



25
YEARS

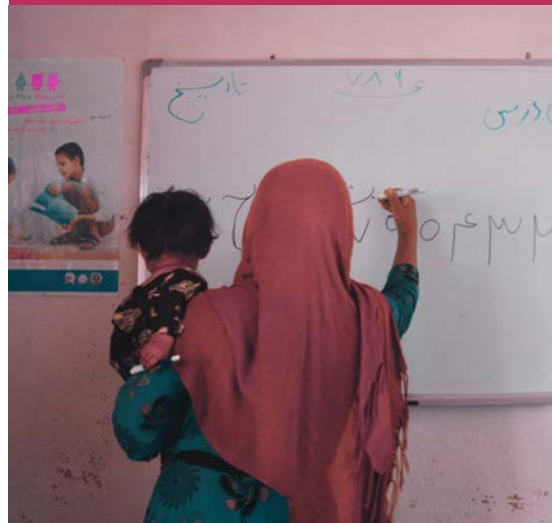
of Impact

 Canadian Women *for*
Women in Afghanistan
Making the Right to Learn a Reality

Annual
Report
2023

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Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan
 PO Box 15007 Aspen Woods, Calgary, AB, T3H 0N8, Canada

Registered Charity #887718203RR0001

NGO in Official Partnership with UNESCO (Consultative Status)

Organization in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 2023

ABOUT US

Canadian Women for Women in Afghanistan (CW4WAfghan) exists to make the **right to learn** a reality.

As a federally registered Canadian charity, we have supported human rights and education opportunities for girls and women in Afghanistan for 25 years by providing access to quality, gender equitable education. We have trained 10,000 teachers, established 300 libraries and science labs, and established a digital library with tens of thousands of downloads each month.

As of August 2021, Afghanistan became the only country in the world where the state bans women and girls from receiving an education.

Working in partnership with Afghan women, CW4WAfghan has adapted programs to offer free virtual courses and programs to connect thousands of Afghan women and girls with quality education. Our advocacy and educational programs transform lives, promote gender equality, and uphold the right to learn.

25
YEARS

of Impact

Taliban Seize Power in Afghanistan & Canadians Take Action **1996**

Breadwinner Books & First Breaking Bread Dinners **2000** – **2002**

Darakht-E Danesh Library Launched & Women's Scholarships **2012** – **2015**

Program Adaptation In Response To Taliban Restrictions **2021**

1998 – Founding of a National Organization & First Chapters
1999

2008 – Kabul Office Opens, New School, & Women's Libraries
2009

2019 – Gender Equity In Teacher Training & Learning Baskets Launches
2020

2022 – DD Classroom, Remote Communication Assistance & Safe Harbour Launch
2023



[Click here to view the 25 Years of Impact Timeline with full details on our website.](#)

EXECUTIVE MESSAGE

From Our Board Chair

As we celebrate 25 years since our founding, I am filled with a sense of pride, gratitude, and hope. Our journey has been marked by the power of unwavering determination and the unrelenting pursuit of a vision. From humble beginnings to a global presence, our organization has adapted, grown, and thrived in the face of adversity, meeting the many challenges posed by the tumultuous events in Afghanistan over the years.

We were founded on a simple yet profound belief: the right to learn. This belief has guided us through the most trying of those challenges, shaping our response to the ever-changing landscape we operate in. Born from an impactful article in 1996, our early founders were moved to action, refusing to sit back and passively watch women and girls in Afghanistan be erased from society. Over two decades later, we have seen this movement grow into an unstoppable force, ever more emboldened by the fresh wave of devastation now facing Afghanistan.

Our history is a testament to the tenacity of this community of supporters, from the early days of advocating for girls' education in refugee camps in Pakistan, to our current multifaceted approach. This community has stood shoulder-to-shoulder with women and girls in Afghanistan, amplifying their voices and empowering their potential, even as they face escalating violence, oppression, and erasure.



Laila Rashid

Over the past quarter-century, we have witnessed moments of triumph and tragedy, but our collective resolve has never wavered. We have adapted to changing circumstances, leveraging our creativity, resourcefulness, and partnerships to drive progress. Today, as we celebrate this milestone, we honor the dedication of our exceptional team, the generosity of our supporters, and the unrelenting spirit of Afghan women and girls who continue to face unimaginable challenges and the brutal suppression of their rights and freedoms.

As we look to the future, we do so with a sense of hope and determination. We will continue to navigate the complexities, steadfast in our pursuit of a brighter future for all, where women and girls in Afghanistan can thrive, learn, and live without fear of persecution. Thank you for standing with us on this journey. Your support, trust, and partnership have made our progress possible.

“ Over the past quarter-century, we have witnessed moments of triumph and tragedy, but our collective resolve has never wavered. We have adapted to changing circumstances, leveraging our creativity, resourcefulness, and partnerships to drive progress.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGE

From Our Senior Director

The past year has been devastating for Afghanistan, especially for girls and women, as their rights have been severely curtailed, and access to education, among other rights, has been even further restricted. These new setbacks threaten Afghanistan's long-term development, while also reiterating the vital importance of CW4WAfghan's work.

Despite unprecedented challenges, we persist in advancing our mission of empowering Afghan women and girls through education, and I am delighted to present to you the highlights of CW4WAfghan's annual report for the year 2023. By leveraging technology and tapping into the remarkable resources available to us — including skilled educators, motivated learners, and digital infrastructure — we continued delivering education programs through our adapted approach. We expanded the Darakht-e-Danesh Classroom and Digital Learning Centers, enabling hundreds of Afghan girls to pursue their education and progress to higher grades. We offered high-quality, relevant courses for adult learners through Darakht-e Danesh Courses and enriched our ever-growing online library to enable Afghan people access to free resource materials.

Furthermore, our commitment to supporting Afghan women and girls extended beyond the virtual classroom. We expanded our Scholarships & Grants program, awarding a record number of Shafia Fund Scholarships to address the growing need for financial assistance. Additionally, the Remote Communications Assistance fund ensured access to essential tools such as computers and internet connectivity, enabling continued virtual learning and teaching to hundreds of learners.

Furthermore, we remained dedicated to providing tangible support to Afghan communities. From delivering Learning Plus Baskets to families in need to implementing programming for displaced school leaders in Pakistan through the KIX project, over and over again our efforts made a meaningful difference on the ground.

“Despite unprecedented challenges, we persist in advancing our mission of empowering Afghan women and girls through education.”



Murwarid Ziayee

Advocacy also remained a cornerstone of our work. Through the Afghanistan Policy Dialogue and Advocacy Program, we amplified the voices of Afghan women, ensuring their perspectives led to tailoring our recommendations to governments and stakeholders. We vigorously opposed the Taliban's regressive measures, including the closure of girls' schools, and lobbied both nationally and globally for their reversal, highlighting the dire consequences of limiting educational opportunities for girls and women.

