, migration and/or cultural barriers. HASCO believes that Afghanistan’s future lies in the hands of today’s children; therefore it is vital to invest in their education in order to prevent them from exploitation by criminal networks and extremist groups such as the Taliban.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Hafizullah Khaled is founder and director of HASCO. The organisation received support from Austrians and has ten volunteers in Afghanistan.

PROJECTS

HASCO has implemented two small-scale educational projects in Afghanistan, with particular focus on Afghan returnees from Pakistan and Iran. Most returnees lack qualifications, struggle to find employment and receive negligible social services from the Afghan government. NGOs provide some emergency relief assistance to returnee families, but many children have missed out on years of schooling while living as refugees in neighbouring countries.

Community-based school and educational supplies for Afghan children: HASCO has established community-based schools for returnee children in the northern districts of Kabul, as well as in Herat and Laghman provinces. Without regular incomes, returnees are unable to afford the materials necessary for their children to attend school. With the support of several Austrian institutions (The Hope Journey¹³, The City of Vienna, and the Austrian Ministry of Education, Science and Research), HASCO provided families with ‘Education Kits A & B’¹⁴, which contained learning materials required by children for three months at school.

FURTHER INFORMATION AND CONTACTS

Website: www.help-afghan-school-children.org

Email: hasco@chello.at

© HASCO (2)



As a result of the deteriorating security situation in Afghanistan over recent years however, these organisations have dramatically reduced their financial support to HASCO and the project is on hold until the situation improves.

FUNDING

HASCO received donations in-kind or through sponsorship and transferred cash and educational kits to needy children and families in Afghanistan. The Hope Journey¹⁵, The City of Vienna, the Austrian Ministry of Education, Science and Research and the United Nations Women's Guild (UNWG) have assisted HASCO on various occasions.





Save Afghan Mother and Child (SAMC)

“I come from Afghanistan where I endured a difficult life. I remember my family did not have cooking oil for a month to cook food. Under the Taliban, we had nothing to eat for a long time. War, hunger and migration have affected my team and I. We will do everything to help people in need in Afghanistan.”

Fazel Rahman Samadi – President of Save Afghan Mother and Child (SAMC).

“We don’t want to give these young people the impression that this is free money. We motivate them to finish their studies and pay us back when they get a job. The same students may help other people when they are in a better financial situation.”

Fazel Rahman Samadi

FURTHER INFORMATION

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Afghan Mother and Child Education and Economic Development Organisation (AMCEEDO)

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Afghanistan’s deadly ongoing insurgency continues to create widows and orphans. Despite receiving billions of dollars in aid, the country remains in dire need of financial assistance.

Save Afghan Mother and Child (SAMC) is a private, non-profit, Afghan diaspora organization, which has been operating unofficially in Vienna since 2009, and officially since January 2019. The association supports mothers, children, students from impoverished backgrounds and the physically challenged persons.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Fazel Rahman Samadi is the founder and executive director of SAMC. Ghani Nazari is deputy director and Toba Samadi is treasurer. SAMC has nine volunteers located throughout Afghanistan. The association has a central bureau in Kabul and carries out projects in Khost in the southeast, Kandahar, Ghazni and Wardak in central Afghanistan.

PROJECTS

In 2009, at the request of villagers in Wardak province, SAMC and its local partner in Kabul established a school for girls. Months of negotiation with village elders were conducted before construction was approved. SAMC continued to provide financial and material support to the school until 2017, when the government of Afghanistan took over.

Currently SAMC is running two projects in Afghanistan. One is a sponsorship program for orphans, the second offers loans to youths from impoverished families.

Orphan sponsorship program: Tens of thousands of Afghan children, many of whom have lost one or both parents in the war, are working, scavenging or begging on the streets. Afghanistan’s decades-long conflict has seriously damaged the country’s social, political and economic structure and without breadwinners, these



© SAMC

children, and the remaining members of their families, make up the most vulnerable segment of Afghan society.

Together with its local partner, the Afghan Mother and Child Education and Economic Development Organisation (AMCEEDO), SAMC set up a sponsorship program for orphans and single-parent families. Currently, twenty children in Khost, forty children in the Panjwae district of Kandahar and a further twenty in Ghazni have been placed into orphanages, with expenses covered by SAMC. Children are selected on the recommendation of local elders and friends of SAMC in Afghanistan.

The Vienna-based Turkish charity 'Hasana' ('Good deed') has also begun to sponsor the education of fifty Afghan orphans. The package covers the children's monthly expenses, allowing them to focus on their schooling without being forced to work.

A particular challenge for SAMC is Hasana's requirement for official death certificates from the orphaned child's parents. Obtaining these documents from the Afghan government is an extremely time-consuming and complex process. Frequently certificates are not provided in time, if at all, leading to delays in processing donations. In some cases however, unofficial certificates signed by neighbourhood representatives are

presented to the sponsor, thereby enabling aid to be transferred.

SAMC also offers vocational training to widowed mothers, enabling them to earn a secure income, which will allow children to attend school.

Loans: Since January 2019, SAMC has given loans to ten students, including two women who lost their husbands. Together with local partner, AMCEEDO, SAMC offer monthly loans to students who are otherwise unable to finance their education and/or cover basic expenses, such as food and rent.

Before receiving the money, students sign a contract with the organisation agreeing to repay the loan in instalments once they have completed their education and found a secure job.

FUNDING

Save Afghan Mother and Child receives donations in Austria, as well as from rich Afghans in Afghanistan via the Afghan Mother and Child Education and Economic Development Organisation (AMCEEDO) in Kabul. Since January 2019, the Turkish charity, 'Hasana', and a Bangladeshi association have also provided financial support.

3.1.2. DIASPORA ORGANISATIONS IN AUSTRIA ACTIVE IN THE FIELD OF INTERCULTURAL DIALOGUE

In addition to diaspora associations carrying out aid work in Afghanistan, several organisations in Austria are

active in the field of intercultural dialogue. The VIDC has cooperated with five of these associations.



Afghan Sport and Culture – New Start in Austria (Afghanischer Sport und Kulturverein – NEUER START in Österreich)

The Afghan Sport and Cultural New Start Association was founded in October 2010 and provides integration assistance to young refugees in Austria. In order to encourage peaceful interaction and mutual understanding through integration, New Start organises an annual festival of peace and friendship called “From Kabul to Vienna”. Since 2016, New Start has also collaborated with the VIDC and “Poika – Association for Gender Sensitive

Work with Boys in Education and Teaching” to develop intercultural gender competence workshops for Afghan male refugees.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Website: neuerstart.at/

Facebook: www.facebook.com/neuer.start.2010/



Afghan Wulas Culture and Sport Association (Afghan Wulas Kultur und Sportverein)

In 1999, a group of former Kabul University academics in Vienna founded the Afghanistan Reconstruction Association, with the aim of contributing to Afghanistan’s reconstruction process. The association implemented several projects in central Wardak province, including building schools, digging wells and improving the healthcare system.

In 2004, as Afghanistan was receiving huge amounts of financial, military and development assistance from the West, the organisation changed its name to Afghan Wulas and shifted its focus to cultural activities, such as organising celebrations for Afghanistan’s Independence Day and promoting the Pashto language. Afghan Wulas engaged in these activities until 2010, when one of the

co-founders passed away and other board members moved to different countries for professional or personal reasons.

With the 2015 refugee influx into Austria, the remaining members of Afghan Wulas began to assist recent arrivals to integrate into their new homeland, providing legal counselling during asylum procedures, translation services, workshops on healthcare, the Austrian school system and housing, along with literacy classes for Afghans who had never attended school.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Facebook: www.facebook.com/Afghan.Wulas.at



Community of Afghan Students (Interessengemeinschaft der Afghanischen SchülerInnen und Studierenden – IGASUS)

“Integration through education” is the motto of the Austrian-based IGASUS association. Established by Afghan students in 2015, the organisation provides educational advice for Afghan refugees and asylum seekers, along with helping Afghan parents navigate the Austrian education system. IGASUS has compiled an ‘Education Direction’ manual for Afghan parents in both German and Dari and offers a tutoring pool for Afghan youths who wish to continue their education in Austria.

The organisation also celebrates the graduation of students who have either finished high schools or completed a university degree program in Austria.

FURTHER INFORMATION

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Intercultural Development Centre (Interkulturelles Entwicklungszentrum – IEZ)

IEZ is a Vienna-based, non-profit association founded by Afghan journalist Tanya Kayhan in December 2016 in order to assist Afghan refugees with integration into Austrian society. Initially, the activities of IEZ involved providing free German classes to new arrivals, along with Dari language classes and training in “Austrian values”.

More recently, IEZ’s focus has shifted to its “OXUS TV” project, which will be broadcast via “OKTO TV” – a private, independent television channel supported by the City of Vienna. IEZ plans to produce programs for this channel which aim to both fight negative stereotypes about Afghan refugees in Austria, and to use media and communication help Afghans integrate into

their host country. Programs will be targeted at both the general public and Austria’s Afghan community.

IEZ will offer training in video journalism to Afghan refugees with a background in journalism or an interest in media and communication, in addition to assisting its trainees to network with Austrian media houses.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Website: www.ie-zentrum.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/Interkulturelles-Entwicklungszentrum-103427913603074/

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Katib Culture and Sport Association (Katib Kultur Sport Verein)

In 2010, Daud Nazari and four members of his extended family established the Katib Culture and Sport Association in Vienna. In addition to offering free Dari language classes to Afghan children, the association became a meeting point for predominantly ethnic Hazaras to gather and celebrate religious days and mourning ceremonies.

In 2013, the Katib Association began to offer integration services to Afghan refugees, including German classes and sporting activities. Most notably, in an attempt to counter stereotypes, the Katib Association

has trained more than thirty women to swim, an activity prohibited to them in Afghanistan. As the refugee flow has increased over recent years, the association has been organising football tournaments, karate competitions and other sporting activities in order to help young Afghans with integration.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/katibkultursportverein/>

4.2. Denmark



Afghan Lawyers Association in Denmark (ALAD)

“We all have a responsibility to give something back to Afghanistan. We as the Afghan diaspora have knowledge and opportunities here in Europe that we can transfer to rebuild Afghanistan.”

