

# Voices from Afghanistan

During the last 20 years Afghan women and girls made tremendous educational gains, progress that helped lift people out of poverty, improved maternal and infant mortality rates, and contributed to a flourishing civil society.

Since August 2021 that progress has been reversed by Taliban edicts. But the women and girls of Afghanistan are not prepared to lose their rights without a fight, and have urgent messages for the international community.

**38%**

of students in schools were girls in 2018, up from less than 1% twenty years earlier.

**13%**

of the Afghan population is made up of adolescent girls. Afghanistan has among the youngest populations in the world.

**3.9%**

is the increase in earning capacity from each additional year of schooling that a girl receives

## The education crisis in Afghanistan is part of a wider human rights crisis.

Education is a basic human right protected by Article 26 of the [UN Declaration of Human Rights](#). The theft of this right, together with other forms of oppression currently faced by Afghan women and girls, constitutes the [greatest women's rights crisis](#) on the planet.

While the situation varies from province to province, [more than 1 million girls](#) remain affected by the current ban on secondary education.

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Since the Taliban came, we spend our time in the house doing chores. I don't see friends or classmates, and I don't know what happened to any of them. At the moment we do not have access to even our most basic right to education and employment, we breathe but we do not live until our schools and universities are opened and we are free to go again without fear and without going hungry. We want peace in our streets.

I do not want to stay at home and not work or study. Please do not leave us alone. If you forget us today, our next generations will remain in darkness.

***Please hear our voice.***

**- 19 year old girl from Kabul**



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Even if schools do re-open, I can't continue my studies, because security isn't good. It's not safe for us girls to go outside, we have no access to knowledge. Also, my family's economic situation isn't good, and they don't have money to pay so I can continue my education.

- 16 year old girl  
from Kandahar

## International response must address these dual crises simultaneously; solving one means solving the other.

School closures are only one of the growing number of barriers that girls - and all children - face in realizing their right to education. A deteriorating security situation and deepening economic crisis, with more than half of children malnourished, are compounding the problem.

To solve this dual humanitarian and human rights crisis, provision for education must be embedded as a core feature of humanitarian response, and must target the most vulnerable, particularly women and girls.

Canada has made historical commitments to supporting education in fragile states, including Afghanistan, and especially for girls. Given the current women's rights crisis in Afghanistan and Canada's Feminist Foreign Policy, now is the time to accelerate those commitments.

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They should create such platforms specifically for girls, like online opportunities, scholarships or jobs to help Afghan woman use their education and talent.

- 17 year old girl from Kabul



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We need solidarity from all the people of the world: don't forget Afghan girls. Please raise our voices over every corner of the world.

- 17 year old girl from Balkh

## The time to act is now.

Visit [cw4wafghan.ca/AdvocateNow](https://cw4wafghan.ca/AdvocateNow)