Our public engagement initiatives provided opportunities for solidarity and action, fostering hope amid challenging circumstances. The contributions of our Public Engagement program and Fund Development team have been instrumental in sustaining and expanding our impact, thanks to the steadfast support of our members and donors.

This year, we were also proud to gain Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and to become a leading partner in the Alliance for Education of Women in Afghanistan (AEWA): an international initiative focused on coordinating opportunities for Afghan women to continue their education.

As we navigate the challenges ahead, we remain determinedly committed to our vital work. This annual report not only recounts our achievements of the past year but also provides insight into our future. I hope this report offers a glimpse into our organization's resilience and determination, inspired by the resilience and determination of the Afghan people.

Thank you for joining us on this journey of compassion, solidarity, and lasting change.

EXECUTIVE MESSAGE

From Our Executive Director

At CW4WAfghan, we have benefitted so much from an internal consensus on the transformative power of education. You could say our community has been filtered in a self-selection process: if you count yourself among our members, supporters, donors, staff or volunteers, it's a pretty safe bet that you recognize the necessity of education for the wellbeing and rights of women and girls and that you see education as the most strategic pathway towards empowerment and equity. But it's worth asking: how do we know when we've achieved that vision of empowerment and equity?

At a time when equitable access to high-quality education for all seems like such a distant reality, this can seem like an esoteric question; but any good map needs its destination clearly marked, no matter how long it may take to reach there.

UNICEF's best estimate is that there are over 21 million children in Afghanistan; around 10.5 million of those children are girls. Using the global rate to calculate the percentage of children who are school-aged, we end up with around 9.3 million girls who should be attending school at the basic education level (up to grade 12). But in 2023, UNESCO estimated that an astonishing 80% of school-aged girls and young women in Afghanistan were out of school.

It's hard to find a measure more telling of the devastating impact of gender apartheid than these figures. Conversely, it will be progress on moving this dial that tells us we are making headway. So when I ask myself, how do we know when we've won, the answer is when every single one of those 9.3 million girls and young women has a school to call their own.



Lauryn Oates

In some ways, it's a crude measure. We know simply accessing education is not enough. We know meaningful learning needs to be happening in the classroom, and that takes more than just getting girls through the door. We know education must be relevant; it must be aligned with the aspirations of young people who want to be part of the modern world, who want an education that will give them agency and opportunity. But we've also learned from our experiences of restoring access to secondary education for girls to whom it's been denied, that attending school can restore a sense of dignity and hope. It can make dreaming possible again. It can reignite the planning for the future that comes when you're back on the pathway you chose for yourself. School, even one accessed from a laptop, can be a sanctuary, from the instability, unfairness, and chaos outside. It can be a lifeline.

We will continue to create educational opportunities and extend this lifeline to everyone struggling to access them. By now, we know what it takes. We have built a school. Its desks are digital, but its students and teachers are real. And we will continue adding more rooms until there is a seat for everyone.

“ School, even one accessed from a laptop, can be a sanctuary, from the instability, unfairness, and chaos outside. It can be a lifeline. We will continue to create educational opportunities and extend this lifeline to everyone struggling to access them.

Dear Donors, Supporters, and Volunteers,

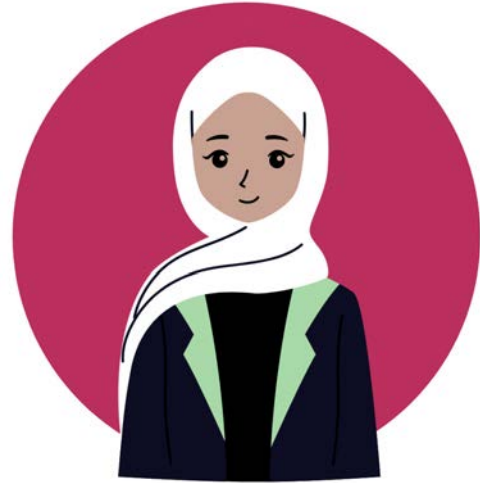
In 2023, your unwavering dedication and generosity have empowered us to provide vital access to education for Afghan women and girls. Today, we're excited to bring you a special message directly from those whose lives you've touched.

Meet Asma, a fifteen-year-old student from our Darakht-e Danesh Classroom. Asma aspires to become a cardiologist. She is determined to graduate high school and attend university to achieve her dreams.

Thanks to your support, Asma has received devices and internet through our Remote Communications Assistance Program, enabling her to attend her daily online classes. Additionally, she and her family have benefited from Learning Plus Baskets, supporting food security for her household.

Click the headphones icon to hear the direct impact of your contributions. Listen to Asma's gratitude and reflections on the crucial role of education and knowledge.

It is because of your support that we can continue to stand with Asma and thousands of girls just like her, to provide pathways to achieve their dreams. Thank you for being the driving force behind positive change in the lives of Afghan women and girls.



Meet Asma



Click the headphones to hear from Asma

“

Thank you for helping us with the gift of education. Your kindness has made a huge difference in many lives. Because of you, more people can go to school and learn new things. Your support has allowed us to build schools where none existed before... We believe that education is very important. It helps people to follow their dreams and live a better life, and this is all thanks to you!