Zohreh Faizi – Chairwoman of The Afghan Lawyers Association in Denmark

On 14 November 2013, an Afghan diaspora group in Denmark founded a non-profit, social, professional legal entity, “The Afghan Lawyers Association in Denmark”. ALAD provides a platform for Afghan lawyers to exchange professional experiences and information in addition to rendering assistance and free legal advice to Afghans residing in and/or applying for asylum in Denmark. The organisation also encourages Afghans living in Denmark to both exercise their rights and carry out their duties as responsible citizens. Additionally, ALAD strives to enhance the legal knowledge of young Afghan lawyers in Denmark.

ALAD also operates in Afghanistan, providing free legal aid to Afghans unable to afford a lawyer. Women in prisons and victims of domestic violence are a particular focus.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Zohreh Faizi is the chairwoman of ALAD. Sami Sabet, Farhad Bahador and Enayat Safi are members of the board. The chairperson and board members are elected in a general assembly every 2-4 years.

PROJECTS

Afghanistan’s judicial system has been progressively deteriorating over the past decades. Courts in many parts of the country are chronically understaffed and most ordinary Afghans have no access to judicial institutions, nor can they afford legal representation. The lack of confidence in the formal justice sector has contributed significantly to the destabilisation of the country and led to a situation where many Afghans rely on either informal or Taliban-style justice.

Legal aid office in Kabul: ALAD’s legal aid office in Kabul provides free services to Afghanistan’s most vulnerable, in particular to female victims of domestic abuse wish-

FURTHER INFORMATION

Website: www.legalaid-afghanistan.com

Facebook: www.facebook.com/pg/faajid/posts/?ref=page_internal

Email: info@legalaid-afghanistan.com

ing to divorce violent husbands, and to women in prisons. Attempted self-immolation is a common situation where women require legal assistance after recovery. The association has hired administrative staff and a lawyer to represent women who are unable to pay for legal representation. ALAD runs its Kabul office in cooperation with the Afghanistan Independent Bar Association (Anjoman-e Wukal-e Modafe) and plans to expand into more provinces across Afghanistan.

In March 2019, with the support of Danish Institute for International Studies (DIIS), ALAD organised a public debate in Copenhagen to discuss peace, human rights

and women's rights in particular, in the event of a possible peace deal with the Taliban.

FUNDING

ALAD funds its work through membership fees and donations from around Denmark. The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) Diaspora Program provides financial assistance to ALAD's Legal Aid Office in Kabul. The chairperson and board members run the association on a volunteer basis and are currently working on applications for further funding.



Afghan Youth Association in Denmark (AYAD)

“At the age of 16, when I lived as a refugee in Pakistan, I was motivated to work for positive change in my country. Now I live in Denmark and still have the same motivation for my country and people. I have no identity without Afghanistan. It is OK if I am not in that country, but I feel attached to and part of that country.”

Wesal Zaman – Board member – AYAD

In November 2009, a group of young Afghans in Vejle, southern Denmark, convened to establish the Afghan Youth Association in Denmark (AYAD). Concerned that many young Afghan refugees were struggling with integration, and the Danish language in particular, AYAD’s founders began to offer Danish classes, along with emphasising the importance of being active citizens and contributing to Danish society. AYAD has also organised various cultural programs, events and talks, with the aim of giving Danes a more nuanced picture of Afghanistan, Afghan culture and people. Additionally, the organisation attempts to strengthen unity amongst youth, create networks, and promote mutual understanding between Afghan and Danish cultures through community-based projects and social activities. AYAD’s integration-support initiatives and Danish language classes continued until 2015.

More recently AYAD has been providing mother language classes to both Danish-born Afghan children and illiterate Afghans who had no opportunity to attend school in Afghanistan. AYAD has also implemented several development projects in the educational sector in Afghanistan, including setting up a mobile library for children and digitalising monographs and theses at Kabul University.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

AYAD has 128 members who work on a voluntary basis. External benefactors support the organisation with relief assistance at times of humanitarian crises in Afghanistan. Joseph Saber is the organisation’s president. Jamil Ghafuri is vice president.

PROJECTS

The world in pictures: AYAD’s first project in Afghanistan was a mobile children’s library. Together with the Afghanistan Development and Peace Research Organisation (ADPRO), AYAD sent a research team to collect 250 folk tales from across Afghanistan. The researchers

FURTHER INFORMATION

Website: www.ayad.dk

Facebook: www.facebook.com/AYAD.DK/

Email: info@ayad.dk



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then selected twenty-five of these stories to be transcribed and illustrated for 5-7 year olds, along with some Danish stories translated into Dari. Two thousand and five hundred copies of these books were printed. The Danish Refugee Council's (DRC) Diaspora Program provided more than 25,000 Euros to finance the project.

The mobile library visited one kindergarten in Kabul each week in order to engage with children through books and revive Afghanistan's reading culture. The children were also able to borrow books to read with their parents at home. If parents were illiterate, AYAD volunteers would help the children. The library visits included a theatre show and children were trained to perform the roles of various story characters, dressed in traditional Afghan clothes. AYAD helped the library to visit 50 kindergartens and then passed the project to the Directorate of Kindergartens in Kabul.

Digitalisation of monographs at Kabul University: No electronic records exist as to the number of theses and monographs written by Kabul University students. According to a survey by ADPRO, as academic papers are written by hand, there is only a minimal digital database, making it difficult for students to access and build

on existing literature. Professors and lecturers also have no way to detect whether academic papers have been plagiarised or are a student's own original work. AYAD, together with local partners, ADPRO and the Afghanistan Centre at Kabul University (ACKU), began a pilot project of digitalising academic papers at Kabul University's Faculty of Psychology, in order to improve the ethics of research, create literature and prevent plagiarism.

FUNDING

AYAD members are not required to pay fees, but rather make contributions towards specific activities and projects. The Danish Youth Council (DUC) provides AYAD with more than 5,000 Euros annually to cover administrative and organisational expenses.

In order to receive financial support from the Danish Refugee Council's Diaspora Program (DRCDP) – which is in turn funded by the Ministry of Development Cooperation of Denmark and other donor agencies – AYAD is required to present proposals for individual development projects to be implemented in Afghanistan. AYAD also receives project-based donations from the Afghan diaspora in Denmark, in particular for emergency relief. A 2017 campaign to raise funds for victims of suicide attacks in Kabul was called '#PrayForKabul'.



Katib Cultural Association (KCA)

“During my first years in Denmark, I realised that Afghans had built a very thick and tall wall between themselves and Danish people, which did not help either them or their hosts. You cannot have a better life until you have integrated into your host society. This was the main reason why we founded the Katib Cultural Association – to help ourselves benefit from the generous support of our hosts.”

Habib Paiman – Founder of Katib Cultural Association in Denmark

The Katib Cultural Association was founded in 2007 by Habib Paiman and other Afghan refugees in Copenhagen. The association’s initial objectives were to support the integration of Afghans into Danish society, promote Afghan languages among Afghan youth, and to foster mutual understanding between Afghans and Danes in order to prevent cultural, religious and racial clashes. Founder, Habib Paiman, explains, “We had no idea about integration or the social, economic and political situation in Denmark. We established the association to encourage Afghan refugees to participate in Denmark’s economic and educational life, so they could better contribute to their host country and transfer their knowledge and expertise to Afghanistan”. The association also assists school and university students in Afghanistan.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Members of the Katib Cultural Association come from Denmark’s Afghan diaspora community. Currently, Sabrina Mirzad is association president, Sakineh Rostami is secretary and founder, Habib Paiman, is director of communications. The board of directors is elected annually and the president is elected every two years.

PROJECTS

Since 2013, the KCA has carried out several development projects in Afghanistan. These include the construction of a school and library, along with other small-scale projects to improve the quality of education in the Jaghori district of Ghazni province – a Hazara-dominated region in central Afghanistan.

Khar Tezak village primary school: The village of Khar Tezak had received permission to open a primary school, however there was no building available. The KCA’s chief project coordinator, Maina Abassi, carried out an assessment with local council members during which residents voiced the need for a school building

FURTHER INFORMATION

Website: www.katib.dk

Email: info@katib.dk

to protect students from weather extremes. Using a 45,000 Euro grant from the DRC Diaspora Program, the KCA collaborated with the village council to construct a fully-equipped, fourteen room, two-storey school building. Unusually for Afghanistan, the school is coeducational and provides schooling for more than 300 girls and boys.

Library: Together with the local village council, the KCA facilitated the construction of a library building at Sale-

hi Zerk High School in Zerk village, Jaghori district, Ghazni province. The DRC Diaspora Program provided 45,000 euros for this library which now serves 1,000 students.

FUNDING

The Danish Refugee Council Diaspora Program has funded all KCA's projects.



4.3. Germany



Afghan-German Association for Education, Health and Crafts

(Afghanische-Deutscher Förderverein für Bildung, Gesundheit und Handwerk – AFGHAN e.V.)

Following the ousting of the Taliban in 2001, international donor agencies and private individuals worldwide poured billions of dollars into Afghanistan to finance the country's reconstruction. The top priorities were to build schools and healthcare centres, empower women, provide vocational training and fight poverty. Germany's Afghan diaspora were among those active in initiating a range of humanitarian and development projects in their country of origin.

In 2002, a group of Afghan and German teachers, engineers, journalists, friends and supporters established the non-political, non-profit Afghan-German Association for Education, Health and Crafts (AFGHAN e.V.) in Friedenau, Berlin.

The oft-cited proverb "Give a man a fish, and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime" is the association's core principle, and its various projects aim to help beneficiaries to ultimately support themselves.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

AFGHAN e.V. was founded and is co-chaired by Dr. Safi Baborie, son of a former Afghan diplomat in Germany, and Mr. Heiner Hütsch, long-time friend of Afghanistan and teacher at the Georg-von-Giesche-Oberschule in Berlin. Mr Hütsch has extensive experience in the reconstruction of schools in Afghanistan.

PROJECTS

AFGHAN e.V. has carried out several projects across Afghanistan, chiefly in the education sector. These projects include support for the Shinwari village primary school in Kabul's Sorubi district, the refurbishment of the community school for girls in Shotul district, Panjsher province, and supplying computers for the use of the

FURTHER INFORMATION

Website: www.afghanev.org

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3,700 students and 60 teachers at Jamal Mina school in Kabul. Another project involved the construction of a school for girls in Wardak province.