With gratitude,

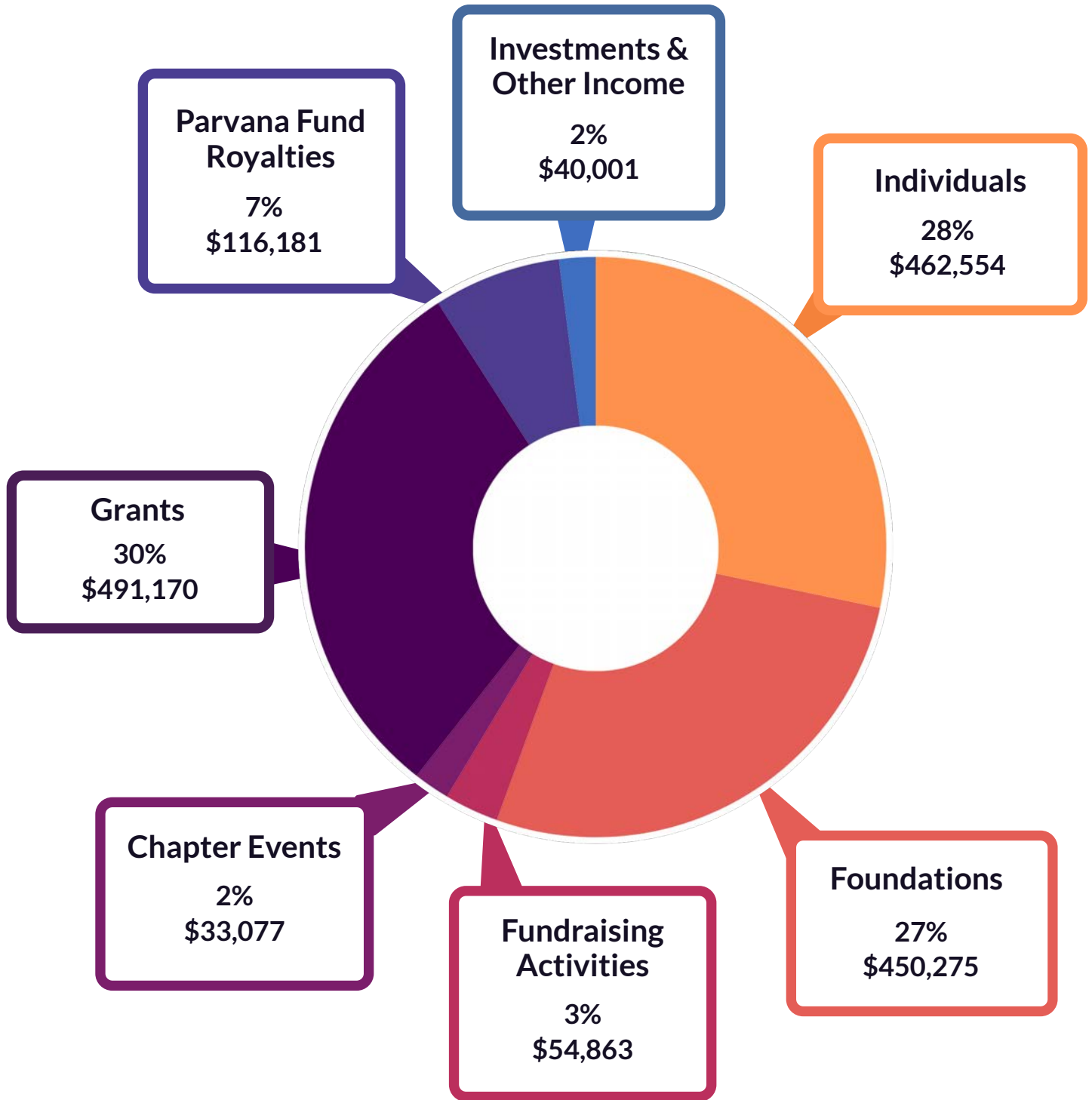


Canadian Women *for*
Women in Afghanistan

Making the Right to Learn a Reality

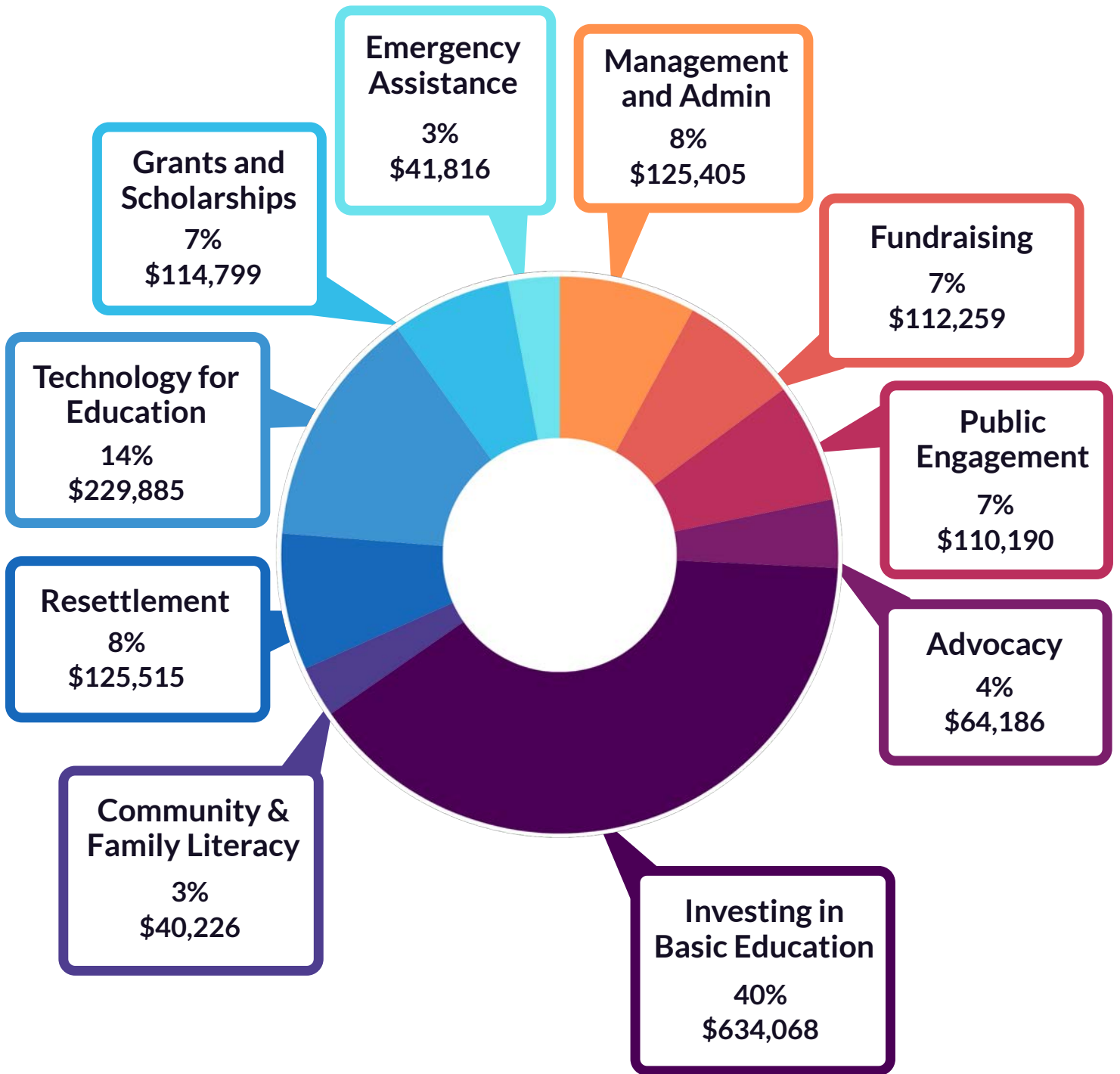
Financials

REVENUE



Financials

PROGRAM EXPENDITURES






Community and Family Literacy

Learning Plus Baskets



Investing in Basic Education

School Leaders as Agents of Change Towards Equity and Inclusion

Care-Centered Networked Improvement Communities Research Project



Grants & Scholarships

Shafia Fund

Remote Communications Assistance



Technology for Education

Darakht-e Danesh Classroom

Darakht-e Danesh Library

Darakht-e Danesh Courses

Gender Equity in Teacher Training

Digital Learning Centres



Policy Dialogue & Advocacy



Safe Harbour



Public Engagement

Community and Family Literacy



PROJECT

Learning Plus Baskets

Est. 2020

In 2020, we developed our Learning Baskets Program to provide families with packages of educational supplies for at-home learning. After the fall of Kabul, CW4Wafghan increased support to address the escalating humanitarian crisis by distributing Learning Plus Baskets to Afghan families. These baskets contain essential educational resources to support at-home learning plus crucial food staples and emergency supplies, thereby assisting vulnerable families attain food security.