Kohna Khomar School: Around 2,000 families live in the multi-ethnic village of Kohna Khomar in Wardak province, 100 km southwest of Kabul. The village now has four primary schools, three intermediary schools, a school for girls and one madrassa (religious school). Until 2008 however, there was no school for girls, and as families preferred not to send their daughters to school together with boys, most girls were unable to receive an education. In 2006, villagers began to plan a school for 200 girls; with five classrooms, a teacher's room and a kitchen. Residents donated land, but had no financial resources to fund the construction of a school building. Village elders approached AFGHAN e.V. for financial and technical 'know-how'. As the estimated construction budget was over 45,000 Euros, AFGHAN e.V. applied to UNICEF for financial assistance. The association also raised money through organising exhibitions, information events and lectures in Germany.

The school was constructed, accredited and officially launched in November 2008 with 250 students and ten teachers. Today, the 'Zandra-Woman School' has nineteen teachers, eight of whom have a higher school education. Subjects taught include Afghan languages, English, mathematics, chemistry, biology and sport.

Prior to the building of the Kohna Khomar school for girls, women were unable to participate in public gatherings or decision-making processes in Kohna Khomar. Only one woman was able to read and write. The village elders had to discuss the hiring of female teachers with religious leaders. For the residents, sending their girls to school was a big step, which encouraged them to think about the role of women in the village. The building is also used by women of the village for literacy classes and vocational training.

FUNDING

AFGHAN e.V. projects in Afghanistan are predominantly funded through membership fees and private donations.



Afghan Women's Association (Afghanischer Frauenverein e.V. – AFV)

“The staff of the Afghan Women's Association work every day to ensure a bright future for Afghan families in their country. They support refugees, hungry, injured people, marginalised women and girls in need. They provide medical assistance, education, training, and supply entire villages with clean drinking water. The work of AFV deserves our deep respect and support. Help us. Together we can achieve a lot better in Afghanistan.”

Herbert Grönemeyer – patron of AFV

“It is an honour to support AFV as their ambassador. I do so because of my deep attachment to Afghanistan and to my late friend Roger Willemssen who supported and accompanied the Afghan Women's Association for more than ten years.”

Herbert Grönemeyer

FURTHER INFORMATION

Website: www.afghanischer-frauenverein.de

Email: info@afghanischer-frauenvereinn.de

In 1992, following the defeat of the Soviet-backed government in Afghanistan by U.S.- and Pakistani-funded mujahideen, a group of Afghan women refugees in Osnabrück, Germany founded the Afghan Women's Association (AFV). The AFV's mission is to support sustainable development in Afghanistan at a grass-roots level, in particular to improve the quality of life for women through the promotion of social and economic inclusion. In this way, the AFV has enabled many women to become important contributors to Afghan society.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE AND PATRONAGE

Nadia Nashir is the president of Afghan Women's Association. Three other Afghan women make up the board. AFV has an external consultant and office in Kabul. Currently AFV has around 410 members and sponsors engaged in its development and humanitarian work in Afghanistan. Prominent German musician and actor, Herbert Grönemeyer, is the AFV's patron and new ambassador.

PROJECTS

AFV's humanitarian and development projects target vulnerable Afghans in central Ghazni, Kabul and northern Kunduz provinces. The association believes its projects provide vital assistance to Afghanistan as the country simultaneously faces multiple crises. National and international conflicts have resulted in the internal displacement of almost two million people. Hundreds of thousands of Afghan refugees have returned from neighbouring Pakistan and Iran with little to no prospect of finding employment and integrating into the country's social and economic life. Natural disasters, including a severe drought, have added to the country's woes.

The AFV aims to empower women and children and help lift them from poverty. Currently, the association runs fourteen projects, including vocational training in

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tailoring, education and literacy classes for girls and youth, in addition to providing medical care, potable water and emergency relief assistance to IDPs and returnees from Pakistan and Iran. AFV president, Nadia Nashir, travels to Afghanistan twice yearly to oversee the implementation of projects.

Pul-e Sheena: This settlement in eastern Kabul accommodates 14,000 IDPs (almost 2,000 families) displaced by fighting between the Taliban and government forces in northern Takhar, southern Uruzgan, Helmand, eastern Laghman and Nangarhar provinces. In May 2019, the AFV provided humanitarian relief – including food items at a time when prices were extremely high – to 520 of these families (3640 persons). Visions for Children assisted the AFV with financial support for this project.

Vocational Training in Ghazni: The AFV runs a vocational training centre for women in Roshani in central

Ghazni province. Every year, three female instructors train thirty women between the ages of 18 and 25 in tailoring, as well as providing a daily one hour literacy class in Dari, one of Afghanistan's two main languages. At the beginning of the course, trainees receive a sewing machine, iron and pair of scissors, and as part of the training the women make uniforms for the students at Roshani School. On completion of the course, trainees can take the equipment home and use it to start their own businesses. Being able to earn an income increases social recognition and respect for women in the community.

The project costs approximately 8500 Euros annually for the whole group.

FUNDING

The AFV is funded by private donations and membership fees. Interested parties can also sponsor events and/or become patrons of vulnerable families.



Afghanistan – Aid that Reaches its Destination (Afghanistan-Hilfe, die ankommt e.V.)

“The rural population often have no access to medical care. Many people have to travel long distances to reach to hospitals. That is not only dangerous, but the quality of help they get is not always what it should be.”

Dr. Najiba Behmanesh –
founder and chairperson – Afghanistan-Hilfe

Talks to establish this non-profit organisation began in 2001, however it was not until 2008 that Afghanistan – Aid that Reaches its Destination was officially registered and began operations. Based in Bad Kreuznach, Germany, the association focuses primarily on supporting the health and education sectors in Afghanistan.

Afghanistan Hilfe provides humanitarian assistance to widows and orphans in Afghanistan and is engaged in the construction of schools, repairing educational equipment and school buildings, as well as digging wells to provide safe drinking water.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The association’s founder, Dr. Najiba Behmanesh, has spent 2-4 weeks in Afghanistan each year since 2002 at her own expense, offering free medical treatment, helping orphans, widows and other vulnerable Afghans.

PROJECTS

Medical supplies: German medical practitioners and the Phoenix pharmacology company donate medicines, medical supplies, medical equipment and cash to finance medical treatment, which Afghanistan Hilfe distributes to hospitals and healthcare centres in Afghanistan. Since 2004, the German army¹⁶ has transported up to two tonnes of medical supplies free of charge to Afghanistan annually. Dr. Behmanesh delivers this medicine and equipment to several clinics in Kabul. Among these is the Dewan Begi clinic, which also receives support from the Afghanistan Information Centre (Afghanic e.V.).

Family sponsorship: The diaspora organisation looks for sponsors in Germany to support widows and families without breadwinners. Many women have lost their husbands and their children are too young to work. Currently around fifty families in Germany provide Afghan widows in urgent need with cash, which allows their children to attend school without being forced to work.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Website: www.afghanistan-hilfe.de
Facebook: www.facebook.com/Afghanistan-HilfeDieAnkommt/
Email: info@afghanistan-hilfe.de

As soon as the children reach working age and are able to support the family themselves, this financial support is discontinued. As part of the organisation's strategy of "helping people so they can help themselves", some widows are given sewing machines or milking cows to enable them to generate their own income.

Drinking water: Another of Afghanistan Hilfe's projects involves digging wells in areas with a lack of clean drinking water. In August 2017, in cooperation with DES-WOS¹⁷, the association funded the construction of four wells in Baladoori, Pul-I Khumri, the capital city of Baghlan province in northern Afghanistan.

During Dr. Behmanesh's latest trip to Afghanistan in July 2019, she documented the association's family sponsorship, wells and school repair projects. This documentation will help the organisation to generate further funding to expand its work.

FUNDING

Afghanistan Aid that Reaches Destination funds its projects through donations, direct assistance from family and friends, and an annual membership fee of 36 Euros. One-off donations are also encouraged. Individuals and companies also donate medical supplies and medicine, which the association transports to Afghanistan.



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The Doctors' Association for Afghan Refugees Ärzteverein für afghanische Flüchtlinge e.V. (AFAF)

During the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan in the 1980s, millions of Afghans fled to Pakistan, with some later moving to Europe. In 1982, a group of Afghan refugees in Helmstedt, Germany, established the Doctors' Association for Afghan Refugees (AFAF). AFAF's initial objective was to provide medical care to Afghan refugees, both in Pakistan and Afghanistan. Following the Soviet withdrawal in 1989, AFAF became involved in the reconstruction of Afghanistan's healthcare system.

AFAF's top priority is the transfer of knowledge. This is achieved by training Afghan doctors, both in Germany and Afghanistan, in order to improve the standard of patient treatment.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Doctor's Association for Afghan Refugees is a non-profit entity registered with the district court of Helmstedt. Doctors of Medicine, Gudrun Scharifi and Ataulah Zulfacar are board members.

AFAF was a founding member of the "Dachverband des Afghanisch Medizinisches Fachpersonals" (DAMF), the umbrella organisation for Afghan medical personnel. AFAF was chair of DAMF from its establishment in 2002 until March 2007.

PROJECTS

Prior to 2001, AFAF volunteers traveled to Pakistan and Afghanistan during their vacations at their own expense in order to distribute medical supplies, financial aid to widows and orphans and to dig wells in refugee camps. The association also contributed regular funding to a psychiatric centre treating drug addicts and mentally ill patients in Peshawar – a city in Pakistan near the Afghan border.

After the ousting of the Taliban in 2001, AFAF continued its humanitarian assistance, providing ambulances, training, supporting hospitals in Kabul with medical equipment and medicine, and building schools. Today

FURTHER INFORMATION

Website: www.afghandoctor.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/AFAF-eV-%C3%84rzteverein-f%C3%BCr-Afghanische-Fl%C3%BCchtlinge-ev-1677321305830607/

the organisation focuses on training Afghan doctors and giving financial support to print medical journals.

First Aid for Gunshot and Blast Injuries & Basic Life Support (BLS): Thousands of Afghan civilians are killed or wounded each year as a result of Afghanistan's ongoing conflict: suicide bombings, aerial bombardments, fighting between the Taliban, organised criminal networks, militias and government forces are all too frequent occurrences.