“

I had a job but lost it with the recent ban of female employees. I was searching on the internet for humanitarian support and I got access to your organization's website. I emailed and got a response and soon you have surveyed my home. I am happy to see this much huge material you have included in the learning baskets. My daughter is happy to see the storybooks. Thank you CW4Wafghan.

- Learning Plus Basket Recipient



247

Learning Plus Baskets
Distributed in 2023

1717

Total Family Members
Reached

WHAT IS INCLUDED IN A FAMILY'S LEARNING PLUS BASKET?

This is a sample of a recent Learning Plus Basket Distribution





PROJECT

School Leaders as Agents of Change Towards Equity and Inclusion

Est. May 2021 (to April 2024)

School leaders can be essential agents of change who motivate teachers and communities, identify inclusion challenges through collecting evidence, and create safe, inclusive conditions for all learners.

This project created and studied Networked Improvement Communities (NICs), which are peer, professional communities that allow school leaders to work together with a common goal: solve real-time inclusion issues related to poverty, gender, culture, and discrimination among Afghan students, especially girls, living in refugee villages.

The research was originally planned for schools in Kabul and surrounding provinces but, after the fall of Afghanistan, the research site was moved to UNHCR camps (“refugee villages”) for Afghan refugees in Peshawar, northern Pakistan, where over 800,000 Afghans had fled since the Taliban takeover. The research addressed inclusion and school participation challenges for displaced Afghan students and educators living in refugee villages in Pakistan.

The research findings show that these school leaders gained new agency to tackle persistent barriers to education, especially for girls, children with disabilities, and very poor families. The valuable research contributed to applied research about Afghan school leaders, Network Improvement

Communities, and inclusion practices that will shape the future of educational practices for our programs and the programs of allied NGOs.

As the project comes to an end, the team is supporting other UNHCR-funded organizations to adopt the NIC model in their Afghan schools. CW4W Afghan is proud to partake in these highly-regarded collaborations and meet international standards for development partnerships. This project was funded by Knowledge and Innovation Exchange (KIX): a partnership between Global Partnership for Education and the International Development Research Centre (Canada).

“

Before this training, we didn't welcome students with disabilities – we didn't like them so much because we were concerned that they would make it difficult for us. After taking this course, we are ready for students with disabilities.

- Male School Leader

“

Speaking of personal development, I must emphasize that this journey has been immensely motivating for me and has facilitated my learning in various area, including inclusive education, and using problem tree analysis.

- Female School Leader

30

**School Leader
Participants**

18

**Schools
Participating**

1

**Five-Month Online
Inclusion Course Created**

Investing in Basic Education



PROJECT

Care-Centered Networked Improvement Communities Research Project (CC-NIC)

Est: November 2023 (to April 2026)

Afghan refugee students suffer from extreme poverty, discrimination, harassment, and exclusion, and have “unknowable futures” (Dryden-Peterson, S. 2017).¹ In response, CW4WAfghan is working to support refugee communities by developing new and innovative teacher education programs in partnership with the University of Peshawar, following the success of the KIX research project.

Funded by the International Development Research Centre, the CC-NIC project will research how teachers can begin using “pedagogy of care” practices and strategies in their classrooms to build student-teacher and student-student relationships by working with teachers from other schools in networked improvement communities.



CW4WAfghan is developing the first of its kind online “pedagogy of care” curriculum to support refugee educators, some of whom have limited teaching capacity and limited access to learning resources.

In addition to directly empowering teachers in the networked improved communities, research efforts will contribute to the Empowering Teachers Initiative, a Global South research consortium working on teacher professional development. UNHCR and the Department of Education are active stakeholders, positioned to adapt this model in other refugee schools in Pakistan and around the world.

3

**UNHCR Refugee Villages
Supporting Afghans**

50

**Teachers
Participating**

1

**Teacher PD Course
in Development**

→ **Modules focused on:** →

- ethics of care;
- teacher and student resilience and well-being;
- gender-responsive and inclusion practices



UNHCR classroom in Pakistan

¹Dryden-Peterson, Sarah. 2017. Refugee Education: Education for an Unknowable Future. Curriculum Inquiry 47, no 1: 14–24.



PROJECT

Shafia Fund

Est. 2009

The Shafia/Mohammad Memorial Education Fund for Afghan Women and Girls is a fund established by our former Kingston Chapter in memory of three teenage sisters (Zainab, Sahar and Geeti Shafia) and Rona Amir Mohammed who were all murdered on June 30, 2009, in Kingston, Ontario, Canada.

The scholarships assist applicants with their education costs including tuition fees, books, transportation, or specialized supplies such as lab materials or tools.

In response to the December 2022 ban on women from attending higher education institutions, we expanded the parameters of our scholarships to not only fund women inside Afghanistan, but also fund women who fled Afghanistan and are studying in neighboring regions.



In 2023, we received a remarkable 195 applications from women seeking financial aid to resume their education that was interrupted by the Taliban. This represents an astounding eightfold increase in applications from previous years.

The 121 scholarships awarded in 2023 provided vital assistance across multiple areas: 37 awards helped cover course fees, 45 awards supported students by covering transportation costs, 14 awards assisted with purchasing essential books, and the remaining 25 awards contributed towards stationery and internet expenses.



“

My name is Zinat* I am a student of English Language and Computer programs. Thank you for helping and making me more motivated to continue my education. Due to the recent restrictions by Taliban I was so hopeless and sad, but by receiving this fund I felt hopeful and energetic for continuing my studies. I appreciate your support and I wish you will continue helping Afghan students.

- Shafia Fund Recipient

Grants & Scholarships



PROJECT

Remote Communications Assistance

Est. 2022

Sometimes the gap between the desire to learn and access to life-changing educational opportunities can be as simple as internet connectivity or a laptop.

Our Remote Communications Assistance Project (RCA) supports women and girls in accessing online education by providing essential items including internet connectivity, data packages, power banks, satellites, tablets, phones, and more.

IN 2023, WE PROVIDED

392

devices and connectivity packages to Afghan women and girls, including:



70
Laptops



22
Tablets



254
Internet
Packages



4
Solar Panels



12
Course Fees



16
Power Banks



14
Keyboards,
Printers, and Books

“

Your support has not only provided me with practical resources but has also instilled in me a sense of hope and empowerment. I am deeply touched by your compassion and dedication to helping others realize their potential.