First respondents to incidents such as explosions, air strikes or terror attacks need to be equipped with basic skills in order to save lives of victims and prevent avoidable complications. It is therefore crucial to educate the civilian population in the management and treatment of gunshot and blast injuries.

AFAF's most recent project – "First Aid for Gunshot and Blast Injuries and Basic Life Support (BLS) Training for Schoolteachers and Administrators" – has been implemented in cooperation with the KAWUN Institute of Higher Education in Mazar-e Sharif. Almost 200 staff members in eight schools benefitted from this training during the pilot phase of the project which was held in November and December 2018. During the project's

second phase, AFAF aims to train 2,000 staff in over one hundred schools in Mazar-e Sharif and northern Balkh province. At the conclusion of the program, trainees will receive emergency first aid kits.

Construction work: AFAF's construction projects include a polyclinic in Panjsher valley and a clinic and primary school in the eastern Shewa district of Nangarhar province. Up to 400 children attend the school each year. The Shewa clinic treats up to 1,100 patients, three-quarters of whom are children and women. AFAF also set up and supplies medical equipment and medicines to the Department of Neonatology at Maiwand Children's hospital in Kabul. An ultrasonography device purchased by AFAF for a hospital in Mazar-e Sharif is still in use.

FUNDING

"First Aid for Gunshot and Blast Injuries and Basic Life Support (BLS) Training for Schoolteachers and Administrators" is funded by the General Consulate of Germany in Mazar-e Sharif. AFAF also receives donations from private and government institutions to run its various projects in Afghanistan.



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Afghanistan Information Centre (Afghanic e.V.)

“Since childhood, my ambition was to stay with my people and help them as a doctor. I studied medicine, but could not stay and work in Afghanistan. I feel in debt to the country of my birth. Afghanistan is a really poor country and it needs more than what we do to lift it from poverty.”

Dr. Yahya Wardak –
chairperson – Afghanic e.V.

In 1993, as Afghanistan was mired in a brutal civil war, the Afghanistan Information Centre (Afghanic e.V.) was founded in Germany by a group of Germans and Afghans. Afghanic e.V. provides cultural advice and German language services to the Afghan diaspora, in order to help refugees to integrate into German society. Since 1995, the organisation has been instrumental in raising awareness of Afghanistan through its annual “Hamburg Afghanistan Week” event, as well as distributing information to people and institutions with an interest in Afghanistan. Afghanic e.V. promotes scientific and cultural relations between Afghanistan and Germany through its targeted programs to reduce poverty, enhance educational excellence and healthcare projects in Afghanistan. It is believed to be one of the most well-known Afghan associations in Germany.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Afghanic e.V. has an Afghan and a German board of directors. Dr. Yahya Wardak and Dr. Jürgen Kanne are chairpersons. Maria Hosein-Habibi, teacher and artist by profession, is an active member of the association. The organisation has a scientific advisory board and many partners and supporters in both Afghanistan and Germany, including: German Society for International Cooperation (Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit – GIZ), International Center for Migration and Development (Centrum für internationale Migration und Entwicklung – CIM), German Academic Exchange Service (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst – DAAD) and German Aid for Afghan Children (Kinderhilfe Afghanistan e.V.). The association also has a partnership with the Afghan Ministry of Higher Education, as well as with Kabul, Khost, Nangarhar and Balkh universities.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Website: www.afghanic.de
Email: info@afghanic.de

PROJECTS

Afghanic e.V. has been engaged in a number of development projects in Afghanistan over the past years.



Dewan Begi Clinic: Dewan Begi is located in Company, an area of Kabul's District 5. Afghanic e.V. and the International Centre for Migration and Development (CIM) jointly sponsored the construction of the Dewan Begi OPD (Out Patient Department) Clinic in early 2016, in order to provide quality healthcare services – particularly to women, children and the elderly.

The clinic provides an extensive range of services, including internal medicine, paediatrics, gynaecology, orthopaedics, psychological counselling, stomatology and ultrasonography. The facility also houses a medical laboratory and an emergency department. Dr. Abdul Waris Safi is the head of internal medicine, Dr. Shakira Baz Obaidi is the clinic's gynaecologist and Dr. Zulal Ahmad is an orthopaedic doctor.

Around fifty patients visit the clinic daily, 80% of whom are women seeking advice and assistance with gynaecological issues, childbirth, nutrition, family planning and immunisation.

Afghan and German doctors carry out “on the job training” to build the capacity of medical staff and help them with filing and medical records. Patients are charged a small fee to cover local staff salaries and other running costs. Dewan Begi covers 60-70% of its expenses through these fees and, according to Dr Wardak, the clinic aims to be completely independent in the near future.

Textbooks: Many public universities in Afghanistan have no specialised literature in either of the two national languages, Pashto and Dari. Frequently the only “literature” accessible to students are notes dictated by instructors, supplemented by lecture notes hectographed multiple times. The printing of textbooks is an important step towards improving the quality of teaching and learning.

Afghanic e.V. began printing textbooks in 2010 as a pilot project at Nangarhar University. So far 1,000 copies of each of 290 books have been printed, covering the fields of medicine, engineering, psychology, agriculture, economics, education and journalism. One thousand CD copies have also been produced for each title. All these textbooks can be downloaded free.¹⁸

FUNDING

Afghanic e.V. receives financial and professional support from multiple organisations and institutions, including the Federal Republic of Germany, German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), Konrad Adenauer Stiftung, German Aid for Afghan Children, CIM, GIZ, BORDA and Afghanistan-Schulen (Afghanistan schools).

The association is registered as a not-for-profit organisation at the District Court of Bonn, Germany.



German-Afghan Initiative (Deutsch-Afghanische Initiative e.V. – DAI)

“We, the students of Sufian Payin, would like to thank the Afghan-German Association for helping us with two classrooms, a water tank, a guardroom, a courtyard, computer and printer.”

Following the defeat of the Taliban in 2001, a group of Afghans and Germans in the city of Freiburg met to discuss how they could help the suffering people of Afghanistan. Eventually they decided to travel to Afghanistan to assess the situation for themselves. The group of volunteers collected warm clothes and food and, in the winter of 2001, right after the US invasion, they took these items to Herat and central Hazarajat. They remained in Afghanistan until the summer of 2002, providing relief assistance with the technical and financial support of Caritas International. This first-hand experience of life in the war-ravaged country enabled the Freiburg volunteers to understand how they could best help the Afghan people, and in 2002 they founded the German-Afghan Initiative (DAI).

DAI believes that the key to creating a better Afghanistan is to promote education for youth, women and girls. The organisation has built schools and vocational training centres for women and nomads, in addition to organising and conducting emergency relief activities and supplying humanitarian aid to internally-displaced persons and other needy Afghans.

Another of DAI’s initiatives is a sponsorship program for orphans and children of widows. DAI’s support helps these children attend school rather than be forced to work, and thereby to build their futures through education.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

DAI’s motto is “Afghans and Germans help together”. The organisation has a small office in Freiburg and is an excellent example of how Afghans and Germans can work together to carry out development projects. As of 2017, there are two chairpersons, Assina Karim and Pascale Goldenberg, a cashier, secretary and six evaluators, both German and Afghan. DAI is registered with German authorities as an ‘association’. A general assembly is held in autumn every second year to elect

FURTHER INFORMATION

Website: www.deutsch-afghanische-initiative.de

Email: infor@deutsch-afghanische.initiative.de



© DAI

new chairpersons. Farzaneh Farhatiar and Dr. Dietlinde Quack coordinate the project in Gabrail, Herat.

PROJECTS

DAI focusses on education in rural areas, in particular in Parwan, 70km north of Kabul, and in western Herat. The organisation believes that whilst there is great demand for assistance in major cities, sufficient international organisations are already present in these locations. For over fifteen years DAI has been supporting two schools in Parwan – the Laghmani School and the Balaghel Peace School, as well as the Gabrail school in central Herat province.

Laghmani School: In 2004, over 2,000 children moved into their new school – constructed by German Afghan Initiative – on the outskirts of Parwan’s capital, Charikar. Previously, classes were held in tents or sun-shelters in a landmined area demarcated with red warning stones. DAI constructed two school buildings – one for boys, one for girls – each with 16 classrooms and two extra rooms. DAI also constructed a drinking fountain for the pupils. In 2008, another organisation constructed an additional building in order to accommodate more girls.

Shahrak Women’s Centre (SWC)

In 2003, a group of Afghan women who had been teaching girls secretly during the period of hardline Taliban rule, were looking for financial resources to establish a women’s training centre. After meeting some members of DAI in Herat, they decided to establish the

Shahrak Women’s Centre in Gabrail district, northwestern Herat.

As the local community was against women’s participation in educational programs, the centre’s founders began by offering tailoring and literacy classes in order to sensitise the project’s critics to the concept of education for women. As the population of Gabrail grew, DAI expanded its range of subjects, adding English and drawing classes. Traditional embroidery was also taught at the centre. By 2008, five years after the SWC’s establishment, 160 women were attending courses regularly. In 2015, the SWC moved to its own building with eight classrooms, built with the financial support of the German government.

Since 2015, almost 300 women use the centre’s facilities on a regular basis. They participate in literacy and computer classes and learn tailoring, cooking and cosmetic skills. SWC manages to run its entire operation on just 1,000 Euros a month.

FUNDING

Over the years, many schools, organisations, companies and private citizens have contributed to the German Afghan Initiative, via sponsorship and/or donations. In particular, the energetic and committed pupils, parents, teachers and headmaster at the Montessori-Centre Angell Freiburg provided generous support for the construction of the Laghmani school. The French NGO’s MISEREOR and AFRANE have also contributed financially to these schools.



Aid for Diabetes Outpatient Clinics in Afghanistan (Hilfe für Diabetes Ambulanz Afghanistan e.V. – HDAA)

“As a child, I wanted to study medicine and serve Afghanistan. I became a doctor but could not serve my people. Since I have been in Germany and have access to some resources, I decided to help the country of my birth through this association, which I established in 2008.”

Dr. Zarmina Zarman –
chairperson – HDAA

“The number of children with diabetes is increasing daily in Afghanistan. We find it difficult to treat all children who suffer from the disease as we don’t receive as many donations in Germany as we used to.”