Thank you from the bottom of my heart for your kindness, generosity, and belief in me. I will carry this gift with me as a reminder of the incredible impact that one person's actions can have on another's life. Your support has inspired me to strive for excellence and create a brighter future for myself.

- Remote Communications Assistance Recipient



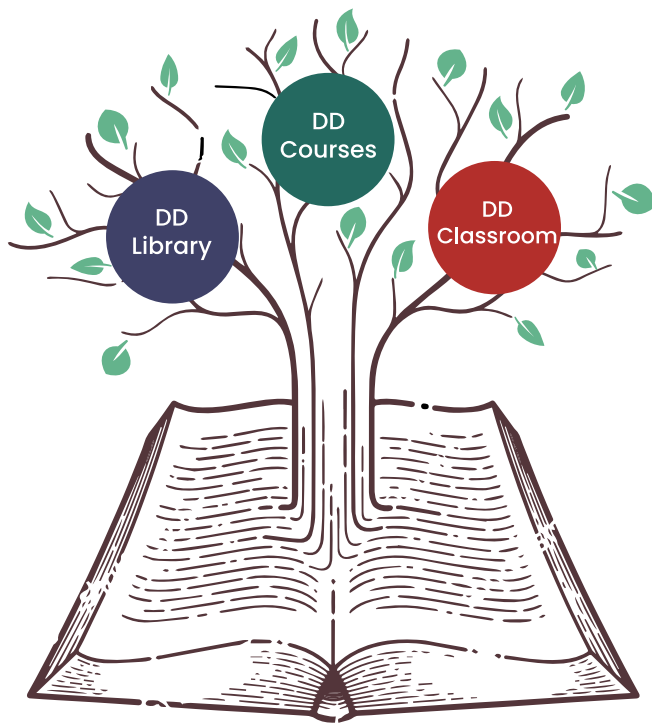
Technology for Education



At the heart of our educational programs is our Darakht-e Danesh Academi suite of educational tools that collectively ensure access to education for thousands of Afghans.

Darakht-e Danesh translates to “Knowledge Tree” in Dari language: one of the primary languages of Afghanistan.

Our knowledge tree has three branches:



Darakht-e Danesh Library

Over 7,600 online resources in 9 languages

Darakht-e Danesh Courses

16 online asynchronous courses

Darakht-e Danesh Classroom

Our live online high school for Afghan girls

Each element of our Darakht-e Danesh Academi serves as a pathway to empowerment through quality education and is free to learners.



WHO USES DARAKHT-E DANESH ACADEMI



Afghan women and girls who were cut off from their conventional education



Displaced Afghans living in neighbouring countries and the broader region who cannot attend local schools



Afghans, and the educators working with them, who have relocated to other countries and need bridging support with their education



Anyone who needs access to high quality learning materials in languages spoken in Afghanistan



Third-party organizations that need a learning management system to deliver educational programming to learners



PROJECT

Darakht-e Danesh Classroom

Est. 2022

In response to the ban on secondary school education for girls, we launched Darakht-e Danesh Classroom (DD Classroom) online high school with live teaching. In 2022, our DD Classroom started with one successful pilot cohort of 25 grade seven girls who received online instruction from women teachers who would otherwise be unemployed.

In 2023, we continued to expand the school and added our first grade eight classes. By the end of 2023, we had a total of 110 students in our high school.

Through a highly secure and encrypted system, the girls attend live online classes and receive quality educational instruction in subjects including history, math, Pashto, English, biology, chemistry, physics, geography, Islamic studies, Dari, Pashto and computer subjects.

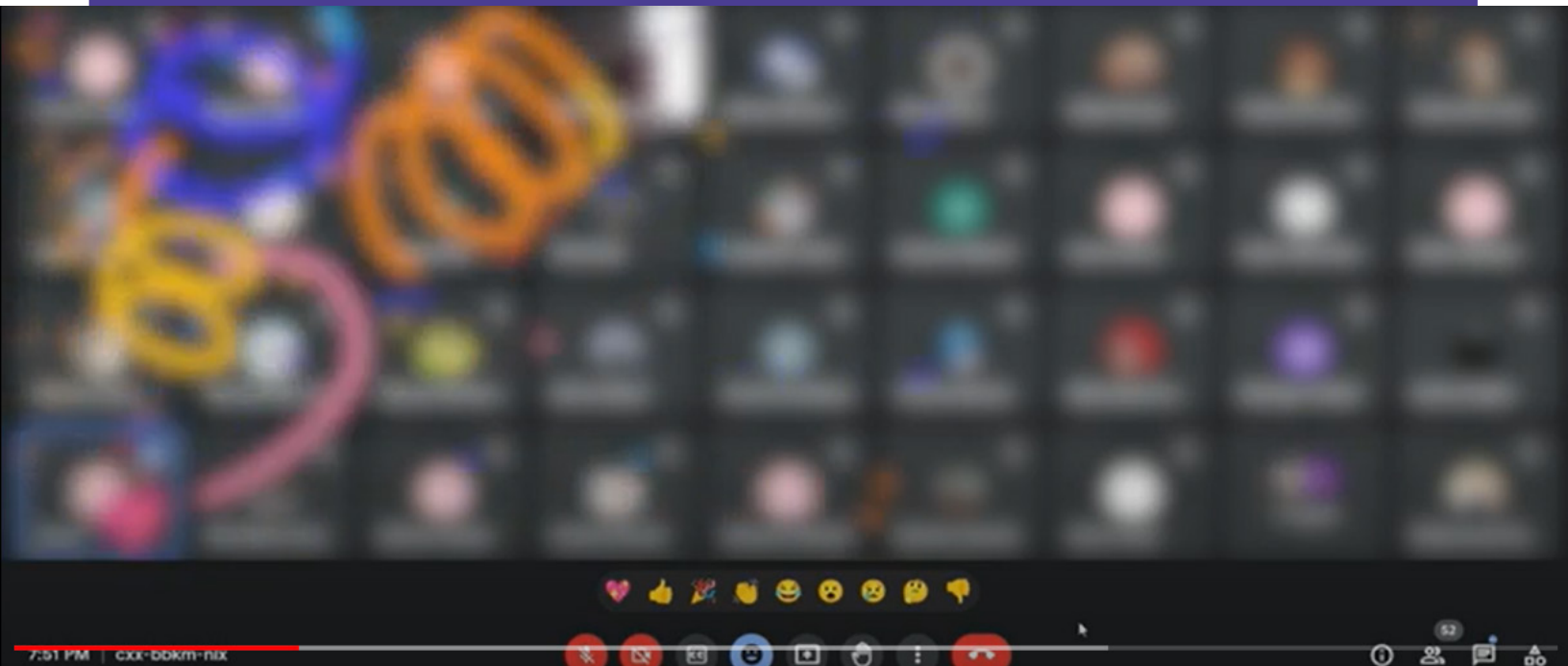
“

DD Classroom helped me to study with more and better hope, to always keep going, to struggle with difficulties and disappointments, and to accept the fact that no difficult situation is forever. DD Classroom is more than just a school for me; it is also a hope for my future... Darakht-e Danesh was a bright light in my dark days.

- DD Classroom Student, Grade Eight

Looking ahead to 2024, we are committed to greatly expanding our DD Classroom – with aims of total enrollment of 375 students in grades seven through 10 – so Afghan girls are able to achieve their educational goals and reach their full potential.

Our students have become so confident and skilled at online learning that they now organize and lead online events for various national and international occasions. On days such as International Women’s Day and Teacher’s Day, they gather online and invite their parents and their teachers to participate in these online activities.



This year, girls in our DD Classroom formed a literary club: a collective virtual space where they can share their worries, hopes, and aspirations through poems, prose, artwork, and other powerful forms of creative self-expression. The club strengthens community and offers a supportive outlet as the girls navigate the complexities and uncertainties of their collective lives.

AUGUST 15, 2023

Shattered Dreams

I am Hadia. I am only thirteen years old. What I write is just a little of the pains of a seventh-grade girl, who is put behind closed doors. Even though I'm still a teenager, I feel like a hundred years have passed in my life...

Today, the strange turmoil is once again twisting through my devastated city. They talk about celebrating independence, oh, what a fictional and fragile independence... Two years have passed since the rise of the Taliban, the enemies of knowledge and awareness; two years of despair for girls who have grown up in this desolate land. Oh, how sorrowful it is every time to look out of the window at the school, the empty desks of the school, the empty classrooms of the school, the dark, silent, and bitter corridors of the school...

During the last two years, every time I picked up the pen, my words seethed with hatred; hatred for the ignorance of the century. The paper I was writing on, burned with hatred which was coming from my pen. My words wanted to shine all at once and flight, but it seems they are trapped in a narrow and dark cage, unable to find a way to soar...

Today was the most bitter day of my life. The small world I had constructed in my own imagination crumbled ruthlessly in these two years. Every day, a brick from the wall of my hopes fell. Now, pain is evident in my eyes, and the bitterness of time is apparent on my face. My life has become like unsweetened coffee, a regret has taken over my existence, and a lump of suppressed feelings is lodged in my throat, robbing me even of the ability to cry; but for how long, until when!!!!

A question remains unanswered for me: why and until when? And sometimes, when I ask my question, no language is capable of answering it.

Taliban consider today as Afghanistan's Independence Day, but no! Today is a day when Afghanistan fell into chains and captivity. They transformed Afghanistan into a land of horror and cries, where wails reach from every corner, searing hearts...

We are the unfortunate children,
Perhaps the worst generation in history,
The most sorrowful generation in history.
I am deprived of self-recognition,
I can't be happy in my own country,
I can't study.

Oh, how unjust it is!

What silence has enveloped this country,
Oh, the shattered dreams,
Oh, the lifeless alleys,
Oh, the grief-stricken mothers,
Oh, the oppressed migrants,
Oh, the distance from the homeland,
Oh, the presence in the homeland,

O Lord, if I stay in the homeland, I am ruined,
If I leave the homeland, I am an exile,

Oh, I am the most bitter generation in history,
I don't even know what my sin is, but it's as if I have been a criminal.

I wrote these words with a thousand incurable pains, I wrote it as an Afghan girl, hoping that someday her voice might reach the world.

A GIRL WHOSE BODY REMAINS, WHILE THE TALIBAN HAVE TAKEN HER SPIRIT AWAY,

Hadia

Technology for Education



PROJECT

Darakht-e Danesh Library

Est. 2014

At the heart of our Knowledge Tree is our Darakht-e Danesh Library (DD Library). In 2023 our online library for Afghans reached an incredible 7,300 resources in 127 subjects in nine languages.

DD Library is used an average of 40,000 times per month. At any given time, someone is downloading a book, audiobook, lesson plan, video, or other resources from our library. The DD Library is free, open to all, and ensures ongoing access to learning resources for Afghan women, girls, and their families.



په دې لړۍ کې یو ځای، ماشومان د دې لپاره مبارزه کوي چې خپل خوږونه په حقیقت بدل کړي... سهار وختي د لمر خنلو پر مهال، زود هلو پر غونډې نلسته وږ او خپله هيله مي اسمان ته واستوله. یوه وړخ به مې هيله زمکېا شي

0:46 / 7:31

ماجبيشه او د هيلو غونډی

Darakht-e Danesh Library

4.44K subscribers

Subscribe

3

Share

Download

...



Click here to view an example of a book converted to both audio and video for accessibility.

DD Library “Lite” Installations

In places with no internet connectivity, our entire Darakht-e Danesh Library can be installed onto computers to be run off of a local area network (LAN). This allows offline users in remote areas to access the knowledge in our library.

DARAKHT-E DANESH LIBRARY 2023 at a glance:



DDL is the first Afghan library to offer audiobooks for accessible learning.



DDL has resources on subjects including Afghan media, arts and humanities, business, history, science, mathematics, and more!



DDL is offered in Dari, Pashto, English, and the Afghan minority languages of Nooristani, Uzbeki, Swaji, Pashai, Shugnani, and Munji.



In November 2023, our DD Library was used over 60,000 times in one month!

“

I wanted to extend my heartfelt appreciation for installing the DD library into our center’s laptops. Your support has made a significant impact on our center. The integration of the DD library has enhanced our laptops’ capabilities, providing valuable educational resources and tools. This installation has empowered our staff and beneficiaries with knowledge and skills that will make a lasting difference. Your dedication to improving educational opportunities is commendable and greatly appreciated.

- Home-Based School Teacher



“

When I am involved in voluntary work, I see myself as part of a larger whole. This larger whole helps me take a step towards creating meaning in my life. Every step I take on this path is a drop in the infinite ocean of meaning and happiness that I leave for my children and others.

Darakht-e-Danesh has given me the opportunity to express my worldview and myself with others in the form of words that I translate. Every text that is translated and edited is a treasure for my personal growth and an attempt to make available the resources that many wish to have. Working at Darakht-e-Danesh has become part of my larger identity.

- DDL Volunteer



*Thank
You
Volunteers!*

Our Darakht-e Danesh Library is only possible because of the generous contributions of dozens of volunteer translators globally.

From children's books to higher education textbooks, these incredible volunteer translators convert resources of every level into Afghan languages.

PROJECT

Darakht-e Danesh Courses

Est. 2019

The third branch of our Knowledge Tree is our Darakht-e Danesh Courses (DD Courses), consisting of asynchronous courses offered in Dari, Pashto, and English.