Dr. Zarmina Zarman

FURTHER INFORMATION

Website: www.hdaa.de

Email: tereza.plaz@t-online.de

Diabetes¹⁹ is a rising global health problem affecting people of all ages. Cases of the disease are also increasing in Afghanistan, particularly amongst children. The ongoing conflict, along with extreme levels of poverty, has led to a situation in which the majority of the Afghan population has little or no access to basic health services.

The Afghan diaspora association, Aid for Diabetes Outpatient Clinics, Afghanistan (HDAA), was first established in 2008, in Wetterau, Germany. In September 2010, HDAA began a partnership with the Indira Gandhi Children’s Hospital in Kabul. The association aims to support and treat children and adolescents with diabetes, using both local resources and knowledge and experience from Germany. Most patients in Afghanistan suffer from type 1 diabetes, while type 2 is more common in countries such as the US and Germany where over-nutrition is widespread.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Dr. Zarmina Zarman is HDAA’s founder and chief executive officer. Dr. Bernt Kampmann is joint director.

PROJECTS

HDAA’s partner, the Indira Gandhi Children’s Hospital in Kabul, is Afghanistan’s only diabetes centre for children. The facility treats 260 children on a regular basis. According to Zarmina Zarman, most children with diabetes are under 18. Families typically realise their children have the condition when they are around seven years old.

As part of its program, HDAA invites medical staff from Afghanistan to visit German hospitals. During the summer of 2019, HDAA sponsored a doctor from the Indira Gandhi Children’s Hospital to undertake three months of specialist training in the treatment of childhood diabetes in Bad Nauheim, Germany. On completion of their training, doctors return to Afghanistan to share their knowledge and experience. In previous



© HDAA

years, the organisation also brought diabetic children to Germany for treatment, however this program has been discontinued due to a lack of funding.

FUNDING

HDAA supports its projects through donations from private individuals and the diabetes centre in Bad Neuheim, Germany. Dr Zarman and other members work on a voluntary basis.

4.4. The Netherlands



“I became a medical doctor in the Netherlands as a result of the support, love and passion my mother instilled in me. She was unable to attend school, as her family did not allow it. My passion to support the education of girls in Afghanistan brought me to the Ariana Foundation.”

Dr. Fereshta Wahedi – Chairwoman of Ariana Foundation

The Ariana Foundation is a non-profit association, established in 2003 by two Afghan and four Dutch women, with the aim of promoting solidarity between the Dutch, the Afghan diaspora in the Netherlands and Afghans living in Afghanistan. The foundation focuses on helping to build a well-educated female middle class in Afghanistan, able to contribute to the reconstruction of the country.

The Ariana Foundation provides opportunities for Afghan girls to gain an education, thereby enabling them to join the labour force. Afghan women can then be empowered through their financial and social independence.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Ariana Foundation’s three board members meet every three months. Dr Fereshta Wahedi - who fled Afghanistan with her family as political refugees in 1998 and eventually became a medical doctor - has held the position of chairperson since 2015. Halia Riaz from Pakistan is the foundation’s treasurer, and Mohammad Asghari, from the Afghan diaspora in the Netherlands, is secretary. The board receives administrative and logistical support from three volunteers. None of the board members receives remuneration for their work.

PROJECT

Study grants: With the help of its local partner in Kabul - the ‘Empowerment Centre for Women’ (ECW) - the Ariana Foundation recruits 40-50 underprivileged girls between the ages of 18-24 annually. The girls are provided with study grants to cover the costs of high school or university education: 35 Euros monthly for university students and 25 Euros per month for high school students. One board member travels to Afghanistan each year to interview the newly recruited girls and monitor their progress. The ECW confirms the ages and eligibility of each grant recipient. Girls are required to pass all exams each academic year in order to keep their schol-

FURTHER INFORMATION

Website: www.stichtingariana.nl/
 Facebook: www.facebook.com/ArianaStichting/
 Email: stichtingariana@gmail.com

arship. Should they fail, they are replaced by other girls on the wait list.

Ms. Wahedi says the scholarship program will begin to focus more on school students, as currently around 30% of university students get married and are forced to discontinue their education.

FUNDING

More than 90% of the association's funding comes from private donors and philanthropists who contribute on a monthly or annual basis. Ariana Foundation receives no government funding. The chairperson also raises money through public speaking at schools, media houses and other institutions, where she recruits individual sponsors.



© K Ariana Foundation



Keihan Foundation

“I’m grateful to the Keihan Foundation and its partners for organising this project and inviting me to the Netherlands. This project is essential for the development of the medical curriculum at the Kabul University of Medical Science. I hope to see PhD and Masters programs offered to Afghan students and young professionals in the future.”

Dr. Zalmai – Afghan doctor and recipient of exchange program at the Department of Anatomy and Embryology of the Leiden University of Medical Science

“Connecting with Afghan people is the source of my inspiration to work for Keihan Foundation. I have always helped people in my area with small things, but these small things mean a lot to someone else and that gives me pleasure.” Rahat Muslem – President of Keihan Foundation.

Rahat Mulsem – Keihan Foundation

FURTHER INFORMATION

Website: www.keihan.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/keihanfoundation/?__tn__=%2Cd%2CP-R&eid=ARCIkYz-KgWIZ_h_rfi-GsS9BmOrGYn-m81aomrfGkGE-pErPUcNbZlqUq5XisTWP_8vG2YoZjLzwRLsad

Email: info@keihan.org

In 2005, a group of young Afghan students in the Netherlands came together to establish the Keihan Foundation. The association’s activities are focused on three areas: integration, education and development cooperation. Foundation members assist Afghans in the Netherlands to integrate into their host society by organising events to help them learn about Dutch culture and improve their Dutch language skills.

The foundation has also implemented several successful joint development projects. A core area of Dutch-Afghan cooperation is the facilitation of knowledge transfer via exchange programs for doctors and medical staff, along with the creation of partnerships between medical universities and hospitals in Afghanistan and the Netherlands. The foundation has grown over time and is now one of the biggest and most active Afghan organisations in the Netherlands.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The foundation’s board members are volunteers, one of whom is involved in coordinating activities. Two employees are paid for their work in the organisation’s Netherlands office. Dr. Rahat Muslem is president.

PROJECTS

The Keihan Foundation is primarily involved in medical development assistance in Afghanistan through the following programs: Academic Exchange Medicine (AEM), Anatomy Teaching Innovation Program, and the Clinical Skills Training Program. Other projects include the provision of medical supplies, building libraries, providing drinking water and offering legal support.

Academic Exchange Medicine (AEM): In cooperation with Leiden University, the Keihan Foundation arranges for medical students from Afghanistan to attend a three-month study program at the Leiden University Medical Centre (LUMC), after which students transfer their new found knowledge and experience to Afghan-

istan. Three medical students from Afghanistan took part in the inaugural Academic Exchange Medicine program in September 2017. Currently, up to seven Kabul Medical University students annually benefit from the program. The selection process is rigorous and applicants are also required to pass the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) exam.

In another of the foundation's exchange projects, gynaecology professors and physicians from the Netherlands visit academic hospitals in Kabul to teach young doctors and medical staff. Afghan physicians also travel to the Netherlands to learn from the Dutch healthcare system and improve their medical knowledge through access to the most recent developments in contemporary medicine.

Anatomy Teaching Innovation Program: In 2009, the Kabul University of Medical Science (KUMS) approached the Keihan Foundation to request support

for its anatomical dissection program. The Anatomy Teaching Innovation Program initiative was successfully launched in 2013, in collaboration with Leiden University Medical Centre and the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The re-introduction of anatomical dissection classes has made a great improvement to the anatomy curriculum at KUMS and is an important milestone in cooperation in higher education between Afghanistan and the Netherlands.

FUNDING

The Keihan Foundation's main partners are the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Leiden University Medical Centre, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), Cordaid (a Dutch organisation), the Kabul University of Medical Science (KUMS). Several Afghan diaspora organisations in the Netherlands also cooperate with the foundation.



© Keihan Foundation (2)





Medical Committee Afghanistan – Netherlands (MCAN)

“Most of us have obtained our medical/ pharmaceutical degrees in The Netherlands and are currently working in our fields. We had wonderful study programs and still have access to several facilities while we are in the process of becoming capable physician/ medical specialists. We believe that in the 21st century, every country should have access to the most recent research and developments, especially in healthcare. Having our roots in Afghanistan, MCAN is our humble endeavour to contribute to the rebuilding of the Afghan healthcare system.”

MCAN Team

“We at MCAN share an intrinsic drive to help Afghanistan. It is self-evident to us that we must use our contacts and share our skills and knowledge to provide assistance to our fellow Afghan healthcare professionals.”

MCAN Team

FURTHER INFORMATION

Website: www.mcan.nu

Facebook: www.facebook.com/Medical-Committee-Afghanistan-Netherlands-1412381482345806/

Email: info@mcan.nu

In 2014, a group of young medical professionals from the Afghan diaspora community in the Netherlands founded the Medical Committee Afghanistan – Netherlands (MCAN), with the objective of ‘sharing knowledge, building networks and collaborating to become stronger’. Committee members volunteer their services to contribute to the reconstruction of Afghanistan’s healthcare system. Based in Utrecht, MCAN aims to engage Dutch medical professionals, academics and financial organisations interested in Afghanistan.

MCAN strives to engage exclusively in quality, effective, efficient and demand-driven projects. Transparency in project financing is also crucial. The organisation only begins a project when members are convinced there is a real chance of success and ongoing sustainability.

MCAN’s development projects must also result in the advancement of medical knowledge and improvement to the healthcare system, regardless of the financial, social or religious status of the beneficiaries. Consultation with local partners in Afghanistan is essential. Information about specific projects is communicated to donors and interested parties via the organisation’s website and social media platforms.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

MCAN is a volunteer organisation consisting of medical doctors and academics living in the Netherlands. The chairman is Razma Paykardjoe, Hogae Oriakheil is deputy chairperson, Zubair Roshanmal holds the position of secretary and Seyed Qaderi is treasurer, alongside eight other volunteers.

PROJECTS

MCAN currently has two projects in Afghanistan: Up-ToDate and e-Surgery. It also runs projects in the Netherlands, which aim to increase awareness and discuss health issues among migrant communities.

UpToDate: MCAN plans to establish an “UpToDate” resource centre at the Kabul Medical University to support medical students and doctors in their diagnostic decisions. UpToDate is an online point-of-care medical resource used by more than 1,7 million clinicians worldwide.²⁰ More than 11,600 subjects across 25 specialties are continually updated and reviewed by experts. Along with playing an important role in medical education, the software can help to reduce diagnostic errors and improves patient care.

“The data suggests the use of computerised tools such as UpToDate enable better decisions, better outcomes and better care.”

Ashish Jha, M.D., M.P.H., Harvard University

E-Surgery: Surgery is a life-saving specialist field requiring extensive training in order to acquire the necessary skills to perform operations. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), surgery is often the only treatment option that can reduce the risk of fatalities from common conditions, and its impact on the public health system will continue to grow in the years to come.

MCAN began its “e-surgery” project with the support of INCISION Academy²¹, to raise the level of surgical

skills in Afghanistan and thereby improve the country’s healthcare system. The pilot e-surgery project began in 2018 at three hospitals in Kabul: the Kabul Medical University, Ali Abad Teaching Hospital and Sardar Daud Khan Military Hospital.

General surgeons, orthopaedic surgeons, urologists, gynaecologists and ENT (ear, nose and throat) doctors at these hospitals were given access to INCISION’s database. MCAN distributed a questionnaire to participants every three months in order to evaluate the project’s effectiveness. The project received positive feedback and MCAN now aims to expand the database to more hospitals and medical workers across Afghanistan.

MCAN has organised sessions for elderly Afghans in the Netherlands to provide information about the Dutch healthcare system and discuss important and controversial issues such as palliative care and organ transplantation.

FUNDING

MCAN is a Public Benefit Organisation with ANBI charity status. Funding mainly comes from inter-governmental organisations such as the IOM, as well as donations from private citizens, hospitals and various institutions.

4.5. The United Kingdom



Afghan Action

"I would like to remain the person whose transactions only focuses on giving beauty to her surroundings and as the citizen of the universe I utilize each and every day in doing something good."

Zainab Homam, Afghan Action CEO

Afghan Action is one of many Afghan diaspora charity organisations in the UK. The organisation was established in 2005 to help young men and women in Afghanistan through targeted projects to develop 'good jobs, sustainable businesses and a fair market'. AA's UK office raises funds to support training programs, which enable beneficiaries to learn income-generating skills and thereby reduce poverty and promote peace and stability. Skills taught include carpet weaving, tailoring and cloth making, and AA strives to find markets for the finished products in the UK. AA has 'trained, educated and employed' more than 800 Afghans from impoverished backgrounds through its Kabul Training and Business Incubation Centres, as well as a growing network of partners across Afghanistan.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Afghan Action has a team of five persons including Ms. Zainab Homann as chief executive officer. Ms Homam has years of experience working for charity organisations in the UK. The UK team monitors the success of various projects and compiles reports for major sponsors.

PROJECTS

Carpet weaving project: Afghan Action's main goal is to assist young Afghan men and women acquire skills which will enable them to set up businesses and secure their own futures. The carpet weaving project trained participants in techniques to produce carpets in modern, traditional and mixed designs. Training took place in AA's Training and Business Incubation Centre in Kabul's Kart-e Se district. Wool were brought from sheep in Ghazni, in central Afghanistan, and natural dyes were used. A large array of rugs were produced, including lounge and bedroom rugs, runners for halls, table top and wall-hung rugs, with sizes ranging from less than one square metre up to twelve square metres.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Website: www.afghanaction.org

Email: admin@afghanaction.org



Sewing and cloth making: Young women and widows are particularly vulnerable to unemployment and poverty. AA began its cloth-making project in 2011 in order to provide impoverished young women with a means to support themselves and their families. The project initially aimed to train 46 women between the ages of 18 to 25 in cloth-making and tailoring over a two-year period. The first group comprised three professional masters and twelve women. In 2013 and 2014, additional trainees were recruited and trained to produce clothing for the Afghan market. Between the launch of

the program and its official end in the autumn of 2014, fifty-two Afghan women received training.

FUNDING

Donations, raising funds to support sister organisations and assist through micro-financing new enterprises. AA develops markets for Afghan products in the UK by selling Afghan carpets. The organisation also attracted funding for its cloth-making project from the Cloth-workers' Foundation, the Linda Norgrove Foundation and ASHRAM International.



Arian Teleheal – International Telemedicine Charity

“When I became a doctor in 2010, I knew that I had to fulfil my dreams. I kept returning to Afghanistan and I also saw that many people wanted to come and help but could not. That is when I realised that we had to find a way to connect healthcare systems in war-torn countries with world-class healthcare systems in developed countries. Eventually I found a solution; Arian TeleHeal – International Telemedicine Charity.”

Dr. Waheed Arian –
founder and chairperson – Arian Teleheal

Dr. Waheed Arian arrived in the United Kingdom in the 1990s as a 15 year old refugee, with no formal education, no family or financial support and little English. But he had a big dream. He wanted to become a doctor and help people, not only in Afghanistan, but also around the world. He studied at Cambridge University and later received additional qualifications from Harvard University and the Imperial School.

Dr. Arian was born in 1983 during the Soviet occupation of Afghanistan. He survived daily rocket attacks and bombings as Mujahidin soldiers fought the then Soviet-backed communist government. Along with millions of other Afghans, Dr Arian’s family fled to a refugee camp in Pakistan. He and ten family members shared a single room, where Waheed suffered from tuberculosis, malaria and other infectious diseases. These experiences of extreme hardship inspired young Waheed to study medicine, so he could help people in need.

Dr. Arian completed his medical studies in 2010. He traveled to Afghanistan during his annual leave to fulfil his dream of helping his own people. Like Dr. Arian, other medical professionals also wanted to help, however without the risk of traveling to a war zone. This inspired Dr. Arian to set up Arian Teleheal, an innovative project which utilises everyday smartphone technology such as instant messaging and video chat to enable doctors in war zones and developing countries to consult expert clinicians around the world. The project was set up in 2014 and has already been responsible for saving dozens of lives.

Dr. Arian has received widespread international recognition for his outstanding achievements, including: the Rotary International Peace Award (2008), the UN Global Hero Award (2017) and the UK Prime Minister’s Points of Light Award (2018).

FURTHER INFORMATION

Website: www.arianteleheal.com

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Arian Teleheal is a UK-registered charity organisation with around 100 volunteer doctors and specialists

based in the UK, the USA, Canada and Western Europe, who support local doctors in Afghanistan, Syria and other countries in need.

PROJECTS

“The doctors assist us in the diagnoses of cases we are unable to determine due to the lack of proper equipment. They help us selflessly.”

Trauma doctor in Afghanistan.

The primary goal of Arian Teleheal is to create networks of healthcare professionals across the globe and bring them together through the use of technology. Dr. Arian and his team of volunteers use internet-based communication tools such as Skype to advise and educate medics in various hospitals on how to deal with trauma, emergency and other cases.

“Local doctors who want advice from specialists can contact our case management team 24/7 via instant messaging or video chat. Their patient’s case is then

allocated to an appropriate specialist, who will review it and then discuss it or reply by instant messaging or video chat. The local doctor then considers this advice to help them treat their patient.”

Doctors in five Kabul hospitals took part in Arian Teleheal’s pilot project in 2015-16. All participants reported that the quality of health services improved, “dozens of lives were saved” and Arian Teleheal was “hugely supportive and educational”.

“The quality of health services have improved. Arian TeleHeal doctors respond very quickly and most patient problems are able to be solved.”

Dr. Momosai Zewar, Deputy Minister of Health, Afghanistan, Head of Emergency and Intensive Care Services, Afghanistan

FUNDING

Arian Teleheal receives no government funding.



Farkhunda Trust (FT)

“My story is not unique. Women and girls across Afghanistan would love to pursue their dreams of education, but mostly we cannot due to poverty and lack of opportunities and/or support for women.”

Hamida Ahmad Wardak, 24 – Farkhunda Trust award recipient from Wardak province, studying economics

Afghan women’s rights activist Rahela Sidiqi founded the Farkhunda Trust – in memory of the brutally murdered Farkhunda Malikzadeh – in order to support Afghan women who wish to pursue higher education. In March 2015, 27-year old Farkhunda Malikzadeh had just completed a degree in religious studies and was working as a volunteer teacher at a Kabul mosque. During an argument with a mullah, he accused her of burning a copy of the Qur’an. On hearing the mullah’s accusation, an angry mob began to attack Farkhunda. She was beaten, her body driven over and set on fire while bystanders, including police, watched on. Graphic footage of her burning body went viral on social media, shocking Afghan society, the government, and women’s activists around the world. The anger over Farkhunda’s lynching quickly turned to grief and national shame for Afghanistan and for the government’s failure to prevent this horrific incident.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The Farkhunda Trust is registered as a charitable entity in the UK. Rahela Sidiqi is the founding director. The board, comprising Ms. Sidiqi and an executive committee, makes all major decisions regarding strategy, policies, operational activities and finance at biannual meetings. At the organisation’s annual general meeting, topics affecting scholars are discussed, along with the challenges faced by women in Afghanistan in their quest to gain a higher education. In the past two and half years, volunteers in the UK and Afghanistan have worked in the areas of fundraising, finance management, communications and strategic advice as well as coaching and mentoring. FT employs two coordinators in Kabul whose salaries are paid by the trust’s institutional partners, the Gawharshad Institute of Higher Education and Dunya University. Benawa University, in southern Kandahar province, is also a local partner.

FURTHER INFORMATION

Website: www.farkhundatruster.org

Email: info@farkhundatruster.org

PROJECTS

The Farkhunda Trust provides scholarships to women from disadvantaged backgrounds, enabling them to pursue higher education at either private or public universities in Afghanistan. The trust also offers mentoring programs to female students in Kabul, western Herat and more recently in southern Kandahar provinces. FT aims to raise the profile of women in Afghan society by assisting female students to become socially and financially independent, as well to become entrepreneurs and political leaders. Higher education enables women from poverty-stricken backgrounds to become active and engaged in the development of a new Afghanistan. It also helps them to fight systemic discrimination within Afghan society and to create a safe space for their personal and professional development.

Scholarships: FT has signed Memorandums of Agreement with several universities in Afghanistan: Benawa University in Kandahar, Kabul University, Gawharshad Institute of Higher Education and Dunya University. Since its foundation, the trust has provided scholarships to nineteen women from underdeveloped provinces, including central Bamiyan, Ghazni, Ghor, Kapisa and western Herat. Scholarship recipients are trained in leadership skills, communication, management and building professional networks.