These courses in professional and personal development are offered in a variety of subjects and allow Afghans to take courses at their own

16

**Courses
Offered**

6500

**Afghans
Accessed the Courses**



“

“The Gender Based Analysis course provided academic solutions to analyze and solve gender issues in our community and the frameworks were helpful for putting my thoughts and analysis into better understanding of any social issue.

- Displaced Afghan Teacher



PROJECT

Gender Equity in Teacher Training



In partnership with

Canada

Est. 2021

The Gender Equity in Teacher Training to Improve Girls' Education in Afghanistan (GETT) Project, funded by Global Affairs Canada, was an innovative project focused on increasing the number of female teachers in Afghanistan and supporting the participation of Afghan girls in formal education. This project successfully operated for two years before being suspended in 2021 after the fall of Kabul.

Through the commitment of Global Affairs Canada, GETT was partially reinstated ("GETT Phase 2") in March 2023 and focused on professional development courses for displaced Afghan teachers living in temporary and uncertain conditions in countries surrounding Afghanistan.

The courses offer certification and better position Afghan educators for future teaching opportunities and provide them with skills to better support all Afghan students, including those facing mental health challenges.

Through this project, we established close partnerships in Pakistan and Türkiye, who continue to work with us today through our digital learning centres.

During GETT Phase 2, CW4WAfghan created and launched 12 free and mobile-friendly professional development courses on our DD Courses platform on subjects including:

- Basic computer and digital literacy skills
- Gender based analysis for education
- Leadership for empowerment of girls
- How to teach online (introductory and advanced courses)
- How to develop distance education courses
- Online safety
- Critical and creative thinking
- Mental health for educators (in partnership with the University of British Columbia)



Click here to watch Ghezal talk about how the GETT project courses have given her tools to ensure boys and girls have equal opportunities to learn in her classroom.

Technology for Education



As part of the original GETT project, we developed 100 gender-responsive instructional videos on grade seven subjects during the pandemic. Our instructors (predominantly female) were trained with gender-responsive pedagogical practices in how to teach challenging subject matter content through these videos. Instructors learned to:

- refer to both “girls and boys”
- share images of women professionals (physicists, mathematicians, teachers)
- share images of both women and men
- speak to students through videos about how important it is to share domestic responsibilities so both girls and boys had enough time to complete homework

The videos were launched on the Ministry of Education COVID-19 website and the Darakht-e Danesh YouTube Channel.

From March 2020 to August 2023, the videos had been viewed over 140,000 times. The number of students watching videos remained constant over the years, despite significant changes in the context in Afghanistan.

12

**Courses
Launched**

3

**Languages
Offered Each Course**

3

**Sites of Project Activity
Serving Displaced Afghans**

100

**Instructional Videos
Launched**

3x

**More People Accessed
Courses than Project Goal**



Click here to view a sample video on the Darakht-e Danesh YouTube Channel

Technology for Education



PROJECT

Digital Learning Centres

Est. 2023

Often, refugee children's education is overlooked because of traumatic events or a lack of formal documentation. At CW4WAfghan, we are committed to ensuring safe access to education is available for Afghans, regardless of their circumstances.

As a result of the reoccupation of Afghanistan by the Taliban, many Afghans are fleeing to neighboring countries. With 2.6 million registered Afghan refugees worldwide,² the disruptions to the lives of these families are immense. In Türkiye and Pakistan, obtaining official refugee status is exceedingly challenging, leaving many Afghans undocumented and therefore disallowed from enrolling their children in local schools. The longer children's education is interrupted, the more likely it becomes that they will never return to school.

In response to this growing problem, CW4WAfghan established Digital Learning Centres (DLCs) in Pakistan and Türkiye in 2023. These centers offer educational opportunities for Afghan refugee youth, with a focus on digital learning through our Darakht-e Danesh Academi.

² UNHCR (2023) Retrieved <https://unhcr.org/countries/afghanistan>



Each DLC features a 20-station computer lab and a skilled facilitator to support students with online classes, peer learning, tutoring, and technical troubleshooting. Sixty students studying in Türkiye DLC and 100 students in Pakistan DLC attend live online classes and receive quality educational instruction in subjects including history, math, Dari, Pashto, English, biology, chemistry, physics, geography, Islamic studies, and computer subjects. Going forward, we will also set up onsite community libraries onsite to promote literacy and serve as safe spaces for community gathering.



2

**Digital Learning Centres
Established**

20

**Computers
in Each DLC**

160

**Students
Studying**

Safe Harbour: Protecting the Right to Education Through Resettlement



Est. 2023

Many Afghan families have fled Afghanistan to neighboring countries where they are living in uncertainty and often without access to education. Many are courageous Afghan women who have risked their lives in raising their voices to demand equal rights for all. These families cannot return to Afghanistan due to the risk of persecution or harm and do not have durable solutions for resettlement.

In our newest program: Safe Harbour: Protecting the Right to Education Through Resettlement, CW4WAfghan is working in collaboration with Canadian institutions that are Sponsorship Agreement Holders (SAHs) in our efforts to relocate at-risk Afghans to Canada so they can resume their education in a place of safety and certainty. Families are resettled with the assistance of our volunteer chapters across Canada who assist with securing housing, acquiring furnishings, enrolling children in school, providing language instruction, accessing healthcare, and offering cultural and community support. By supporting safe passage and resettlement to Canada, we are reconnecting Afghan women and girls with the education they have been denied and preserving critical gains made in Afghan education.

“

[The] interaction and unwavering support that I and my family received from the Vancouver Chapter have deeply and broadly transformed our lives. We are immeasurably grateful for their kind generosity, compassionate support, and great-hearted companionship in our journey to Canada.

- Resettled Afghan-Canadian

“

[CW4WAfghan] chapter volunteers provided me and my family with invaluable support: When we lived in a hotel in Waterloo, my daughter-in-law gave birth to my grandchild, the chapter members brought us a stroller, car seat, diapers, clothes and baby toys. They offered these to us with a world of respect, joy and friendship. When we got our first rental place, they brought us a double bed, a bed for the baby, clothes, kids toys, stationery, kitchenware and food items. My family and I express our heartfelt gratitude...We will always remember how you made us feel welcome in Canada!

- Resettled Afghan-Canadian Family

89

**Individuals
Resettled**

9

**Communities
Welcomed Families**

Families were resettled in:

-
- | | | | |
|---|----------------------|---|-----------------|
| 4 | Greater Toronto Area | 1 | Sault Ste Marie |
| 3 | Vancouver | 1 | Halifax |
| 2 | Winnipeg | 1 | Windsor |
| 2 | Calgary | 1 | Moncton |
| 1 | Edmonton | | |

Afghanistan Policy Dialogue & Advocacy



Est. 2020

In our Afghanistan Policy Dialogue and Advocacy Program, CW4WAfghan works in partnership with Afghan women to improve access to human rights, combat gender apartheid, and make the right to learn a reality for all.

Through our advocacy work, CW4WAfghan has become a key actor in advocacy in Canada and internationally. We are proud to hold a unique position at the crossroads of grassroots activist networks, Women, Peace, and Security spaces, international education policy, and the humanitarian and international development sectors. We work to ensure that Afghan women and girls' voices are prioritized in grassroots and high-level political discussions. Our advocacy work amplifies Afghan voices, influences government policies, and builds global solidarity.



View CW4WAfghan Executive Director, Dr. Lauryn Oates, addressing the Standing Senate Committee in December, 2023 to urge assistance for women and girls in Afghanistan.



CW4WAfghan Executive Director, Lauryn Oates, leading at the Alliance for the Education of Women in Afghanistan (AEWA), hosted by the American University of Afghanistan in Doha, Qatar. CW4WAfghan is a key partner in the Alliance, co-leading advocacy and supporting mapping work to coordinate opportunities for Afghan women to continue their education.

IN 2023, OUR ADVOCACY WORK INCLUDED:

- 1 Youth Advocacy Network launched
- 3 Policy briefs and recommendations with decision makers
- 5 Advocacy campaigns launched
- 6 Advocacy coalitions participated in
- 12 Dialogues with the Government of Canada, allies, UN decision-makers
- 16 Solidarity and awareness events attended
- 22 Advocacy tools distributed
- 53 Afghan women and girls empowered to share their messages on public platforms
- 100+ Higher Education Toolkits distributed

Public Engagement



Since 1998, Official Est: 2010

Our Public Engagement program is our longest standing program that began simultaneously with our first fundraising efforts for Afghanistan, and with the grassroots formation of chapters over 25 years ago. This program fosters an engaged and knowledgeable community of supporters to take urgent, meaningful action in support of the right to learn.

Through media interviews, events, newsletters, toolkits, resources, social media, and community outreach with our 10 Chapters of volunteers across Canada, our Public Engagement program is at the heart of communication and interaction between our organization and the incredible supporters who make our work possible.

Communications

In 2023, CW4WAfghan participated in 45+ media interviews and produced two op-eds, resulting in over 100 local, national, and international publications that raised awareness and sparked action.

Using social media as an outreach tool in 2023, CW4WAfghan joined new platforms, increased our follower base by over 50%, doubled our post output and tripled our Instagram reach to ensure far reaching messages in support of the right to learn.

45+

Media Interviews

2

Op-Eds Published

100+

Local, National, and International Publications

Annual Symposium

This year's Annual Symposium was hosted in partnership with the McGill Faculty of Law and McGill Centre for Human Rights and Legal Pluralism in Montreal, Quebec. Over 120 members, supporters, activists, chapter representatives, board members, staff, volunteers, partners, dignitaries, and members of the public came together for this four day event to focus on key issues affecting Afghanistan and to discuss tangible solutions for change.

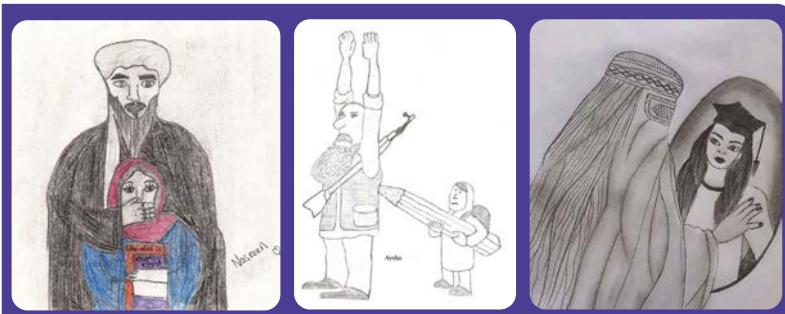
Some highlights of this year's program included a full day youth workshop featuring a virtual discussion with UN Special Rapporteur Richard Bennett, an artwork display by our Darakht-e Danesh Classroom students, and a chapter networking event. The public event featured a panel discussion with Afghan activists surrounding the recognition of gender apartheid as an international crime and a panel discussion with Canadian higher education specialists on methods of mobilizing higher education institutions in Canada to support the right to learn.



“ I want to live in a world where no woman has to watch her life pass by without having any control over it. No woman or girl should have to bear the weight of injustice. Let's collectively move forward to make sure every woman and girl has the opportunity to thrive.

- Nila Ibrahimi, 2023 Annual Symposium

Public Engagement



Our Darakht-e Danesh Classroom students prepared an incredible artwork display for the symposium that was prompted by one question: What does the right to learn mean to you?



Attendees of the full day Youth Advocacy Symposium Workshop offered in partnership with Afghans for Progressive Thinking.

50%

Social Media Follower Increase

120

Participants in our Annual Symposium

10

Active Chapters in Canada

Highlights from our Chapters

A key element of our public engagement program is our 10 amazing chapters of volunteers across Canada. Our dedicated chapters are at the heart of our community outreach, raising awareness and funds locally and assisting newcomer families as part of our resettlement efforts.

Here are some highlights from our valued chapter network:

Ottawa Chapter rally on Parliament Hill for gender apartheid to be recognized as an international crime



Victoria Chapter's Red Pashmina Walk



Peterborough Afghan Marketplace at their 13th Annual Red Pashmina Walk



Vancouver Chapter receives Renate Shearer Award for outstanding contributions to human rights

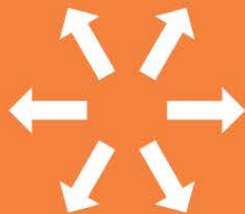
Looking Forward 2024 + Beyond

Elevate



2023 brought tremendous growth to our programs, and 2024 will focus on elevating these programs to new heights. We are raising the bar on industry standards of delivering virtual education, ensuring quality programming with excellence in implementation.

Expand



As our programs grow in scope and scale to meet demand, we are dedicated to restoring access to purposeful educational opportunities that foster agency, dignity, and choice. We are steadfast in our commitment to expanding access to quality education for as many Afghans as possible.

Evolve



With 25 years of experience and relentless program adaptation over the past two years, we ensure the continued delivery of quality education to Afghan women, girls, and their families. Inspired by their resilience and determination, we are committed to strategically adapting to uphold the fundamental right to learn under any circumstances.

We are driven every day by the acute awareness that while we have managed to restore access to education for so many, there are so many more we have yet to reach.

It is with your support that we can bridge the gap, tear down barriers, and provide the tools and opportunities needed for Afghan women and girls to thrive and contribute to a brighter, more equitable future.



Thank you for donating today and helping us restore the fundamental right to learn.



Making the
Right to Learn
a Reality

25
YEARS

of Impact

www.cw4wafghan.ca