Each scholarship is valued at around 1600 Euros annually, which covers university fees, coaching, mentoring, transport, administration and other expenses. Students either apply to one of the universities online, or submit hard copy applications in Pashto, Dari or English. A committee comprising representatives from the relevant university, FT, and a minimum of two independent members of either academic and/or civil society institutions determine the most deserving candidates via a robust selection process. The number of scholarships is dependent on the amount of funds raised by FT each year.

“My ambition is to empower women and to help them develop their confidence and talents by creating opportunities for women and girls to excel in education, employment and society. I dream of establishing schools in remote areas of Afghanistan, so that women and girls there can also enjoy their basic human rights and enjoy life.”

Marzia Mutamed, 20, a scholarship awardee from Central Bamiyan province



© Afghan Women Network (AWN)



© Farkhunda Trust (2)



FUNDING

FT funds the scholarship program with community donations and small grants. The association also raises money through selling products made by trainees, such as carpets.



VIDC director Sybille Straubinger is opening the conference

5. NETWORKING CONFERENCE KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER AND SUPPORT: THE ROLE OF AFGHAN DIASPORA IN EUROPE

2-3 December 2019

The first European conference of Afghan diaspora organisations in Austria – organised by the Vienna Institute for International Dialogue and Cooperation (VIDC) as part of its Migration and Development dialogue – was held in Vienna on 2-3 December, 2019. The event provided a unique opportunity for Afghan diaspora organisations from Austria, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands and the UK to share best practices and propose recommendations on ways to positively engage in the development of their ‘homeland’. Afghan diaspora representatives from the Czech Republic, Hungary and Sweden also participated, as well as representatives from the diaspora’s local partners in Afghanistan – the Kawun Institute of Higher Education in northern Mazar-e Sharif and the Afghanistan Development and Peace Research Organisation (ADPRO) in Kabul, and the Pakistani NGO, FACES. Additionally, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the UN Refugee

Agency (UNHCR), the Danish Refugee Council, the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) and various Austrian NGOs, including asylkoordination Österreich, Caritas Austria and Südwind sent delegates to the conference.

The conference was held in two parts. On the first day there was a public discussion at the University of Vienna. On the second day, participants tackled the challenges of diaspora engagement both in the host countries and countries of origin in four workshops. We present a summary of the challenges and recommendations discussed at these workshops here. Raheela Sidiqi from the Farkhunda Trust for Afghan Women’s Education in London has also added comments. Originally she had planned to attend the conference, however Austrian authorities refused to allow her to enter Austria with her British refugee passport without a visa.



Razma Paykardjoe from MCAN (Netherlands) at the opening event at the University of Vienna



Zainab Homam (Afghan Action, UK) is reporting back from workshop 1

CHALLENGES AND RECOMMENDATIONS FORMULATED DURING THE CONFERENCE

WORKSHOP 1: FUNDING MODELS FOR DIASPORA ENGAGEMENT

The workshop on funding models discussed challenges faced by diaspora organisations in finding financial resources for their projects. Workshop participants outlined the ways they keep their projects alive. All agreed that funding models depend on the project type, the level of funding required and the duration for which the funding is necessary. Workshop participants identified government and other public funding agencies as the most important sources. Obtaining financial support from public funding agencies, however, is not straightforward, due to complex administrative and bureaucratic procedures.

CHALLENGES

No clear policy on diaspora: In many European countries, donor agencies have no defined mechanism for funding diaspora organisations. The Afghan government has no system in place to attract and support humanitarian and economic contributions from the diaspora.

Lack of communication: There is insufficient engagement between diaspora organisations and donor agencies such as the Austrian Development Agency (ADA) or the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). Diaspora associations need to develop better communication strategies. In some countries large donors use contractors, but this makes the application process more time-consuming.

Lack of lobby groups: There are no effective lobby groups to promote the development of Afghanistan at different international levels.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Partnership: Diaspora associations should partner with bigger and more experienced organisations to help them learn how to raise funds, as well as to develop higher quality and more sustainable projects. Local partnerships in Afghanistan are also crucial to the implementation of projects.

Applying for funds at EU level: Diaspora organisations should search for funding opportunities at a European level. Co-financing between national and EU-level funding is another option.

Training: Afghan diaspora organisations need training and support from partner organisations in order



Workshop 1 discussion



Rahat Muslem (Keihan Foundation, Netherlands) and Mingo Haiduk (Danish Refugee Council)



Andreas Zingg (Caritas), Shokat Ali Walizadeh (NEUER START) and Jamal Mataan (Somali community in Austria)

WORKSHOP 2: PROJECT-RELATED CHALLENGES IN THE CONTEXT OF EDUCATION, VOCATIONAL TRAINING AND HEALTH

This workshop focused on the importance of education, vocational training and health-related projects, along with the challenges hindering cooperation in these areas. Key issues discussed included the provision of post-return support, financial and material aid, building capacity, vocational training and providing assistance to the Afghan healthcare system.

CHALLENGES

Corruption: The greatest obstacle to the successful implementation of diaspora organisation projects is systemic corruption within the Afghan government. Millions of dollars of aid money have been embezzled in all sectors, including education. Many non-governmental organisations have also failed to be transparent about how aid money was/is spent.

Security: Diaspora associations in Europe face significant administrative and security challenges in Afghanistan. The security situation in Afghanistan is not under control. Regardless of whether assistance comes from members of the diaspora or international/national NGOs, the important thing is how work is mapped out so selected partners can best reach those in need.

Lack of cooperation: Local government and community leaders sometimes negatively impact the im-

to acquire the skills and expertise required to obtain funding. Rahela Sediqi from the Farkhunda Trust recommended training programs where diaspora organisations can learn about Afghan market opportunities in their home countries.

Transparency: Diaspora organisations should promote and apply transparency in funding in order to build up good reputations. It is also important to focus on donations in kind as well as money.

Flexibility: There is no single approach to meet every situation, but responses should be flexible and take the social, political and security situation into account.



Workshop 2



Shugufa Kakar from Aria Students, Netherlands, at the opening panel

plementation of projects by intervening or delaying the projects. EU embassies in Kabul do not issue visas for Afghan partners to visit the EU for project-related programs, nor do Afghan embassies in Europe cooperate with diaspora communities. Workshop participants sense a lack of willingness on behalf of authorities in both Afghanistan and host countries to communicate and cooperate.

Projects in cities: International aid organisations mainly focus on capital and major cities, while rural regions remain in urgent need of development projects. Connections in Kabul should be utilised to coordinate with local community representatives and students.

Division among diaspora: The Afghan diaspora in Europe is divided ethnically, linguistically, as well as by political affiliation. Groups remain disconnected and do not collaborate with each other.

Competency: Nearly all diaspora association members work on voluntary basis. Many lack specialised and experienced team members to execute projects. The discussants proposed training programs for targeted projects.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Transnational network: In order to be more successful and efficient, NGOs from Afghan diaspora communities should build a support network at the EU level. This will enable them to strengthen relationships with both foreign organisations and organisations in Afghanistan. Increased collaboration and coordination will result in a greater impact.

Capacity building: NGOs and civil society groups from Afghanistan's diaspora community should pay particular attention to developing the capacities of their members in crucial skills such as management and communication. Rahela Sidiqi from the Farkhunda Trust proposes that work exchange visits to other countries will help Afghan diaspora organisations to build their capacity.

Integration: Afghan diaspora organisations should develop programs to work with Afghan refugees in Europe. Many refugees need assistance in the areas of education, work, health and language acquisition. Although host countries offer a range of projects, language barriers and cultural differences often affect their effectiveness. More cooperation is required in order to accelerate the integration process in host countries.

Raising awareness: Awareness-raising programs on a range of issues are urgently needed in Afghanistan. NGOs and diaspora organisations should organise audio, video, print and social media campaigns on issues such as family planning and condom use; "fewer children, better life", for example.

Designing long-term projects: The establishment of long-term projects is vital, as cash payments and short-term assistance generally has a limited and temporary impact. Extensive consultation with locals in target areas is essential in order to design projects to their specific needs.



Sara Soltani (Austrian Development Agency) at the opening panel



Emal Haidary (ADPRO, Afghanistan)

WORKSHOP 3: (SELF-) EMPOWERMENT OF AFGHAN WOMEN

In 2018, the Thomas Reuters Foundation ranked Afghanistan as the world's second most dangerous country for women after India. Despite the Afghan government and its international supporters' pledges to eliminate all forms of violence against women over the past two decades, Afghan women remain subject to gender-based violence and systemic discrimination. The lack of access to healthcare and education, along with discriminatory cultural practices, add to the difficulties faced by women in Afghanistan. Workshop participants discussed the achievability of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) of allowing women to live freely, safely and with equal participation in political, economic and social life, taking into account the problems faced by Afghan women at all levels.

CHALLENGES

Lack of support: There is no support for the core functions of Afghan female diaspora organisations in terms of program management, finance or publicity. Host countries do not acknowledge or support the humanitarian and economic contribution of female Afghan diaspora organisations.

Afghanistan embassies in Europe lack expertise: Afghan embassies in Europe lack development expertise and knowledge to engage female diaspora organisa-

tions. "Only lip service support is paid to Afghan women's diaspora organisations."

RECOMMENDATIONS

Economic empowerment: According to diaspora activist Setara Hassan, "Afghan women are domestic slaves and prisoners in their homes both inside and outside Afghanistan. Many decisions are imposed upon them and they have no choice but to accept it. It is because women are financially weak."

Working group members discussed the importance of dividing household responsibilities, including the economic burden. Women's economic empowerment through the acquisition of skills and education enables them to participate fully and equally both at home and in the community. This will enable them to participate in decision-making processes and ensure their basic rights. When women have an income, this changes the power dynamic between husband and wife.

SDG 2030: Gender equality and gender equity must be integrated at all policy levels and there must be a rights-based approach to the implementation of the action plan. "Gender equality means that the rights, responsibilities and opportunities of men and women is not dependent on whether they were born male or female. Gender equity means fairness of treatment for men and women according to their respective needs."

Multi-layered approach: Women's empowerment is not only a matter of bringing changes to economic sphere, rather it requires a multi-layered approach. Donor countries and policy makers must focus simulta-



Workshop 3

neously on various aspects of empowerment, including education, and capacity building, in addition to economic empowerment. Men must also be educated to understand that they are not superior to women and that household work is not only a woman's job. Boys must learn from an early age that women can study and have a career. This is basic human right, regardless of a person's gender.

Transnational collaboration: Afghan women in various European countries have similar problems due to cultural and religious differences. They should therefore create networks in order to learn from each other and find solutions to their common challenges. It would also be beneficial to collaborate with other women's networks and activists in Europe, in order to foster integration as well as to find solutions to overcome discrimination and stereotypes.

Mentoring: Educational support, leadership and mentoring programs should be considered top priorities in the development sector. Promotion of native languages (Pashtu and Dari) should be funded in order to mobilise greater numbers of home-based women, who are highly skilled but often depressed about being unable to use their knowledge and expertise.



Sahar Fetrat (Central European University, Hungary)

WORKSHOP 4: CHALLENGES FOR AFGHAN REFUGEES IN NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES AND EUROPE

The decades-long war in Afghanistan has created millions of refugees around the world, in particular in Pakistan and Iran. Since 2015, numbers of Afghan refugees in Europe have dramatically increased. Workshop participants discussed the situation for Afghan refugees in both Pakistan and Europe, focussing on challenges hindering refugees' integration into their host societies. Participants presented a number of recommendations to the Afghan diaspora in Europe, as well as to supporting NGOs and policy makers, on ways to improve the situation for Afghans in their countries of residence.

CHALLENGES

Afghans refugees in Pakistan: Afghan refugees in Pakistan have faced numerous challenges over the past decades. Once warmly welcomed, Afghans are now viewed as aliens. They have no access to healthcare, education or the labor market. Many Afghan refugees have never attended school. With little or no education and/or training, they are prone to social exclusion and poverty. In recent years, the Pakistani government has pressured refugees to return to Afghanistan: Pakistani security forces frequently raid, arrest and extort money from Afghans. Many of those forcibly returned to Afghanistan found they had no access to social services, accommodation and employment. Some then went



Sebastian Bielowski (IOM)



Workshop 4



Mechid Paiman (Katib Cultural Association, Denmark) speaks at the plenary discussion. In front: Sybille Straubinger (VIDC), Ali Baqeri (Afghan Community, Austria) and Ghousuddin Mir (AKIS, Austria)



Yahya Wardak (Afghanic e.V., Germany)

back to Pakistan, others migrated to Iran, and many made the difficult journey to Europe.

Perception about Europe: Before their arrival in Europe, many Afghan refugees had both very high expectations and minimal, inaccurate knowledge about what life would be like.

Origin of the refugees: Many post-2015 Afghan refugees in Europe were born in either Iran or Pakistan, and had spent their entire lives as refugees. They do not feel connected to Afghan norms and culture, nor feel loyal to Afghanistan.

Racism and discrimination: Refugees who arrived during the 2015/16 influx suffer systemic discrimina-

tion, not only from host societies, but also from existing Afghan communities. This can be due to their ethnic identities, religious affiliations, and particularly if they convert to a religion other than Islam. Afghan migrant community members often feel discriminated against when searching for housing and employment.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): Many recent arrivals struggle with depression, trauma, suicidal feelings and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as a result of their troubled backgrounds, difficult lives as refugees and the long hazardous journey to Europe.

Family reunification: Family reunification laws have changed significantly in recent years, posing a huge



Michael Fanizadeh from VIDC

challenge for Afghan refugee communities throughout Europe. In Austria for example, family reunification is only permitted when applicants can prove they have sufficient income to provide for their families.

Criminalisation: European media and politicians consistently link criminality with Afghan refugees.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Umbrella organisation: Afghan diaspora associations should establish a transnational umbrella organisation at European level to lobby for and support Afghan migrants. This entity must fight against the negativity surrounding Afghan migrant communities and could also lobby for the general interests of Afghanistan. Through this umbrella organisation, the various diaspora associations could transnationalise activities; promote respect and co-existence in host countries.

Integration: Afghan refugees should not be viewed as obstacles to integration, rather they should be seen as an opportunity for diversity and development cooperation. Many young Afghan refugees are highly motivated and have great aspirations to study and contribute to their host societies. Assisting Afghan refugees with language classes to help them integrate faster in their country of residence is crucial.

Engaging in politics: Afghan diaspora members should engage with European political parties and actively fight against discriminatory language. They should also connect with and influence European media to help create a positive image of Afghans. Ms. Sidi-



Rahat Muslem (Keihan Foundation, Netherlands) and Ali Ahmad (Danube University Krems and VIDC)



Seweta Zirk (MCAN, Netherlands), Homa Abass (Afghanischer Frauenverein e.V., Germany/Czech Republic), Elaine Alam (FACES, Pakistan) and Janine Wurzer (WIDE Network, Austria)

qi recommends that diaspora members who already belong to political parties in their host countries should influence policy makers to improve Afghan diaspora engagement and recruitment.

Refugee laws: Host countries should clearly distinguish between criminal law and asylum law. "Criminality has nothing to do with nationality."

Cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan: For the past four decades, Pakistan has hosted the largest number of Afghan refugees of any country in the world. The Afghan government should work more closely with Pakistan on finding ways to provide support to refugees who wish to return voluntarily. Returning out of frustration to a country in a state of war could pose a security risk for Afghanistan.

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- 15 The Hope Journey. Sharing sacred story with schools. <http://thehopejourney.org.uk/> (retrieved 1 September 2019).
- 16 German combat troops made up the third largest contingent of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). More than 1000 German soldiers remain in Afghanistan as part of Resolute Support Mission to train, advise and assist the Afghan security forces.
- 17 Deutsche Entwicklungshilfe für Soziales Wohnungs- und Siedlungswesen e.V.
- 18 eCompus Afghanistan: <http://www.ecampus-afghanistan.org/>
- 19 Diabetes is a chronic disease that occurs either when the pancreas does not produce enough insulin or when the body cannot effectively use the insulin it produces. Insulin is a hormone that regulates blood sugar.
- 20 <https://www.uptodate.com/home>
- 21 INCISION Academy is a web-based surgical database providing theoretical and practical information to its users via a state-of-the-art e-learning tool. The database includes video clips shot from the surgeons' point of view in 2 and 3-D as well as interviews in which specialists share their knowledge, experiences, skills and expertise. The goal is to assist medical professionals prepare for OR and make a global impact on surgical training.



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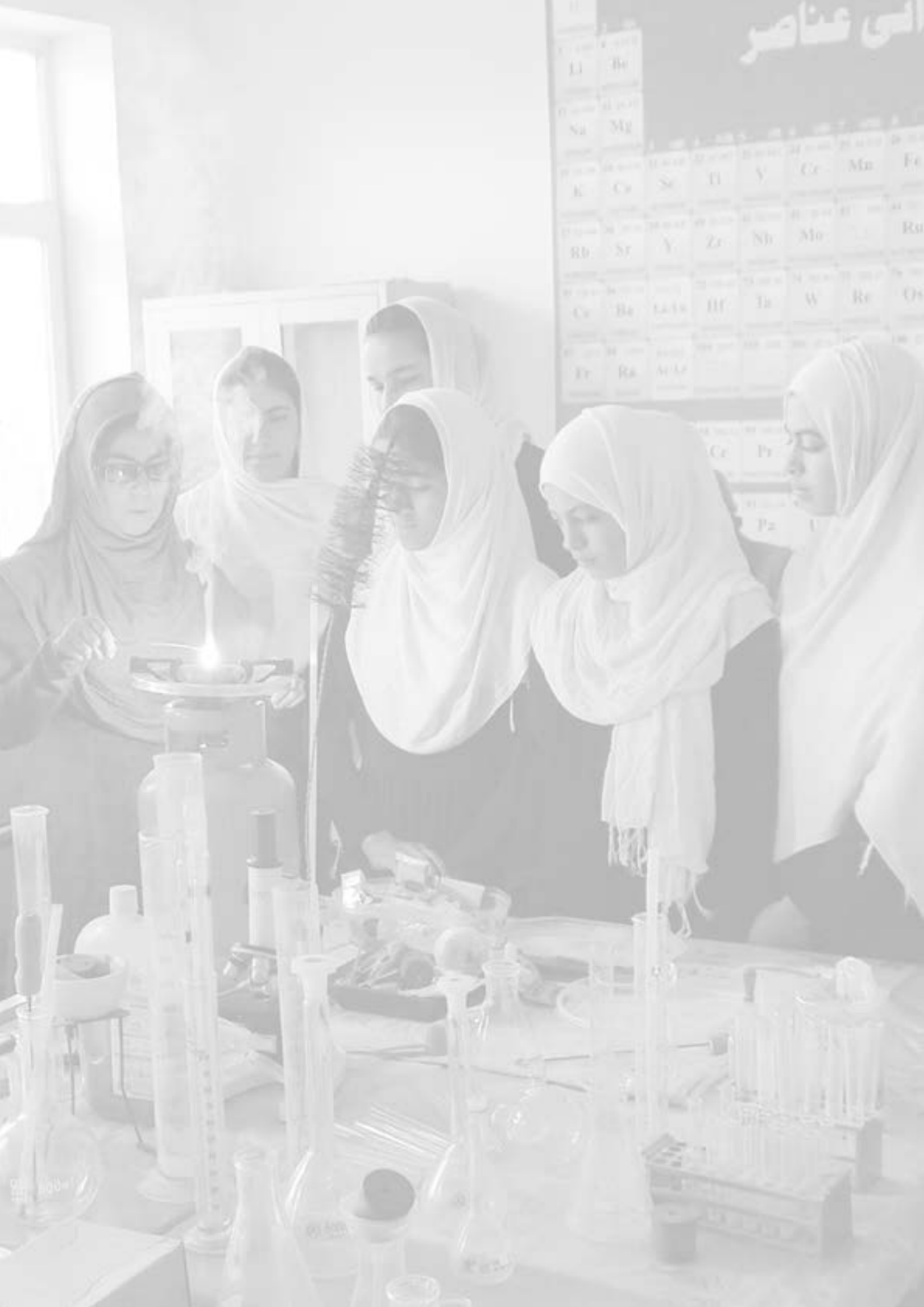
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